

Factors affecting church members retention in the Texas Conference of Seventh-Day Adventists

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Problem

The ability to retain its membership post baptism appears to be a great challenge for the Seventh-day Adventist church. Several studies have revealed that one out of every three neophytes leave the church post baptism. This empirical model hypothesizes that transformational leadership, culture, church programs and evangelism are factors that can predict members' retention post baptism at the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventist Church in Alvarado, Texas, USA.

Methodology

The research was empirical quantitative, descriptive, exploratory, explanatory and transversal. The study population was made up of 175 church members in the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists in Alvarado, Texas, USA. A 103 items questionnaire was used to collect the data for this study. The instrument was delivered and administered in person to the participants. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach alpha estimates for reliability, factor analysis, correlation analysis and multiple regression techniques were utilized to examine and analyse the effect of the four variables transformational leadership, culture, church ministry programs, and evangelism on the members' retention. The substantive statistical process was based on regression analysis, performed in SPSS 22.0

The constructs for the four instruments used were done through factorial analysis techniques (with explained variance levels of over 67 %, which are acceptable) and the reliability, measured with the Cronbach alpha coefficient for each instrument, was acceptable (with the lowest explained variance

levels of .807). For the analysis of this hypothesis, the statistical technique of multiple linear regression was used.

Results

The model was validated with the sample of church members of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. Transformational leadership, church ministry program and culture are good predictors of church members' retention, according to the perception of the church members of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. When evaluating the influence of independent constructs through the standardized beta coefficients, it was found that the best predictor is church ministry programs, followed by transformational leadership, and culture.

Conclusion

It is recommended to the administration of the Texas Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to pay attention to the following variables transformational leadership, church ministry programs as well as evangelism as they plan for the year, they should incorporate program that will continuously promote these factors. Additionally, local church pastors as well as local church leaders should establish plan and activities that they put emphasis on these factors as they train and equip church members in this various areas that have a direct impact on the retention of the neophytes post baptism. These constructs transformational leadership, church ministry programs and culture prove to be good predictors of members' retention.