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SUCCESSION PLAN AMONG PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES IN ZIMBABWE: A QUALITATIVE APPROACH USING THE HIDDEN AND PUBLIC TRANSCRIPTS THEORY

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ABSTRACT

Succession is a major issue both in business organizations and church organizations. This study cascades the study of succession planning to church organizations focusing on Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe. Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe have been growing at a fast rate with many of them mushrooming at a high rate especially in city centres. Most of the church founders of Pentecostal churches are still alive and active but what happens when they are gone? The question is a relevant question as this affects the sustainability of such churches. Do these churches have a succession plan? If they do is it clear to allow for the survival of the church when the founders are no longer around. The discussion in this paper is guided by the James Scott's (1992) Hidden and Public Transcripts. Subordinates tend to behave in a certain way when they are under the scrutiny of the authorities. This kind of behavior. The major findings from the study was that succession plan among Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe is still shrouded in mystery with some considering it as taboo to discuss succession planning when the founder of the church is still alive.

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INTRODUCTION

Succession plans are paramount to the survival of organizations. A major question that needs to be asked in an organization and especially the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe is 'who will take over after the founder's death?' Bieschke (2006) asks this question this way: if a key leader position was unexpectedly vacated by death, disability or disqualification, who is ready to assume that position? He concludes that 94% of organizations have no succession plan. The focus of the study is to explore issues of succession among Pentecostal Churches in Zimbabwe using Scott's Model, 'The Hidden and Public Transcripts' (Scott, 192).

Succession Plan

Bieschke (2006) identified the following aspects that should be followed on issues of succession plan: building your relay team, swing through transition, use vision to manage change, develop a treasure chest inheritance and being covered by the dust of the rabbi.

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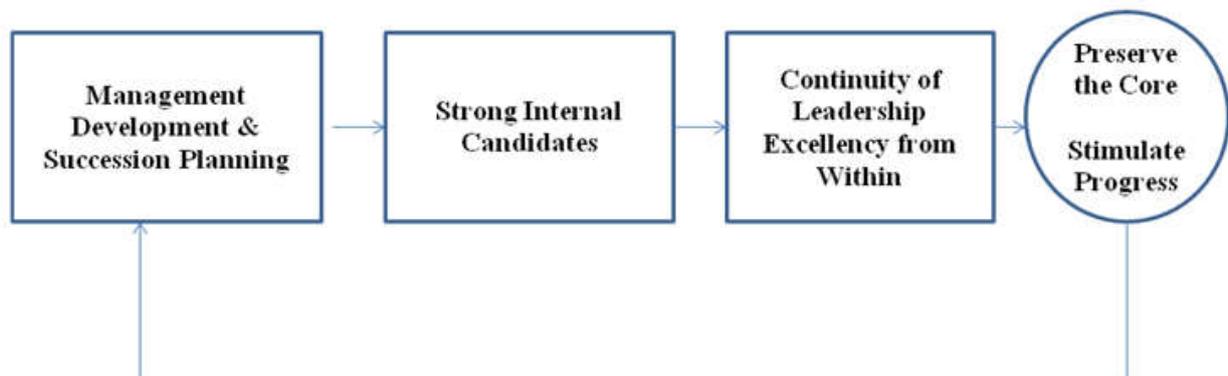
On the first issue leaders should develop future runners in the leadership relay race. In the second aspect leadership transition should be smooth without any interruptions because the one who succeeds would have the same vision like that of the leader and Bieschke (2006) put it as the same 'DNA'. The vision to manage change uses hindsight, insight and foresight so that the organization continues even in the case that something happens to a current leader. The fourth aspect covers issues of values, organizational culture and vision. Collins and Porras (2002: 173-175) identified the continuity of an organization through a well planned succession plan that preserves the core as vital. They identified one major core value with two components; the core ideology which define the characteristics or self identity of an organization. Core ideology as alluded by Collins and Porras (2002:221) provides the bonding glue that holds an organization together as it grows, decentralizes, diversifies, expands globally and attains diversity within. The core values being the first component of the core ideology are guiding principles which do not require external justification that have intrinsic value and importance from those within the organization. The second component is the core purpose which is the organization's reason for existence. It reflects the importance people attach to an organization.

It is those within that can be incorporated into effective succession, thereby building leadership continuity instead of leadership gaps as depicted in Figure 1 and Figure 2. Finally succession plan build people who follow in the leader's footsteps without wavering. Failure to address this may result splits, factions, formation of other churches and people simply leaving for other churches. Paul had plans (Titus 1:5) and had Timothy and Titus that he trained. Moses had Joshua, Elijah had Elishah. Mkwanzazi pointed out that in the absence of clear-cut succession procedures in churches, especially Pentecostal churches; the period following the death of the incumbent 'Man of God' is characterized by infighting, instability and tension (Nyathi, 2013:280-281). He goes on to say schisms develop which at times lead to splintering of the church and there is no unity.

Financial matters are shrouded within the mists of spiritual aura and reverence that attend the founder and Spiritual Leader of the church. In African terms founding something, including a church, carries with it a sense of unassailable ownership. As a result the founder will cling to power. Talking of succession is taboo and treasonous. The explosions are delayed until after the death of the all powerful Spiritual Leader (Nyathi, 2013:314).

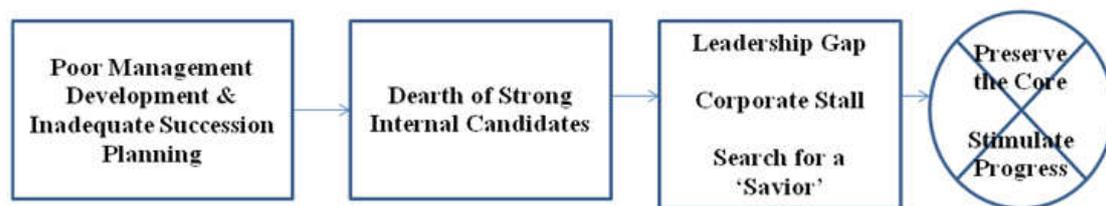
Research Objectives

The research focuses on succession plan with a major thrust on four areas that affect succession plan in Zimbabwean Pentecostal churches:



Source: Collins, J. & Porras, J.I. (2002: 174).

Figure 1. Leadership Continuity Loop



Source: Collins, J. & Porras, J.I. (2002: 175).

Figure 2. The Leadership Gap and Savior Syndrome

Significance of the study

This is an important area as it will curtail any likely future confusion within Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe and will assist in the continuity and influence of Pentecostal churches after the founders have gone.

Statement of the Research Problem

The main area of concern in the Zimbabwean context is the continuation of the Pentecostal churches after the founders are dead or incapacitated. The current situation is that most of the founders are still capable and are in control but what happens after? This concern is highlighted by one of the church leaders in Zimbabwe, Reverend Geoffrey Mkwanzazi when he said: *Succession in Africa presents challenges. The founders of churches, who happen to be senior pastors, have not, as a general rule, instituted bureaucratic structures within which matters of succession are moderated.*

- Leadership and leadership styles
- Mission and Vision
- Tithes and Offerings
- Discourse on Succession

Methodology

Orlikowski and Baroudi (1991) stated that research can be classified as positivist if there is evidence of formal propositions, quantifiable measures of variables, hypothesis testing and the inferences about a phenomenon from a representative sample to a stated population. Interpretive research assumes that our knowledge of reality is gained only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, shared meanings, documents, tools and other artifacts. Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) pointed out that interpretive research does not predefine dependent and independent variables, but focuses on the complexity of human sense making as the situation emerges.

It attempts to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign to them (Boland 1985, 1991; Deetz 1996; Orlikowski and Baroudi 1991). The interpretivism takes a hermeneutic approach to the interpretation of human and organizational behavior. This approach suggests that all human understanding is achieved by iterating between considering the interdependent meaning of parts and the whole that they form. The approach is relevant to the researcher since to understand the influence of leadership styles on churches the researcher has to understand what individuals say and contextualise with the whole aspect in Pentecostal churches. Philosophical hermeneutics is based on the work of Georg Gadamer (1900 – 2002) whose work was ‘Truth and method’. The main assumptions are that understanding is through being rather than through rule-based procedures. This then means that understanding is not free of bias or prejudice and the context in which the researcher is has an influence in that understanding.

Interpretation of qualitative data is not complete; there is always some uncertainty and ambiguity. There should then be a reflection on these biases and prejudices and an attempt to remove those that prevent understanding can be achieved through dialogue and engagement. Therefore according to the hermeneutic argument understanding is highly contextualised and bounded. The process of achieving an understanding of a text can provide insights to the process of achieving a mutual understanding with another person. The meaning of an individual word and the meaning of the sentence as a whole are mutually dependent: people understand the meaning of an individual word by seeing it in reference to the whole sentence and reciprocally, the sentence’s meaning as a whole is dependent on the meaning of individual words. When applied to human behavior, the same publicly observed behaviour can have different meanings in different organisational arrangements. The meaning of an individual action and the meaning of the organisational setting as a whole are mutually dependent and the researcher formed one’s understanding of both simultaneously. The researcher tried to get understanding of the influence on leadership styles through a case study approach of the Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe which allows dialogue and engagement. Though this approach acknowledges that people know what they are doing, it also acknowledges that they (people) are not all knowing. The researcher was open to hear people’s views, interact with them in order to get people’s understandings on the issue of leadership styles in churches and in their church in particular.

The researcher equipped with this statement was able to interpret to the best of her knowledge comparing with her prior knowledge and understanding. According to McGettigan (1997:376), the social world is far too encompassing, evolving and complex an environment for researchers ever to assume that they have arrived at any of its final truths. This means one’s interpretations are always somewhat provisional, uncertain and the facts somewhat ambiguous. Interpretivism works within the multiple constructed social realities in which the researcher and the subject interact and shape one another in meaning (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). This is in direct contrast from the positivist approach of objectivity, neutrality, scientific procedure and discovery of laws (Alvesson and Deetz, 2000:49). The researcher found the interpretivism

approach suitable to her study as she concluded from the above discussion that the following attributes of interpretivism are relevant to the research method that the researcher will adopt. The common elements being that the social action being meaningful and this meaning can be determined by an interpreter, respect and loyalty in relation to the life-world, understanding that human subjectivity can contribute to knowledge without making the knowledge subjective, the researcher’s participation in the life-world that she was trying to understand and the context of human action which needs to be understood in order to be able to understand the action itself.

The Public and Hidden Transcript Theory (Scott, 1992) was used for analyzing qualitative data. The public and hidden transcripts are established ways of behaving and speaking that fit certain actors in particular social settings, whether those in power/authority or those not. According to Scott (1992), the public transcripts are the open interactions between subordinates and those who dominate while the hidden transcripts portray the discourse that takes place ‘offstage’, beyond the direct observation by power holders. The social sites of the hidden transcript are those locations in which the unspoken riposte, stifled anger and bitten tongues created by relations of domination find a vehement, full-throated expression (Scott, 1992). It (the hidden transcript) is a social product and a result of power relations among subordinates as they struggle to win and defend a relative autonomy (Horsley, 2004). The hidden transcript will be least inhibited when two conditions are fulfilled: first when it is voiced in a sequestered social site where the control, surveillance and repression of the dominant are least able to reach and second, this sequestered social milieu is composed entirely of close confidants who share similar experiences of domination. Subordinate groups rarely say out openly their hidden transcript in the public. On the other hand public transcripts are the dominant expected discourse between the dominant class and the subordinates to maintain order (Reiff, 2010). The Public and Hidden Transcript theory shows that there is a distinct divide between the behaviour, language and customs that dominated groups assume in public and the language, jokes and criticisms that structure their lives when on their own.

The roles and language include rumour, gossip, backbiting, disguises, linguistic tricks, metaphors, euphemisms, folktales, ritual gestures, anonymous letters, nicknames, the eyes and the nod (Scott, 1992). Scott identified three distinctive characteristics of hidden transcripts; that each is specific to a social site and a particular group of actors (those you are comfortable with) and secondly that each contains more than merely speech acts, but a whole range of practices (such as poaching, stealing, not paying tithes, not meeting deadlines, shabby work, substandard work while for the power holders, luxury spending, expensive lifestyle) and finally that the frontier between public and hidden transcripts is a zone of constant struggle between the dominant and the subordinate – not a solid wall marred with splits, bitterness, resentments and many others. Scott further identified four varieties of public discourse: a (safe and public) discourse based in maintaining or supporting the “flattering self-image of elites”, second, the hidden transcript itself, third, the strategically located discourse between the first two characterized by disguise,

anonymity and double meaning taking place in the public discourse (such as rumour, gossip, jokes, songs, rituals, codes and euphemisms) and finally a discourse rupturing the divide between hidden and public (such as the in-breaking of the hidden discourse in public). Tourish (2013:77) summarized this whole aspect by saying that a leader's follower quickly realises that the best way to acquire influence and secure their position is to exaggerate how much they agree with the opinions of those in charge. Over time, more and more upward communication becomes flattering rather than critical in nature.

Scott (1992) identified a field which he terms a field of 'infrapolitics' which consists of the attempts of subordinates to construct and defend spaces inaccessible to the powerful including a set of social relations not governed by the official rituals while on the other hand in that same field there are attempts by elites to close down those spaces. In the field of 'infrapolitics', there is an attempt by each side to alter the balance of forces and decontest the public transcript in the direction of its own conceptions (Scott, 1992). The level of commitment involved in public performances can only be revealed by comparing them with the backstage which represents the discourse relatively free from those in authority. An analysis based on one aspect of the public transcript creates an imbalance; hence in this study an analysis of the discourse in both the public transcript and the hidden transcript in Pentecostal churches is discussed. Both observations and in-depth interviews were used as the main data collection methods. Documentation was used for triangulation purposes. Use of the different methods of data collection allowed the researcher to view issues from multiple sources and perspective so as to enrich the meaning of a singular perspective. The use of multiple methods adds strength to the findings as the various strands of data are braided together to promote a greater understanding of the case (Baxter & Jack, 2008). The dominance of one method or the other varied depending with the research focus at that particular instance.

Observation

Observations, both participant and non participant, were carried out on founders, pastors and members of the church. This allowed some behaviours and characteristics to be observed which relate to the study. Unlike a survey where behaviour is inferred and respondents report their behaviour, there are good reasons for thinking that such reports may not be entirely accurate (Bryman & Bell, 2003:1776-1777). In order to counteract this shortcoming, the researcher employed the observation method, both the participant and non participant techniques. Observation draws on the direct evidence of the eye to witness events first hand. Observation can be based on the frequency of events, events at a given point in time, duration of events and sample of people. It involves watching but information from sight is supported by that received through our other senses such as hearing. The information from these various senses is usually combined, processed and interpreted in complex ways to form one's observations. Observation aims at the production of public knowledge about specific issues, which can be used by others in a variety of ways. The observation method enabled the researcher to get qualitative description of the behavior of different groups in Pentecostal church settings in relation to

leadership styles exhibited in these churches. The researcher adopted the use of two forms of observation, the non-participant observation and the participant observation. The purpose of the non participant observation is to observe and record what people do in terms of their actions and their behavior without the researcher being involved (Hussey & Hussey, 1997:159).

The participant observation is when the researcher is involved with the research participants and the phenomenon to be studied. Participant observation requires the researcher to be immersed in the field or present in the natural settings where the phenomenon under study takes place and elicit the meanings they attribute to their environment and behavior (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994:72; Bryman & Bell, 2003:315). It revolves around three possibilities; total participation, participation in the normal setting and participation as observer. The suitability for observation depends on the things that need to be observed. The aim of using participant observation is to provide the means of obtaining a detailed understanding of the research participants' perceptions, values, motives and practices on the focus of enquiry. It allowed the researcher to gain rich insights into social processes related to the influence of leadership on Pentecostal churches and the way participants interpret certain events as supported by the hermeneutic approach. There are problems associated with this technique such as the observer bias in interpretation and also the observer may fail to observe some activities. The researcher used both passive and participant observation. The researcher was present at the research sites for some period of time during which data of various sorts was collected. The researcher employed the passive observation approach as an exploratory, filter process before participant observation. The main observation points were on behaviour of the church members, the church routines and the general discussion of the followers after church, conferences, seminars or church meetings. Most church meetings are accessible and open to the public. The passive participant was ongoing throughout the research period but more intense in the initial stages so as to get insights on a number of activities carried out by various Pentecostal churches under study. The researcher was invited to different Pentecostal churches and attended twenty conferences for different Pentecostal churches and as such could use passive observation during such times.

The researcher then adopted the participant observation technique whose purpose was to gather data about behavior through direct contact in terms of specific situations in which the distortions are reduced to a minimum. The study involved the researcher being involved in a number of activities especially under the cases mentioned above. Access was sought from the church founders and other senior leaders before participation. Bryman & Bell (2003), mentioned that in an observation there should be a clear focus which is divided into two. Firstly it should be clear to the observer who or what or both is to be observed and secondly is that the research problem needs to be clearly stated so that the observer knows which of the many things going on in any setting are to be recorded. The observation period was from June 2010 to March 2014. The researcher targeted three major groups in the Pentecostal setting under study; the founders or overseers, the leaders and the members who were observed in terms of their

character, behaviour, activities and the way they relate with each other and with the followers. Apart from observing them in such capacity the researcher would also observe the church context as a whole in terms of events or incidence that take place such as healings, deliverances, salvation, receiving of the Holy Ghost, prosperity messages and giving of tithes and offerings. This notion is supported by Bryman & Bell (2003) whereby incidents can be observed, where the researcher waits for something to happen and then records that and what follows from it. Trying to address the research problem the researcher also made observations of key leadership meetings (leaders' meetings, youth meetings, men's meetings, and ladies' meetings), conferences, seminars and bible school studies. The researcher's behaviour was like any member of the research context.

The researcher gained information that that would not otherwise be divulged from church leaders such as founder members, pastors, deacons, other leaders such as cell (home group) leaders, social welfare leaders and so on and also non leaders such as the followers. The participation provided the researcher with insights into the people's motivations and perspectives. The researcher became in some cases part of the problem solving team which allowed more insight into the interactions of leaders and followers. The researcher was therefore able to participate, observe and collect information with the permission of the founders and the president in the case of the bigger church category. The researcher took field notes during and after the observation as the situation would dictate. These notes contained what had been observed, discussed, heard without interpretation. The field notes were taken using mostly notes as ninety five percent of the churches would not allow any recording using DVDs, Videos, cell phones and tape recording.

In- Depth Interviews

Depth interviews were carried out on founders of the church, leaders and members in order to understand the full process, hidden meanings and the context of the results. This category represents the main decision makers within the Pentecostal churches. The interviews were done in two phases. The interviews were also used for purposes of elaboration and expansion where data analysis may exemplify how patterns based on quantitative data analysis apply in particular cases. It therefore adds to the understanding of the data collected using other instruments. It is important to add at this level that informal interviews were done in an unstructured manner on members of the congregation to assist in a broader understanding of the aspects that were surfacing as the data collection procedure was going on. An interview is a conversation with a meaning (Berg, 1989; 2004; Dexter, 1970 cited in Maykut and Morehouse, 1994:79). The researcher arranged interviews with people whom the researcher believes may add to the understanding of the phenomenon being studied. Interviews gather information on emotions, experiences and feelings. The nature of such emotions, experiences and feelings need to be explored rather than simply reported in a word or two. Investigation of leadership styles may also involve sensitive and in many cases personal issues hence the need of an interview. Sensitive issues call for careful handling and in some cases coaxing in order to get the informant to be open and honest. The researcher used

interviews on leaders of the church who held information that ordinary followers would not have.

A combination semi structured interviews and unstructured interviews were used since the issues discussed, the questions raised and the matters explored change from one interview to the next as different aspects of the topic are revealed (Hussey & Hussey, 1997:156). Interviews are good at producing data which deal with topics in depth and in detail. Subjects can be probed, issues pursued and lines of investigation followed over a relatively lengthy period. The researcher is likely to gain valuable insights based on the depth of the information gathered and the wisdom of key valuable informants. Interviews are a good method for producing data based on informants' priorities, opinions and ideas. The informants have the opportunity to expand their ideas, explain their views and identify what they regard as crucial factors. Information from interviews can also be used to supplement information obtained from other techniques such as observations, surveys and non-verbal reactions (Kumar, 2005). The method itself is flexible allowing for adjustments during interviews. It also requires simple equipment which is easily accessible. Data can be checked for accuracy and relevance as they are collected. The response rate is high as the interviews are pre arranged and they are also therapeutic in nature. The researcher was focusing on leadership styles and leaders are sometimes lonely for many reasons so this gave them a chance to speak to someone without being criticized.

Group pressure is eliminated so that each respondent reveals more honest feelings. The one – one interview situation gives the respondent the feeling of being the focus of attention, whose personal thoughts and feelings are important and genuinely wanted. The closeness of the one – to – one relationship allows the interviewer to become more sensitive to non-verbal feedback. Without the restrictions of cultivating a group process, new directions of questioning can be improvised more easily. Individual interviews allow greater flexibility in exploring casual remarks and tangential issues, which may provide critical insights into the main issue (Saunders et al 2009: 320-323; Bryman & Bell, 2003:341-343). The researcher took into cognizance some of the following problems related to interviews. Analysis of data can be difficult and time-consuming as this requires the transcribing and coding of interview data. Semi-structured and unstructured interviews produce data that are not pre-coded and have relatively open format. The data collected are to an extent, unique owing to the specific context and the specific individuals involved. This has an adverse effect on reliability. The other disadvantage is that data from interviews are based from what people say rather than what they do. The two may not tally. Interviewee statements can be affected by the identity of the researcher. The recording part can be inhibiting to some people. The areas that one may be interviewing on may be so sensitive to such an extent that some subjects may not be free to open up. Finally interviews may be costly to the researcher in terms of the resources that may be needed such as stationery, transport and accommodation and provision of food in some cases. The researcher requested for permission from senior pastors/founders for carrying out interviews. The interviews ranged from structured to unstructured formats using a

question guide where necessary. Structured interviews were used on leaders in order to establish their goals, leadership styles, background of the founder, leadership structure, the number of churches planted and the number of followers they have. In order to get a fairly accurate understanding the researcher would use probes during interview such as detail-oriented probes, elaboration probes and clarification probes where necessary. The researcher used note taking during the interviews. The researcher found this method useful in order to gain the leaders' perspectives on the focus of enquiry of this study. A lot of information was also obtained using informal interviews and regular informal discussions with members, leaders and founders of the Pentecostal churches. At the inception of the study (2010) interviews were carried out on founders. In 2011, 2012 and the first half of 2013 interviews were carried out on members. In 2013 and 2014 interviews were carried out on core members, core leaders and founders. Core leaders are defined as leaders that that are involved in key decision making and strategic plans and the members are those that have been in that same church for at least ten years and were considered as loyal.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results revolved around the four major areas; leadership and leadership styles, mission and vision, tithes and offerings and the discourse on succession.

Leadership and Leadership Styles

Responses from the founders, leaders and the members create a discourse which Scott (1992) explains this in his theory on 'Public and Hidden Transcripts Theory' where he explained the hidden transcript as an indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates. The founders mentioned that if any church has to succeed and even continue after the death of a founder, it has to have good leadership. Some of the founders mentioned an inner circle of leaders who are trustworthy, make strategic decisions together with the founder, are experienced in the running of the church and understand the vision well. This type of leadership core has different names given to it such as apostolic team, Day-to-Day Advisory Board, Hub leaders and Apostolic Council. They mentioned that the leadership team needs to understand their (the founders') vision and be able to implement that in their branches. It was noted that the churches under study have a number of branches locally and internationally with the biggest church leading. As the researcher was interacting with the various leaders it was observed and noted that they all have titles that relate to their job descriptions such as care pastor who may be involved in caring for people, visiting them; then Sunday school pastor dealing with Sunday school, youth pastor taking care of the youth.

The pastors that are under the founder are also given titles in line with the places where they are based for example the Harare pastor, the Botswana pastor, the London pastor and the list goes on and on. The founders mentioned that in order for them to have a strong leadership they hold regular meetings, conferences and visit the different branches regularly. The founder of the big 2 church category interviewed in Bulawayo on 13 December 2012 put it this way, "As a leader I don't just sit and watch my leaders working. I have to plan ahead, hold

leadership meetings regularly where I always impart the spirit that is in me, the vision that I am carrying. If a leader does not meet his leaders regularly error sets in and that clearly destroys a church. My teachings are in line with the vision that I am carrying so that the leaders carry the same DNA, the DNA of this particular house." The bigger church responded to the same question by saying, "The DNA is passed through the different departments in all our churches starting from Sunday school up to the adults. We have teachings for all departments that align to our DNA. We also use peer-to-peer training and mentoring which ensures the crucial ethos of the church are passed down" (Interviewed on 30 January 2014 in Bindura).

Seminars on leadership are held regularly and the founders sometimes invite guest speakers in line with what he would want his leaders taught. The researcher attended some of the meetings, leadership seminars and conferences. It was noted that such meetings are not normally optional since the founder would want all his pastors whom he calls 'sons' to be with him and hear the founder called 'the father' or 'the visionary' speak 'words of wisdom to his sons'. This the founders said is very important as they need to keep in touch and just like in any home discuss issues intimately and correct issues where it's necessary before anything goes out of hand. The researcher observed that in the meetings the various pastors present reports from their centres as a way of feedback which are discussed openly and the pastors are free to ask question from the founder or any other pastors. The meetings are normally chaired by the founder and in their absence the wife chairs the meeting or any other leader that the founder asks to do so. The founders also mentioned that their wives play an important role in the effective running of the church. The researcher observed that the wives of the founders are very active in church activities in the day-to-day running of the church. The wives attended the meetings and normally sat next to their husbands in front of the people or pastors' meeting that the husband was chairing. The founders highlighted that they encourage their leaders that are married to function together with their wives so that they won't be any gap created between them. The wives of the founders are the ones that run the ladies ministries which are part of the church. The founders believed that such settings address issues of succession as by carrying out such activities they are at the same time grooming future leaders. The leaders that support the founders and the members also highlighted the aspect of conferences and of guest speakers and they also mentioned that these conferences were crucial for their spiritual growth. Upon being asked on the issue of leadership styles of the founders the following were some of the responses:

The only thing that I can say is that they are leaders that hear from God and they also live in luxury. I think there is need of balance so that the church won't die when the leader dies or is too old. (Interviewed in Masvingo on 3 March 2011). I am not sure what your status in church is because what you are asking me as a leader is quite sensitive but let me be honest with you on the issue of leadership. The founders themselves want to believe that they practice servant leadership and ask us to address them that way and we do, what can we do? But truly speaking they are not! Look at the things that they emphasise, contrary to what Jesus would emphasise and

generally their lifestyle. Can this be sustainable for a church? What if one day they are no longer there? I have said it all, thank you (Interviewed in Bulawayo on 23 October 2011).

I find our leaders to be quite good. On the issue of leadership styles I would want to see the servant leadership being practised more than what is currently happening. Maybe leaders shy away from practising it because it does not bring popularity to them but look at Jesus Christ and I think He should always be our model especially us Pentecostals With this current state of affairs in the church I just wonder whether our churches will stand the taste of time like the mainline churches. I love the Pentecostal churches but I would love to see more issues being addressed on issues of continuity so that succession will not cause problems in the future. (Interviewed in Harare on 5 December 2011).

The results show that there is a strong discourse among the founders, general leaders and members of the congregation. This discourse according to Scott (1992) portray the discourse that takes place 'offstage', beyond direct observation by power holder, which he calls the hidden transcript.

Mission and Vision Statements

Although most of the members, including some of the leaders such as pastors, elders and deacons, agree that the mission and vision statements exist, they are not clear as to what the mission and vision say. The researcher attended one of the leadership meetings of the big2 church in Bulawayo in September 2013 where the founder's wife posed a question to all the leaders to tell her the mission and vision of the church. It was evident that the leaders were not sure about the mission and vision as only one person raised his hand to try. The founders expect that everyone in their church know the mission and vision of the church. The discussion by Scott (1992) on the hidden and public transcript explains such a discourse. According to Scott (1992), these hidden transcripts represent discourse that is ordinarily excluded from the public transcript of subordinates by the exercise of power. The hidden transcript is an indifferent guide to the opinion of subordinates (Scott, 1992). Tactical prudence ensures that subordinate groups rarely blurt out their hidden transcript directly. Public transcripts are the dominant expected discourse between the dominant class and the subordinates to maintain order (Reiff, 2010:1). According to Scott (1992) the public performance of the subordinate will be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful. It was observed that the mission and vision statements are not clearly displayed on strategic positions in church where everyone has access.

Secondly, very little is said from the pulpit concerning or about the mission and vision of the church. It was also noted that a number of those that seemed to have a fair idea of the mission and vision had their own private views concerning the mission and vision of the church which agrees with Scott (1992)'s public and hidden transcript whereby the subordinate who puts on performance in order to appease the dominant and uphold the expected discourse, maintaining expected stereotypes (Reiff, 2010). The discourse came out clearly especially from some members who know the mission and

vision but see it as something the church is not really following but such issues cannot be discussed openly as pointed out by the following respondents:

The mission and vision is there and I agree with that but the question is, 'Are we still in line with that?' For me the church has since diverted from that. Initially, and I was there when we started this church we would reach out to those that are disadvantaged, one way or the other, but now my sister it's not like that. I will tell you frankly that now the church has a different agenda and would rather have the rich to fulfill those agenda. This is very clear in church circles (Respondent 1: from big 1 category interviewed on 12/09/11).

I like our mission and vision, it sounds powerful. However I think in our environment it has proved a challenge for the leaders especially to adhere to the mission and vision. Every time I re-visit the mission and vision of this church I am surprised because it seems we are taking completely the opposite route. These missions and visions sound good on paper but reality is quite different (Respondent 1: from big 2 category interviewed on 22/09/11).

I know the mission and vision. Our founders practice that but some of the leaders have diverted and because of the size church it is difficult for the founders to manage every one of their pastors. So for me I see that the problem is not with the founders but some of us leaders who now have their own versions of the mission and vision in order to suit us at our assemblies. All I am trying to say is that the mission and vision of the church should be the driving force of our service but this is not necessarily the case. I am a leader and what I am saying is real and rampant not only in my church but across Pentecostal churches. These things are not easy to discuss openly (Respondent 3: from the biggest church category interviewed on 19/10/11).

However the founders themselves understand the mission and vision statements. This can be attributed to the fact that they are the ones who crafted the mission and vision statements. In discussing with people especially members; they seem to think that the mission and vision statement are meant for leaders such as the founders and pastors.

Tithes and Offerings

While it is an accepted norm within Pentecostal churches that members should give 10% of their income as tithes and free offering usually in the form of money though this applies to any resources. When asked on tithing the hidden transcript has a discourse that does not agree with the leadership on tithing and therefore the lower percentage on tithing. However it was observed that nearly all leaders believe in tithes and offerings. The majority of people that disagree with this church principle are among the members and this can be attributed to their levels of understanding of this concept. It was also observed that teachings were carried out in order to close the gap.

Discourse on Succession Issues

The question on succession plan was referred to founders by most leaders and those that tried to address the issue seemed

not knowledgeable on the subject and the majority was not willing to discuss this issue. The issue of succession plan was sensitive and could not be discussed openly. Some even asked the researcher to withdraw that question as it 'sounded unbiblical'. However the researcher then asked the same question to the founders and put it this way, "*If something was to happen to you such as an illness or even death would the church continue?*" to which the answer was a definite yes. When the researcher then asked who will be able to run the church as they have done and whether they were grooming someone, the response given by most of the founders were vague and not conclusive with some evasive on the question. Though most of the churches have constitutions (some which are quite recent, as recent as 2013), the issues of succession plan is still something that will be tested in due course especially when the founders are no more.

The researcher managed to get two copies of the constitutions from two Pentecostal churches under the case study. From the interviews and the constitutions the succession plans were presented in different angles. Some said they have a father-son relationship so the discussion of succession plan is never discussed as this is considered disrespectful of the father. In the other church category the son was mentioned as the successor. One of the recently (2013) done constitution reads as follows on issues of succession plan: *The spouse of the Apostle (founder) shall take over the position in cases where the position falls vacant by any other reason. In the case of death, the surviving spouse of the Apostle shall succeed the deceased. In case the spouse cannot take the position, the Apostolic Team shall make a determination as to who shall take over the position.* The bigger church category led by a non-founder uses a voting system to elect a leader after every five years from among the Apostolic Council Members who are ordained Pastors. Such a person's minimum age should be fifty years old and the retirement age sixty five years. The founder of the small 1 church category, said *the succession plan is purely in the hands of God, as God is the employer (interviewed on 18/01/2014).*

In Pentecostal circles the issue of succession plan is shrouded with rumours, gossip and unspoken languages. Some of the founders fear the consequences of appointing a successor as this may cause divisions in the church. Others as the findings indicated believe that God is the one in charge over such issues of succession and God will direct the leadership of the church as to who should rule. This belief in divine government called Theocracy can lead to the dark side of transformational leadership (Tourish, 2013). When individuals are asked on this they quickly say we do not know but when approached individually or within their circle of friends they know who the leader's successor is though it has not been publicly discussed. The social knowledge of the members or followers has a different interpretation from that of the leaders. In other word the modes of discourse employed publicly differs from the one behind the scenes as discussed by Scott (1992) using the public and hidden transcripts theory. The public conformity of subordinates in such situations does not reflect an inner consent. There is a clear discourse among the members, leaders and the founders. Most members have no formal knowledge about the succession plan within their

church. They have not heard the issue being discussed. However within their own circles they have their own knowledge as to who will succeed the founder when he dies. This knowledge is amongst them only and not passed to anyone in leadership or anyone whom they consider a threat. The hidden transcript consists of offstage speeches, gestures and practices that confirm contradict or inflect what appears in the public transcript (Scott, 1992). This is where the subordinates can explore a different viewpoint. Within the leadership they brush this question aside and the majority of them referred this matter to the founder. However amongst the leaders they have their own understanding of the succession plan which is not formal or written anyway neither did they get that from the founder. Others came to a conclusion through deduction. The following responses clearly bring out the discourse on succession:

I have not seen anything on succession plan however many of us know who will take the senior post. You can tell that by the way the founder treats his leaders and we know who the favourite is. That is the person who will take over, that's all I can say (Respondent 1 from big 1 church category interviewed on 14/09/2011). That issue is not discussed at all. I guess within church circles you cannot discuss succession plan. This is a church, maybe a company that's where you discuss and things are written down. Maybe the leaders know, I don't know. To be honest with you I am not so worried about that because one is free to move from one church to another if you are not happy. So if something happens to the founder and is no longer able to lead I am free to find another church should chaos erupt in this church. I really don't know what's going to happen if the founder dies but this is taboo especially in our culture to talk about someone's death. Let's just leave it (Respondent 2 from a member 1 church category interviewed on 11/11/2011).

We do not talk about succession when the father is still alive. The person given the vision knows and is in control. We are sons and we respect our father and it is up to the father to discuss that matter should he want to but for now it's not spoken of. We have a father-son-relationship where the father is the decision maker. I cannot dismiss the aspect that there are many who are already jostling for such a position should it arise. Personally I think after the founder is gone there are a number of issues that will need to be addressed in terms of succession and since we do not have a guideline at the moment, should something happen it will be what they call crisis management. Succession, very difficult to talk about lest you are labeled a rebel yet very important at least at leadership level (Respondent 3, a leader from small 1 church interviewed on 20/12/12).

The issue of succession plan is surrounded with gossip, rumours and unspoken languages and gestures as pointed out by Scott (1992)'s public and hidden transcript theory. There is a sharp discourse between the accepted norm on succession and the hidden aspect on succession. According to Scott (1992) this is an 'offstage' phenomenon where individuals discuss among themselves on the same issue but in a different dimension because they are not in the spot light of those in authority. The founders are careful on the issue of succession because the aim for them is to see the vision being perpetuated

and not dying. It is therefore a delicate issue where they need a lot of time and prayer before they can document something.

As one founder from the big church puts it, *“People are people, very complex. Today you think this one can run with the vision tomorrow you see the same person messes up which can destroy the whole church and one’s vision. This issue is delicate. What one can consider safe at the moment is to put a wife or children. Most wives know how the vision was birthed and in most cases she is the co-founder. Fair isn’t it? As I said this is not so easy to tackle (10 December 2013).*

Criteria Used to Evaluate the Analysis

Lincoln and Guba (1985 cited in Hussey & Hussey, 1997:271) suggested four criteria that a researcher can use to evaluate and assess the quality of an analysis under a phenomenological study. The suggested criteria being credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Leininger (1994 cited in Hussey & Hussey, 1997: 271) developed six criteria that can be used to evaluate and assess the quality of an analysis. The six criteria are credibility, confirmability, transferability, saturation, meaning-in-context and recurrent patterning. Credibility is when the subject of enquiry is correctly identified and described (Hussey & Hussey, 1997). Data was collected over a period of two and a half years with the researcher making observations, collecting documents and interviewing the relevant target group. This also allowed the meaning-in-context to data and recurrent patterning of participants’ experiences, events and expressions which can only be observed over time.

Transferability is when findings can be applied to another situation which is sufficiently similar to permit generalization (*ibid*). A case study of six Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe was undertaken which is representative enough to allow generalisation of Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. A systematic approach was used in the research process and the findings flow from the collection of the data which agrees with the issues of dependability and confirmability. Saturation is concerned with the researcher being fully immersed and understanding the project (*ibid*). The researcher is part of the project in that prior, during and after the study, she has been part of Pentecostalism firstly ten years as a member then fifteen years in leadership position hence the interest in the study of the influence of leadership styles in Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. Respondent validity was obtained by discussing the findings from the analysis with the participants; founders, overseers, leaders and members that had participated in the study in order to obtain their reactions and opinions (Hussey & Hussey, 1997).

Conclusion

The question on succession plan seemed very sensitive and met with evasive answers from the founders themselves. Only two out of the six churches interviewed were clear on issues of succession plan and this was supported by documentation. Bieschke (2006) in his study concluded that 94% of organizations have no succession plan. It is not clear to most leaders to find a person whom they can groom for next leadership should they die. It also seems difficult for them to

divulge that information as they feel that the issue may cause division within the church.

The issue of succession is not something that is easily embraced and yet a reality. According to Collins and Porras (2002), the continuity of capable senior leadership is considered paramount. The researcher found out that the Pentecostal churches are reluctant to discuss such issues for fear of division in the church, uncertainty that surrounds the founder as to who can best succeed them, the fear that someone may prematurely terminate their vision and also they are not sure as to go about grooming a successor. This becomes one of the major weaknesses of Pentecostals because should anything happen to their leader, either illness or death. This may result in the deterioration of the church, power struggles and in some cases closure of the church because of a leadership gap. Collins and Porras (2002) indicate that the continuity of quality leadership matter – continuity that preserves the core which they broke down as core ideology (enduring character, self identity), core values (essential and enduring tenets, guiding principles) and core purpose (organization’s fundamental reason for being/existence). The issue of succession is quite challenge to most Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe and the question by Bieshke (2006); *If a key leader position was unexpectedly vacated by death, disability or disqualification, who is ready to assume that position?* In the current study the key leader position being that of the founder. According to Mkwanazi, talking of succession especially in Pentecostals is taboo and treasonous. He went further to say the explosions are delayed until the death of the all powerful Spiritual Leader (Nyathi, 2013). The major challenge facing most Pentecostals in Zimbabwe is whether the church is built around an individual or is an independent institute that has people that come and serve and provide health continuity. The issue of succession has created a secret discourse amongst Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. Scott (1992), pointed out that the subordinates [in this case the members of the church] create a secret discourse that represents a critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant while at the same time the powerful [in this study being the founders and their core leadership] develop a private dialogue about practices and goals of their rule that cannot be openly avowed.

There are contradictions and in some cases tensions as revealed in the hidden transcripts of both members and leaders According to Scott (1992), subordinate groups instead create a secret discourse that represents a critique of power spoken behind the backs of the dominant and at the same time, the powerful also develop a private dialogue about practices and goals of their rule that cannot be openly avowed. The discourse among the founders, leaders that support the work of the founders (such as bishops, pastors, elders and deacons) and the followers brought a clear understanding of its effect on the various activities and policies within Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe. The study established that the discourse on the public and hidden transcripts was quite evident on issues of leadership styles, mission and vision, tithing and succession plan. The acceptable norm which is shared by those in leadership is that everyone should know about the mission and vision but the hidden transcript is not so, in other words behind the scenes it is a different story. Offstage where

subordinates gather outside the eye of their leaders a different picture is portrayed (Scott, 1992). In Pentecostal circles the issue of succession plan is shrouded with rumours, gossip and unspoken languages. When individuals are asked on this they quickly say we do not know but when approached individually or within their circle of friends they know who the leader's successor is though it has not been publicly discussed. The social knowledge of the members or followers has a different interpretation from that of the leaders. In other word the modes of discourse employed publicly differs from the one behind the scenes. The public conformity of subordinates in such situations does not reflect an inner consent. One can therefore conclude that for most Pentecostal churches in Zimbabwe, talking of succession is taboo, treasonous and the explosions are delayed until after the death of the all powerful Spiritual Leader (Nyathi, 2013:314).

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