

Factors Affecting Political Participation among Pentecostal Church Leaders in Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

Leadership operates globally with explicit power to influence people in the dynamic context of society, including state politics, church relationships, and social events. Despite the scope of leadership, Pentecostal church leaders show less propensity of political participation for unknown reasons, especially in African countries. The current study, therefore, aims to ascertain the factors that influence political participation of Pentecostal church leaders in Ethiopia in August 2020. The study has included six Pentecostal churches using a cross-sectional study design and quantitative data analysis of 376 randomly selected individual participants. Data were entered into Epiinfo software and transported to SPSS version 23.0 for analysis.

Accordingly, the average age of the study participants were 32.9 (SD ± 8.3) years, and most of them (63.3%) holding a priest title in the church. More than 60% of study participants acknowledged the importance of political participation in influencing leadership, supporting evangelism, honing socio-economic development, and crafting life satisfaction. The rest proportion suggested that political participation promotes conflict in the church and causes a financial crisis. During the determinant analysis of the propensity of political participation, the female gender (AOR=0.5, 95%CI (0.26, 0.91), *P*-value=0.02) and sharing a priest title in the church (AOR=0.4, 95%CI (0.23, 0.78), *P*=0.01) were found to outlaw political participation. However, being sectarianism (AOR=3.6, 95%CI

(1.39, 9.59), P-value=0.01) and higher monthly income (AOR=7.3, 95%CI (1.12, 45.71), P-value=0.01) were recognized as consoling variables for political participation in the area. Generally, the political participation of Pentecostal church leaders in the study region enralls sectarians and people of higher economic class; however, ignores females and church servants. Therefore, it demands the local state and the church to create a comprehensive and inclusive political situation.

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is a long-term process that influences people to achieve the goals of a group or organization in which followers recognize the rights of leaders to make specific decisions [1-3]. The power of leadership is evident everywhere in the dynamic context of society. Leadership shares similarities in human behavior, social law, psychological law, and organizational law that are rooted in creation and apply to all institutions, including the church, a unique creature in which Christ and the Spirit reside [4-6]. Leadership is not a favorite, but it does change times, issues, technologies, and people. In every way, leaders encourage people and organizations to move from their current position to places that did not exist before and they are needed to step up and take a charge [7,8]. Leaders inspire people to work differently, fight uncertain opportunities, and work toward the fog of a better future. Without leadership, there would be no exceptional efforts needed to solve existing problems and make them come true [3]. These leadership exercises are not the private property of the people studied by the researchers and do not belong to some selected shining stars. Leadership is not about someone. It's about what to do with the sphere leaders participate [1,9]. In a similar sense, church leaders are expected to participate in state politics with variable degrees at national, regional, or locality [10]. Political participation means that a person knows his or her opinions and beliefs and engages in the political process legally or illegally. Currently, the concept of political participation has become very common in everyday public discourse. From the Propensity of globalized world, political participation was ascribed the heart of modern democracy that further enhances balanced socio-economic growth and human development though it could inversely subsidizes the quality of democracy as reported in European countries. In different countries again, political participation showed an effective role in corruption control even though leadership bases on the skill of leaders whether to be constructive or destructive [11-17].

Reports of international outlets indicate that population who participate in political processes, hold the state to account, and exercise rights and responsibilities or democracy or balanced socio-economic growth and human development. In Lithuania, a study report of 2006 concludes political participation to influence economic inequality and insecurity among different groups of the population where a state with a high level of conventional participation could lead to an on-going demographic change [18-20]. Participation from the civil society offers more individual freedom and self-determination and contributes to the feeling of efficacy among citizens in Australia. Similarly the study conducted in Latin America indicates people of political participants to have more satisfaction with their lives and to have impact on the system of the country in European countries [21-23]. Political participation has also shown a positive relationship with governance effectiveness in terms of government effectiveness, control of corruption, and especially, the political management of developing and transforming countries [16]. In South Africa, researchers defined the Pentecostal church to be more effective in its evangelical voice, speaking to those who guide its citizens through political power. Subsequently, they declare that "If you would like to explore new evangelism paradigms and effective models for outreach, learn more about a new Leadership Community opportunity" [10,24]. As to this, some countries including Ethiopia consider religions as part of modernization and sense to manage them in

different approaches, namely upgrading, enslavement, cooptation, and repression [8]. Another study conducted in Ethiopia also identified a protestant church that made a significant contribution to modernization (unintentionally) and the churches also ultimately helped the state's effort towards social transformation [25].

Different studies reflect different factors to have an association with political participation. A study report in Jordan by Mohamed in 2019 indicates the linkage between gender, age, family income, and regional affiliation and local politics. The researcher further concludes that the tendency of participation shifts towards male gender and high income leaders. Whereas another study claims as people with high income cost their time in business and participate less in politics. On the other hand, the analysis of 55 countries on the Religiosity and attitudes towards the involvement of religious leaders in politics indicates good participation of leaders in politics [26-29]. But the relationship between Christianity and politics, that need clearly distinct principles, is a complex subject and a frequent source of disagreement throughout the history of Christianity. In some countries including Ethiopia, states show an attempt to assimilate some churches or their principle into their prestige [30-32].

Given the lack of consolidated studies on the political status of propensity and related leadership issues among Pentecostal churches in the previous review, the researchers in this study have conducted the joint assessment. In addition, some limitations from previous studies should be noted. First, most of the studies have been done in Western countries and few in developing countries. Due to differences in lifestyle, economy, particular politics and culture, the results obtained in Western countries may not be applicable to the African population in general, and to Ethiopians in particular. Second, if participation includes level-specific questions, then religious research generally does not focus on the existing leadership. Hence, this study aimed to determine the contemplation and factors of political participation in Ethiopia among Pentecostal churches in the city of Jimma.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Oromia National Regional State particularly at Jimma town which is located at 357 Km Southwest of Addis Ababa, capital city of the country. The study included different Pentecostal church pastors/Bishops, elders, deacons and household heads as they are the most common decision makers/leaders of the Pentecostal church. A cross-sectional study design was organized for quantitative data collection and analysis for participants of effected inclusion criteria. The sample size was determined using the single population proportion formula taking 50% estimated prevalence of political participation for Pentecostal church leaders in Ethiopian politics, 95% confidence, 5% margin of error, and non-response rate of 10% that produced a total of 384 participants for final study. After decision of sample size, a multi-stage sampling technique was employed to the select study subjects. Six churches were randomly selected, and the number of participants from each church were determined and allocated by population proportionate rate. After allocation of proportionate to size, the study subjects were selected by simple random sampling. As a study variable the Propensity of Pentecostal church leaders on Political participation (Important or not Important) were taken a dependent while four variables of different categories were used an independent. The independent variable included socio-demographic characteristics, faith characteristics, and leadership characteristics of the church, and effects of political participation.

Data were coded and entered into Epiinfo software and transported to SPSS version 23.0 software for analysis. After getting the overview of the data, simple binary logistic regression was fitted for each explanatory variable, and those candidate variables with $p < 0.25$ were simultaneously fitted in multiple logistic regressions to get AORs with

95% CIs to identify factors associated with political participation status ($p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant for final report). The questionnaire was prepared initially in English, translated to local languages Afar Oromo and Amharic, and retranslated to English by another person, who was blind to the original questionnaire, for consistency check. A pre-test of the questionnaire was made on 5% of each category at different church (out of the study churches, but share similar socio-demographic and religion characteristics with the study area) and take corrective actions accordingly by investigatory team. Following confirmed quality check of the questionnaire, orientation training was given by principal investigators for 6 data collectors and 2 supervisors. Completeness, accuracy, clarity and consistency of every filled questionnaire were checked by the supervisors on daily basis. Finally, data cleaning and exploration was conducted before the end data analysis using computer software. The implementation of the study was carried out after getting approval from the ethical clearance committee of Grace Graduate School (Ref no GTC23/2020). An official letter of collaboration and permission request to each church was obtained from Department of Leadership. Every participant was provided full information including withdrawal possibility if indicated and finally a written consent was granted for those fixed participation.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants

Presents the socio-demographic characteristics of 376 quantitative study participants to which the male gender accounted for 270 (71.8%), and the mean age was calculated 32.9 (SD \pm 8.3) with 345(91.8%) of them being urban residents. The majority of, 307(81.6%), of the respondents, were married, and the Oromo Ethnic group was reported as the dominant group (172, 45.7%) in the area followed by Yemi ethnic group that accounted for 53(14.1%). Two hundred seventy-four (72.9%) of respondents were succeeded in education above 12 with 51 (13.6%) and 13 (3.5%) respondents to be the owners of the second cycle and Illiterate ties respectively. Regarding occupation, an employee group contributed 249(66.2%) with 49(13%) merchants, 37 (9.8%) daily laborer, 31(8.2%) student, and the remaining few proportions composed of housewives and farmers. Eighty (21.3%) respondents were represented from Mulu wongel (MW), 77(20.5%) from Mekane Yesus (MY), 72(19.1%) from Meserete Kiristos (MK), 72(19.1%) from Hiwot Berhan (HB), 41(10.9%) from Amanuel and 34(9.0%) from Gent churches from which a total of 238 (63.3%) having priest title in the church (Table 1).

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants.

S.No	Variable	Categories	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Gender	Male	270	71.8
		Female	106	28.2
2	Residence	Urban	345	91.8
		Rural	31	8.2
3	Age in years	<18	20	5.3
		18-64	356	94.7
4	Marital stratus	Married	307	81.6
		Unmarried	69	18.4
5	Ethnic group	Oromo	172	45.7
		Yemi	53	14.1
		Dawuro	51	13.6
		Amhara	40	10.6
		Don't want to specify	27	7.2
6	Level of education	Other*	33	8.8
		Illiterate	13	3.5
		Read and write only	15	4
		First cycle(1-8)	23	6.1
		Second cycle (9-12)	51	13.6
7	Occupation	above12	274	72.9
		Government/NGO	249	66.2
		employee		
		Merchant	49	13
		Daily laborer	37	9.8
		Student	31	8.2
		House wife	6	1.6
7	Participants' church	Farmer	4	1.2
		Mulu wongel	80	21.3
		Mekane Yesus	77	20.5
		Meserete Kiristos	72	19.1
		Hiwot Berhan	72	19.1
		Amanuel	41	10.9
Genet	34	9		
8	Priest title in the church	Yes	238	63.3
		No	138	36.7
9	Monthly income	0-5000 ETB	214	56.9
		5001-9999 ETB	118	31.4
		10000-14999 ETB	19	5.1
		≥ 15000 ETB	25	6.6

The average monthly income of the included participants was 4847.3 (SD ± 4538.2) ETB, earning more than half (56.9%) of the 0-5000 ETB range, and only 25 (6.6%) of the participants reached 15,000 ETB per month (see Table 1). Of the participants who reported the importance of participation (62.5%); 101 (43.0%) of them supported the importance to influence leadership toward democratization and modernization, 82(34.9%) to effecting evangelical voice speaking to those who guide their citizens through political power, 33(14.0%) to support the socio-economic

development and 19(8.1%) to ensure life satisfaction. Of the total respondents who reflected political participation as unimportant, the majority or 24.1% of them thought-out as it would be a means of calling conflicts into churches. The other four compartmented reasons for not participate in politics were reported because of mutual exclusiveness (22.0%) and mission independence (20.6%) of politics and Christianity. The rest 17.7% were responded as political participation challenges a missionary and 15.6% explodes financial crisis as a reason (Table 2).

Table 2. The Political propensity and contemplation of participants (N=376).

S.No	Variable Categories	Frequencies	Percentages	Remarks
1	Political participation is important for	(n=235)		
	Influence of leadership	101	43	
	Help in evangelism	82	34.9	
	Socio-economic development	33	14	
	Life satisfaction	19	8.1	
2	Political participation is not important	(n=141)		
	Calling conflict into a church	34	24.1	
	Mutually exclusive discipline	31	22	
	Independent mission	29	20.6	
	Obstacle to priest mission	25	17.7	
	Financial crisis	22	15.6	

Twenty-one variables were independently entered into variable logistic regression and some of them such as gender, priest title of respondents in the church, situations in the church and monthly income were associated with political status of respondent at p -value < 0.25 . Particularly female gender (P -value = 0.00), taking priest title in the church (p -value=0.00), leadership deceit (p -value=0.01), Poor participatory decision making (p -value=0.03), sectarianisms (p -VALUE=0.11), different ranges of income (5001-9999 ETB, P -value=0.01*, 10000-14999 ETB (p -value= 0.05 and ≥ 15000 ETB (P -value=0.00) Have verified the association (Table 3).

Thereafter, all variables of P -value <0.25 in the bivariate analysis were simultaneously entered into the multivariate analysis for backward logistic regression. For the total variables entered the regression model, four variables have upheld a statistical significance at the level of $P<0.05$. Accordingly, female gender (AOR=0.5, 95%CI (0.26,0.91), P value=0.02), having priest title in church (AOR=0.4, 95%CI(0.23,0.78), $P=0.01$), Sectarianisms (AOR=3.6, 95%CI(1.39,9.59), P -value=0.01) and monthly income(AOR=7.3,95%CI(1.12, 45.71), P -value=0.01) were identified as independent variables of political status of the respondents (Table 3). These outcome results indicate that the odds of being participating in politics for females is 0.5 times (AOR=0.5, 95% CI: 0.26, 0.91; $P< 0.02$) lower than that of males or the tendency of political participation in females is 50% less likely than male participation. Similarly, if an individual has a specified priest title in the church, there exists that he/she wills 0.4 times (AOR=0.4, 95%CI: 0.23-0.78, P -value=0.01) or 60% less likely to participate in politics than the one with no similar title in the church. Thirdly, a church that manifests sectarianism is 3.6 times (AOR=7.3, 95%CI (1.39, 9.59), P -value=0.01) more likely to participate in politics than a church with a Leadership crisis, Leadership deceit, Poor participatory decision making or Culture and tradition practitioners (Table 3). Finally, an individual with a monthly income of \geq

15000 ETB has 7.3 times (AOR=7.3, 95%CI (1.12, 45.71), P-value=0.01) more tendency to participate in politics than their counterparts earning lower than 15,000 ETB monthly.

Table 3. Factors associated propensity of participants political participation (N=376). (**Note:** P value<0.25 and significant **statistically significant at P value<0.05).

S.No	Variable Categories	Political		Total	Bivariable analysis		Multivariable analysis	
		participant	Not		P-value	COR(95%CI)	P-value	AOR(95%CI)
1	Gender							
	Female	51	55	106	0.00*	2.3(1.45, 3.65)	0.02**	0.5(0.26-0.91)
	Male	184	86	270	0	1	0	1
2	Priest title in church							
	Yes	169	69	238	0.0*	0.4(0.24, 0.58)	0.01**	0.4(0.23, 0.78)
	No	66	72	138	0	1	0	1
3	Most observed problems in the church							
	Leadership crisis	59	37	96	0	1	0	1
	Leadership deceit	60	45	105	0.10*	1.8(0.89, 3.64)	0.07	2.3(0.95, 5.71)
	Poor participatory decision making	42	27	69	0.03*	2.2(1.11, 4.23)	0.05	2.4(0.99, 6.04)
	Sectarianisms	28	16	44	0.11*	1.8(0.88, 3.90)	0.01**	3.6(1.39, 9.59)
	Culture and tradition	46	16	62	0.25	1.6(0.71, 3.80)	0.34	1.6(0.57, 4.50)
4	Monthly income							
	0-5000 ETB	129	85	214	0	1	0	1

	5001-9999 ETB	79	39	118	0.01*	4.8(1.40, 16.64)	0.03	4.7 (1.00, 19.00)
	10000-14999 ETB	5	14	19	0.05*	3.6(3.62, 12.84)	0.04	4.7(1.00, 20.70)
	≥ 15000 ETB	22	3	25	0.00*	20.5(4.2, 99.73)	0.01**	7.3(1.12, 45.71)

DISCUSSION

The current study executed a quantitative data analysis collected through survey from church leaders to recognize the propensity and contemplation of local political participation and their associated factors. Participants of different socio-demographic characteristics and different affiliations with their church were randomly assessed for the articulated results. The current study revealed the situation at ground and the studied churches were explored for their political contemplation and the majority (62.5%) of the respondents were underlined the inevitability of political participation [23]. This result goes with the statement of Orthodox Church in Ethiopia but contradicts study results of the majorities of protestant churches [25]. With the participation, influencing leadership, evangelical support, socio- economic development and life satisfaction are considered as some of the coming privileges following political participation. In contrast fewer groups nominate political participation as source of conflict, mutually exclusive discipline, independent mission, obstacle to priest mission and cause of financial crisis. This idea varies across studies and greatly among individuals. It agrees with international outlets, Lithonia and Australian study results that declare political participation to ensure rights and responsibilities or democracy exercise or balanced socio-economic growth and human development, economic inequality and insecurity influence among different groups of the population, freedom and self-determination of individual, efficacy among citizens and modernization [8.18-20].

Similarly, reports in Latin America and European countries supports the current result on importance of political participation to convey life satisfaction [22,23]. The results also share similarity with the study in South Africa that ensured political participation to help evangelism to be more effective in its mission and life satisfaction [10]. The variability of the results could be the level of individual leaders understanding for -the one will of God for all people, salvation and incorporation into the people of God. Territorial nations and their governments are limited in their ability to do the will of God because they rely on violence, at least as a last resort, and because they try to place them in God's place. However, a government that acts impartially and maintains order is better than anarchy or unjust, oppressive government. In this state, church leaders must bear witness to the state and ask it to act in accordance with high values or standards, while less than God expects the church to do, it can bring the state closer to God's will is. Christians are responsible to witness to governments not only because of their citizenship in a particular country, but also in order to reflect Christ's compassion for all people and to proclaim Christ's lordship over all human institutions without belonging to the world (John 17:14-19) to manage secular world. For the dualistic personality Christian could manifest they should view the world dualistically, spiritual aspect and the opposite sphere. The bible highlights on support of this as "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" in matthew 22:17-21. Otherwise "We must obey God rather than men" said Act 5:59. When past success begins to wane, explore new paradigms for effective evangelism including politics [24]. To

this end we can conclude that church rely on Holy Spirit guidance, whereas the state depends largely on its philosophical and political knowledge for its survival. It is therefore arguable wish, now that the church also exists within an unredeemed world and is consequentially imperfect; conferring the existence of this community to be political [33].

After looking into the propensity and contemplation of the study subjects towards political statuses, further analysis for an association was analyzed. At the outset, being female was found to demonstrate limited political participation. This result is supported by the study conducted in Jordan but contradicted the study result of the United States [26]. The possible explanation could go to the point where women believe that they do not have the ability to make political change, and their participation would make no change in society. In addition, the high rate of female unemployment and the rarity of female church leaders make them more reluctant to take political participation. Further, education, amongst all other factors, could be identified as one of the most important possible causes of the problem that prevents women from entering into politics. They are forced to stay home giving more chances for the male-dominated nature of politics in most countries like Ethiopia and puts a glass barrier against women trying to enter politics.

At the second similar to the first, church leaders who have a priest in the church have observed to keep themselves away from political participation [28]. The current result goes parallel to the study report in the US but contradicts the study analysis of the religiosity and attitudes towards the involvement of religious leaders in politics of 55 countries [29]. The possible variation could be because of differences in socio-demographic characteristics, level of moderation, and democratization. The restriction of service into spirituality excluding the secular aspect could be another reason where the church leaders can change the world through simple Practical principles that they demonstrate in the church such as serve them and serve with them [24].

Thirdly, church leaders earning higher monthly income have shown more tendencies to participate in politics [26,28]. These report shares similarities with the study result conducted in Jordan and the us but contradicted by another study in Latin [27]. Here the variation is amicable because it's no secret that in many respects, politics is a game for the affluent. The more money you have, the more likely you are to pay attention to politics, to vote, or to donate money or time to a political cause. Money also buys you access to the politicians of your choice (through corruption) especially in countries like Ethiopia. But in developed, modernized, and democratized countries the political parties would engage in production whereas it could reversely be corrupt in the countries of the unstable Political situation and higher unemployment. Therefore, it's not simple to precisely quantify the political activity of the super-rich as it has many factors to affect. But in the current study, the conclusion could be either political participation brought the income or vice versa in people of higher monthly income than their counterpart who generates less.

Fourthly, the current result pointed out that church leaders who fraternizes world and church system (sectarianisms) have known to have more tendencies of political participation [34]. The result is acceptable from the opinion of some countries' scholars and not by others [30,31]. The difference could be the result of numerous facts; intention, legitimate power, and objective are some of the reasons. Church and state are clearly distinct in concept and source of powers in society though both claim the people's loyalty both needing a principle of their creed. If detailed fraternization materialized, People worship the gods of the particular state in which they lived, religion in such cases is a department of the state in certain circumstances [35]. As a Christians is a citizen (someone whose choices and destiny are not owned by someone else) before nothing else, the church with a full of Christians should

advisably keep the relationship at a reasonable length and strongly continue working with a state than mixing up the systems [36,37].

Finally, the researchers emphasized that it is important to understand that Christianity is not opposed to politics, but rather is another way of life beyond political identity and vision. It does not remove people from civil liability. That is, people learn a deeper understanding of civic responsibility and civic character in the relevant society. It is also important for the Christian community that its goal is to enable people to gain civic respect and civil liberties, which can be easily understood by making independent decisions in consultation with the state.

Limitations of the study

Social desirability bias, limited literatures on the field of the study and instability of the country's political situation during the study periods could affect extent of participants' involvement and opinion.

CONCLUSION

The study recruited respondents with different socio-demographic characteristics and varying degrees of political inclination and contemplation. More than half of the respondents emphasized the importance of political participation, although few respondents expressed the opposite opinion. For groups reported the importance of political participation, the study measurement model has shown that the majority of the leaders to influence leadership towards modernization and democracy through political participation. On the other hand, few participants saw political participation as a way of promoting conflict in the church. Finally, being a woman and being a church leader with a priestly title in the church was recognized as a factor in avoiding political participation. Conversely, those who manifest sectarianism and those who earn the highest monthly income have identified a reason for political participation in the region.

Authors' contribution

Both authors have equally involved in conceptualization, formal analysis, methodology, visualization, original draft, writing, review and editing of the paper. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript

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