

**SERVANT LEADERSHIP, CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND  
RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT AMONG CITAM AND PCEA PASTORS  
IN KENYA: A MIXED METHODS STUDY**

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## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for examination to any other university or institution.

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## **Dedication**

This study is dedicated to my late parents; Joshua Musya Wambua and Roda Ndulu, who both passed on in the course of the study and who would have been proud to see me graduate as a 'Doctor'. I also dedicate this study to my husband; Gilbert Ngwiri and sons Wema Njoroge and Furaha Musya. Their support has been instrumental in providing the time, space and prayer cover throughout the study period. This is our PhD.

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## Abstract

The main objective of the study was to assess the relationship between servant leadership behaviours and interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in Kenya. The moderating variable was emotional intelligence. The specific objectives were: to determine the effect of emotional healing on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors, to establish the influence of conceptualizing on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors, to investigate the effect of putting followers first on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors, to determine the effect of behaving ethically on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors, to determine if emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors from CITAM and PCEA urban churches in Kenya, and to compare and contrast the themes emerging from the qualitative on servant leadership, interpersonal conflict management styles and relationship management with the results obtained from the quantitative research. The study was anchored on the Servant Leadership Theory, Organizational Conflict, Theory and Emotional Intelligence Theory. The study was based on the Pragmatic philosophy and used convergent parallel mixed methods design. The population comprised of 180 pastors from eight urban towns in Kenya. Through random sampling, a sample size of 123 pastors was selected. Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Committee at Pan Africa Christian University and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation in Kenya. Data was collected electronically through a structured and semi-structured questionnaire to collect both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently. The quantitative data from the structured questionnaire was analysed through descriptive and inferential statistics, using STATA Version 17. On the first objective to determine the effect of emotional healing on interpersonal conflict among the pastors, the p-value was 0.355. The second objective on the effect of conceptualizing on interpersonal conflict management had a p-value of 0.443. The third objective on the effect of putting followers first on interpersonal conflict among pastors had a p-value of 0.057. The fourth objective on the effect of behaving ethically on interpersonal conflict among pastors had a p-value of 0.400. Quantitative data was presented using tables and figures. From the findings, only 'putting followers first' servant leadership behaviour had a noticeable impact on how pastors handle interpersonal conflict. Simple regression analysis results indicated that servant leadership has an effect on accommodating and collaborating conflict management styles. ATLAS.ti 7 software was used for qualitative data analysis to generate themes. Qualitative data was presented using thematic analysis and tables. The qualitative analysis revealed challenges that impede the use of servant leadership in conflict management. The emerging themes revealed that organizational leadership, organizational culture, spiritual maturity and self leadership were necessary antecedents to the use of servant leadership in conflict management. The qualitative findings also revealed the need for interventions through training on servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence, for effective interpersonal conflict management among pastors.

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### **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

CEUP:	Centre of Expertise for Urban Planning
CITAM:	Christ Is The Answer Ministries
CMS:	Conflict Management Styles
EAK:	Evangelical Association of Kenya
FGCK:	Full Gospel Church of Kenya
NACOSTI:	National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation
NCCK:	National Council of Churches in Kenya
PAOC:	Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada
PCEA:	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PEFA:	Pentecostal Evangelistic Fellowship of Africa
SME:	Small and Medium Enterprises
SLQ:	Servant Leadership Questionnaire
USA:	United States of America
WLEIS:	Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale

### **Operational Definition of Terms**

- Accommodating:** Accommodating conflict management style occurs where there is strong commitment to the relationship and the one giving way shows little interest in the results (McCorkle & Reese, 2018).
- Avoiding:** Avoiding conflict is a conflict management style that arises where there is little concern for both oneself and similarly for others (McCorkle & Reese, 2018). The problem is not discussed and the parties avoid talking about the issue.
- Behaving ethically:** Behaving ethically implies that one holds to high moral standards, does the right things in the right way, is forthright, truthful and fair with others (Northouse, 2022).
- Collaboration:** Collaboration conflict management style encourages the parties in conflict to discuss their interests and cooperate together to choose the best course of action (McCorkle & Reese, 2018).
- Compromising:** Compromising conflict management style is applied where none of the parties involved in the conflict benefits or suffers (McCorkle & Reese, 2018). Both parties give a little in give-and-take.
- Competing:** Competing conflict management style is used when reaching a goal takes precedence and importance over maintaining the relationship (McCorkle & Reese, 2018).

- Conceptualizing:** Conceptualizing refers to the thorough understanding of an organization that a servant leader has (Northouse, 2022). The capacity to understand the organization's mission, purpose and intricacies allows the servant leader to approach a problem from multiple angles and come up with an innovative solution that aligns with the overall goals and objectives of the organization.
- Emotional Healing:** Emotional healing involves awareness and attention to the worries, issues, concerns and well-being of others, recognizing their problems and being prepared to take time to resolve them (Northouse, 2022). Servant leaders exhibit emotional healing when they make themselves available, stand with and assist others going through a problem or struggling.
- Putting followers first:** Putting followers first by prioritizing them is the hallmark characteristic of servant leadership (Northouse, 2022). The servant leader makes it obvious to their followers that their concerns are a priority through their words and actions. The servant leader also places the interests and success of the followers above his or her own and are prepared to put aside their own work to help their followers with theirs.
- Relationship management:** Relationship management is the social skill in emotional intelligence that is about managing relationships to move to desired directions (Harvard

Business Review, [HBR], 2017). It is effective in leading change, networking, conflict management, as well as in building and leading teams.

**Servant leadership:** Servant leadership is a leadership style that prioritizes the psychological needs of followers and the organizational goals come as secondary (Mustam & Najan, 2020). In this study, servant leadership is considered as the capacity of leaders to put the needs of others ahead of their own when it comes to managing interpersonal conflict among pastors.

**Conflict management:** It is an approach that involves design of creative plans to minimize or reduce conflict dysfunctions and increase their positive aspects (Rahim, 2023). In this study, conflict management means the awareness, ability and competency to proactively prevent conflict before it starts or to manage it when it starts.

**Emotional intelligence:** It is the capacity to comprehend one's own emotions and those of others, as well as to inspire and cultivate oneself and others in order to improve performance and organizational effectiveness (Stoller, 2021). In this investigation, emotional intelligence is the capacity to be aware and cognizant of one's own emotions and those of others when managing interpersonal conflict.

**Pastor:** Refers to an individual assigned to oversee, head, or lead a church, department or ministry within the church and whose duties include leading other staff, and providing spiritual leadership to the congregation.

## **Chapter One: Introduction and Background to the Study**

### **Introduction**

In the field of organizational leadership, the areas of servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence continue to be subjects of interest to academic researchers and leadership practitioners. Servant leadership is distinguished by its focus and emphasis on helping others, putting their needs ahead of the leader's own needs, and demonstrating that the concerns of others are a priority. Robert Greenleaf is famous for conceptualizing servant leadership (Urlick, 2021). Similarly, emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a crucial ability necessary for effective leadership in top leadership roles, with diverse benefits such as effective decision making, problem solving and effective conflict management, and more important than cognitive abilities (Purushothaman, 2021). Interpersonal conflict on the other hand, exists in all organizations, including churches, and has to be managed if the organization is to achieve its goals and desired objectives.

This chapter introduces the three variables: servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence. It also examines various studies that highlight the leadership problem of conflict management among pastors. Additionally, the chapter covers the problem statement, the objectives of the investigation, the research questions and the hypotheses. Towards the end, the chapter concludes with a summary, after outlining the study's assumptions, justification, significance, scope, limitations and delimitations in the end. The background of the study is presented in the section that follows.

## **Background to the study**

According to Robert Greenleaf, who was the first to coin the term ‘servant leadership’, a servant leader is a leader who is first and foremost a servant, and then the two roles of a servant and leader are infused in one real person (Dhiman, 2023). Servant leadership is an ongoing and integrated perspective to life and work that emphasizes increased service to others, prioritizes serving others, and promotes an atmosphere of belonging and equitable distribution of power when it comes to making of decisions (Spears, 2025). Christ-modelled servant leadership arises from sacrificial service that is demonstrated by understanding, listening, attention, learning and collaborating (Black, 2023). Servant leadership can be used across a variety of organizations, societies and contexts, including the church for ministry effectiveness (Ayogu et al., 2022).

Leadership wrangles and interpersonal conflicts are not new in Kenya. Bitter wrangles among leaders within the church lead to church splits and in some cases, can also lead to drawn out court cases (Matisi, 2020). Leadership and interpersonal conflicts among pastors have potential to do more harm to the church and its witness to the world (Fox, 2023). Thus, servant leadership has been recognized as a useful leadership strategy for addressing the underlying causes of conflicts that lead to leadership problems. There are several reasons for this.

Firstly, servant leadership is a genuine people centred approach that is able to provide an adequate response to many societal problems (Sousa & van Dierendonck, 2021). According to du Plessis and Nkambule (2021), conflict is one of the existential challenges that pastors face in churches that impact or influence how they lead, thus the need for knowledge and skills on servant leadership to help them

overcome this challenge. Buffel (2020) asserts that leaders who practice servant leadership are better able to prevent and handle conflict when it occurs.

Secondly, leaders who display servant leadership are better able to manage interpersonal conflicts. Fields (2021) argues that servant leaders are generally concerned with actively resolving issues, preserving positive relationships and communicating effectively. Thirdly, because it places a strong emphasis on love, values associated with humanity, communication, concessions and agreement, servant leadership is pertinent to conflict management (Wuli et al., 2020). Conflict is unavoidable even among those who practice servant leadership, thus, they must manage the tension conflict creates maturely in order to have a beneficial outcome in the conclusion of the conflict (Craun & Hensen, 2022). Finally, according to Tard (2019), servant leaders readily acknowledge disagreement, have the intention and desire to reveal what is true, are naturally curious which in turn cultivates open-mindedness, and have shared goals or objectives to address conflict. From the above, it is possible to see why servant leadership is appropriate for conflict management.

### Servant Leadership Behaviours

Servant leadership as a leadership style made up of several behaviours (McQuade et al, 2021). According to Martinez and Leija (2023), the behaviours of a servant leader are actions that are visible and quantifiable. Liden et al (2015), identified seven servant leadership behaviours in their servant leadership model, and created the shorted 7-item scale measure of global servant leadership known as the Servant Leadership Questionnaire, SLQ (Canavesi & Minelli, 2022). In the SLQ questionnaire, which was also validated by Sendjaya et al., (2019), seven servant leadership behaviours are listed. These are: conceptual skills, emotional healing, behaving ethically, putting followers first, empowering, helping followers succeed,

and creating value for the community (Northouse, 2022). Specifically, four of the seven servant leadership behaviours have been positively correlated with conflict management. The four behaviours are: emotional healing, conceptualization, putting followers first and behaving ethically (Obi et al., 2020; Segundo, 2021).

Emotional healing has been identified as an essential element of servant leadership due to its unique role in emotional and mental health among medical professionals (Zada et al., 2022). Servant leaders that exhibit emotional healing behaviours are able to assist others in overcoming emotional suffering, failure or disappointment (Martinez & Leija, 2023). Emotional healing in servant leadership has been favourably connected with the conflict management styles of collaborating, competing, obliging and compromising (Fields, 2021). Fox (2023) recommended that future studies on conflict in the church, among leaders and between leaders and congregants, consider formal approaches to conflicts so that pastors have information to develop training guidelines on conflict resolution.

Conceptual skills mean that servant leaders demonstrate an ability to think beyond the immediate context using mental thinking models and visionary abilities (Spears, 2025). According to Gašková (2020), conceptual skills is a behaviour in which servant leaders have a thorough insight into an organization's purpose, ability to solve complex problems, as well as handle day to day operations. Conceptual skills have also been positively correlated with compromising, collaborating, competing and accommodating conflict management styles (Fields, 2021).

Putting followers first implies voluntary subordination. This means that servant leaders wilfully consider the needs of others before their own, subordinating themselves in order to serve others (Martinez & Heija, 2023). One of the main characteristics of servant leadership that sets it apart from other leadership

philosophies is prioritizing followers (Gašková, 2020). By prioritizing followers and serving their needs, servant leaders enable their organizations to attain their long term goals (Obi et al., 2022). Although it is assumed that pastors generally practice servant leadership, empirical research on servant leadership behaviours among pastors in the Kenyan context is lacking.

Behaving ethically as specific servant leadership behaviour is crucial in the life and work of the pastor as a leader. The moral qualities in behaving ethically include virtues such as trustworthiness, integrity, honesty, being reliable and respectful to others. Behaving ethically is also important in leading others towards attainment of organizational goals and objectives (Funga & Sambu, 2023).

In USA, Sironen (2020) conducted a correlational study to find out if there is a connection between the spiritual development of protestant church congregations and the servant leadership characteristics of their pastors. According to Sironen (2020), biblical servant leaders possess key characteristics such as prayer, study, teaching, preaching, discipling, modelling and preparing the congregants who were believers for service in the church ministries. The study took a quantitative approach to collect and analyse the data. The findings from the study showed a strong and positive connection between the congregational spiritual formation and development, and pastoral servant leadership. This presents one of many practical benefits of pastors practicing servant leadership.

In Africa, according to Buffel's (2020) analytical review of conflict in the Lutheran Church in South Africa, the churches' disputes, crises and leadership issues require servant leadership in order to be addressed and resolved effectively. Still in South Africa, Resane (2020) highlighted the challenge of integrity among pastors. According to Resane, pastoral leadership in South Africa marred by integrity crisis as

pastors pursued materialism, were prideful, and lacked credibility in reposting and demonstrated shallow theological training. Resane argued and proposed that pastors return to the fundamentals of leadership by embracing servant leadership as a model that ensures pastoral integrity.

In Kenya, a number of studies on servant leadership have been conducted. Karanja et al. (2021) examined the impact of servant leadership on public engagement in county governments in Kenya by submitting questionnaires to voters from eight counties. In a different study, Awino et al. (2021) looked into the association between servant leadership and expansion of evangelical churches within the country, mediated by leader power. While Karanja et al. (2021) looked at the county governments, and Awino et al. (2021) looked at the expansion of churches, the goal of the current study was to look at how servant leadership and conflict management styles relate to one another among pastors from two denominations in selected urban counties in Kenya.

Based on suggestions by Fields (2021) and Zada et al. (2022) that future studies extend research on servant leadership and conflict management into varied sectors, the current study consequently examined four elements of servant leadership in connection to the five interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors selected from two denominations with churches in urban counties in Kenya. The four chosen elements of servant leadership in the current study are emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first and behaving ethically. The other three servant leadership behaviours of helping followers succeed, empowering followers and creating value for the community were not considered for this study. Empowering followers and helping followers succeed are concerned with follower performance and organizational performance (Odiaka, 2022). Therefore, empowering and helping

followers were not considered as relevant variables for the current study. Since the servant leadership behaviour of creating value for the community is associated with societal impact, it was also not included in this study (Sarkus, 2022). The section that follows presents the background for interpersonal conflict management.

### ***Interpersonal Conflict Management***

The dependent variable for this study was interpersonal conflict management. According to Smith et al. (2020), a conflict process starts when an individual believes that another person has harmed or is going to harm something that he or she cares about. Understanding the various types of conflict that can arise within an organization and the various approaches or styles to handling them are essential components of conflict management (Folger et al., 2021). Interpersonal conflict management styles denote the different behavioural habits that people tend to use when handling conflict (Caputo et al., 2019). Interpersonal conflict management styles can be divided into five categories, namely: accommodating, avoiding, competing, compromising, and finally, collaborating, which the current study focused on (Smith et al., 2020).

The focus of this current research was interpersonal conflict management because despite the fact that conflict is a natural part of human existence, poor management can have various detrimental effects. The Bible records various narratives that capture conflict scenarios and their resolutions, as well as proverbial statements that offer strategies on how to apply wisdom in addressing conflict (Chukwuma et al., 2020). The biblical narratives referenced by Chukwuma et al. (2020) include Cain and Abel, Joseph and his brothers, Moses and Miriam, and David and Saul (Genesis 4:1–16; Genesis 37:1–36; Genesis 45:1–15; Numbers 12:1–16; 1 Samuel 18:6–30; 1 Samuel 19:1–24, New International Version, 1984). These include

intra-group conflicts that take place between groups, intergroup conflicts that take place within a group, interpersonal conflicts that involve two or more people and intrapersonal conflicts which are conflicts that occur within an individual (Palmer, 2020). Interpersonal conflict with fellow workers is one of the key reasons that pastors leave positions where they were serving God (Buffel, 2020; Hamm & Eagle, 2021).

One of the major challenging issues that church organizations face is managing conflict (Resane, 2020; Tagwirei, 2024; Umeanwe, 2024). Studies that have been done in local, regional and international settings have captured this conflict management dilemma. For example, at the international level, reviewers Hamm and Eagle (2021) found that interpersonal conflict was a major factor in clergy departure from congregational service in the Protestant and Roman Catholic denominations in United States of America (USA). Additionally, pastors in America who experience unresolved interpersonal conflicts with their fellow pastors or leaders have been shown to suffer from emotional health issues that make it difficult for them to collaborate with others, which in turn has resulted into dysfunctional relationships, resignations and terminations from work (Palmer, 2020). The research studies cited here demonstrate the presence and influence of unresolved interpersonal conflicts among pastors in America.

In Africa, several studies have looked into the causes of conflict among pastors. A research conducted within the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa's Orange state revealed that internal conflict among the leadership had been going on for over a decade and that some of the conflicts had resulted in physical violence and litigation (Pali, 2018). Other studies such as one by Kanengoni et al. (2018) capture the impact of unresolved interpersonal conflict among pastors in South Africa. A

research by Joynt (2018) also focused on capturing the reasons why pastors in South African churches left full-time ministry. The aforementioned studies focus on the root causes of conflict with no mention of interpersonal conflict management styles or leadership styles in managing interpersonal conflicts among pastors. Only Joynt (2018) proposed that future studies on conflict among pastors to consider the use of servant leadership when it comes to conflict management due to the servant leader behaviours of empathy, compassion, and healing to manage turmoil among followers. This recommendation was relevant to the study as those specific servant leadership behaviours, and their relationship to interpersonal conflict management styles were considered.

Other studies from Africa include Msipa (2020), whose study highlighted the tribal conflict among Pentecostal clergy in Zimbabwe. The study focused on the tribal conflict between Shona and Ndebele clergy in the cities of Bulawayo and Harare. From the findings, Msipa (2020) concluded that the standard approach to handling disagreements among the pastors was to avoid addressing it, in the hope that it would eventually fade and go away by itself. Findings from the study indicated that in conflict among pastors, the traditional view of dealing with conflict was by avoiding, in the hope that the conflict will gradually dissipate on its own. As a result, the conflict caused by the tribal differences among the clergy was not being managed. Rather, it was being perpetuated from one generation of clergy to another. The current study intentionally considered the five interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors. Next, is a review of a study on conflict management among pastors from Nigeria, West Africa.

In Nigeria, Afolaranmi (2022) examined the conflict management strategies pastors who were under the Nigerian Baptist Convention used. Afolaranmi (2022)

looked at the conflict that occurred between pastors as leaders, between pastors and congregations, and also conflicts between members of the congregation. By employing both random and purposive sampling, twenty pastors from the Baptist community in Ibadan metropolis were interviewed, along with five officials at the national leadership level of convention. The pastors were discovered to have unconsciously utilized multiple conflict management methods to find solutions to the disagreements such as counselling, prayer, persuasion, compromise, meditative dialogue, teaching and preaching, among others. These mechanisms were found effective, although the pastors did not explicitly indicate awareness and use of the conflict management styles. Furthermore, the study did not explore leadership styles that would be effective in interpersonal conflict management.

In Kenya, several studies have investigated conflict among church leaders. Some of the studies have focused on intra-church and intergroup conflict. For example, Muhanji (2021) examined the dispute in the Quaker church between the church leadership and the congregational members. Mwabonje (2019) investigated the impact of the conflict among the leaders of the church on the Christian formation and moral development of ACK Emmanuel Church members in Kengeleni, Mombasa and found that conflict among leaders at the church was associated with rivalry, strained relations, retarded development and negative publicity of the church. The Seventh Day Adventist Church leaders are also not immune to conflict caused by leadership struggles among themselves, according to Marambi (2022).

Based on the aforementioned studies, there is evidence of the presence of conflict between individual leaders with each other, as well as between leaders and congregants. However, based on the studies carried out in Kenya, a conceptual gap exists regarding the association between leadership styles of pastors and the conflict

management styles that they apply when managing conflicts among themselves. Thus, the current study specifically attempted to evaluate the impact of the servant leadership style on the various conflict management styles among pastors from specific churches in several urban counties in Kenya. The findings from the study helped to gain an insight into interpersonal conflict management styles of pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya. The next section is on emotional intelligence, which was the moderating variable of this study.

### *Emotional intelligence*

Emotional intelligence constituted the third variable in this study. Its inclusion stemmed from research suggesting that emotional intelligence has a substantial impact on the management of conflict (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). For example, the inefficient or poor management of conflict has been linked to the individual's low emotional intelligence (Winardi et al., 2021). According to Lancaster (2020), pastoral leadership becomes less effective because of behaviours such as inconsistent management of emotions. Research studies in others fields such as nursing underscore the effectiveness of emotional intelligence in conflict management (Aseery et al., 2023). Therefore, the current study argued that the use of emotional intelligence in conflict management among pastors was crucial to prevent disputes between pastors from escalating.

Several research studies have examined the moderating influence of emotional intelligence. Internationally, for example, Ullah (2022) conducted a study to investigate the linkage between task and process conflicts, in relation to relationship conflicts, and the moderating effect of emotional intelligence. Ullah (2022) found that negative feelings decrease as an employee's emotional intelligence increases. Similarly, Michinov's (2022) study among French fire-fighters revealed that

awareness and management of one's own emotions moderated the relationship between integrating conflict management style, also known as collaborating conflict management style, and burnout.

In Pakistan, Kundi and Badar (2021) examined how emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between interpersonal conflict at their job and the employees' tendency to get involved in unproductive counterproductive work-related actions. The findings indicated that interpersonal conflict positively affected workplace behaviour, and that emotional intelligence weakened the likelihood of counterproductive work behaviour. Still in Pakistan, Mairaj and Siddiqui (2020) investigated the controlling influence of emotional intelligence in the association between conflict management styles with workplace frustration and organizational citizenship behaviours. The findings indicated that emotional intelligence influenced both organizational citizenship behaviours as well as workplace frustration. Additionally, the findings of the study by Mairaj and Siddiqui found that emotional intelligence also complemented accommodating and collaborating strategies with workplace frustration.

In Africa, Ejakpofon (2023) explored the role of emotional intelligence in the effect between work-family conflict and counterproductive work behaviour by reviewing various studies that had already been conducted. From the review, Ejakpofon (2023) contended that emotional intelligence was capable of reducing work-family conflict and therefore, also reduce counterproductive work behaviour within the organization. The paper concluded that the employees whose emotional intelligence levels were high would be able to handle their work-family conflict, while also reducing or completely eliminating negative behaviour in their workplace.

The interrelationship between emotional intelligence, servant leadership, and interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors is an area that is under-researched in Kenya. The current study sought to investigate the relationships between servant leadership and conflict management styles among the pastors of two church denominations in selected urban counties in Kenya. Furthermore, the study also examined the moderating influence of emotional intelligence in the relationship between servant leadership behaviours and interpersonal conflict management styles among the pastors.

Research studies on emotional intelligence typically encompass all four components of emotional intelligence as a whole. The four components are: relationship management, awareness of others, awareness of self and management of self. Relationship management, also known as social skills, involves leading others, influence, being a change catalyst, managing conflict, fostering collaboration and enhancing team capabilities (Chernis & Adler, 2023). Most research studies focus on the relationship between all four aspects of emotional intelligence and the five styles of interpersonal conflict management (Jordan & Troth, 2021; Ullah, 2022; Valente & Lourenço, 2020; Winardi et al., 2022). The current study specifically concentrated on relationship management of emotional intelligence due to its unique role in handling conflict in relationship management. This focus was used to provide a rationale for the study's direction.

The background information on the three variables used in this study, namely; servant leadership, conflict management styles and emotional intelligence among pastors in churches indicates that although conflict it to be expected and can be managed, conceptual gaps and contextual gaps exist, therefore, highlighting the need for this study to be conducted. The purpose of this study was to look into the impact

of specific servant leadership behaviours on the conflict management styles that pastors use when addressing their interpersonal conflicts. Using the convergent mixed methods methodology, quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, processed individually and the findings combined. The reason for gathering the two kinds of data was to develop a more comprehensive picture understanding of the problem being researched by comparing the responses from the two databases (Dawadi et al., 2021, Taherdoost, 2022). The next section of this chapter presents the context of the church in Kenya in general, and then specifically, the Presbyterian and Pentecostal churches chosen for this study.

### **Church Leadership in Kenya**

Globally, the term ‘church’ is used to describe the body of believers all over the world, irrespective of their denomination (Seale, 2024). The church also refers to a local congregation which is made up of believers gathering together in a locality where the members are neighbours or live near each other (Dougherty & Mulder, 2020). Christians gather in congregations for fellowship, worship and teaching through a local church (New International Version, [NIV], 1984, Hebrews 10:25). Local church leadership involves pastors as leaders, in partnership with the members (Hester, 2021). The call of the pastor as the leader is to lead (NIV [1984], Romans 12:8). The overseers or senior leadership, elders, and deacons oversee the function and growth of the congregation. Leadership in the church is viewed as a ministry of stewardship through the proper use of purpose, time, resources, opportunities, challenges and people, so that ministry takes place. A church leader is described in this study as a pastor who holds responsibility for a specific department, ministry, or congregation.

Urban churches are found in urban towns. In Kenya, an urban town is defined as a built up and compact human community settlement having a population of at least 2,000 people regardless to the local authority limits. According to the 2019 Kenya Housing Survey, the urban population makes up 28.49% of Kenya's population. The urban town is frequently a commerce and service centre that provides services and goods to the inhabitants and others within the vicinity, with built-in infrastructure such as buildings, roads, communal areas and services. Kenya continues to experience a quantitative growth trajectory evidenced by the rise and establishment of physical churches (Muthuku et al., 2023). The 2019 Census indicated that 33.4% of Kenyans and 20.4% identify with protestant and evangelical denominations respectively. According to Niazi et al. (2024), urban churches experience a quicker rebound in attendance, donations and finances than churches in rural or small towns. However, numerical increase masks the real state of church health marked by leadership wrangles and disunity of members, among others.

The churches in Kenya are not immune to challenges. Kithure (2022) investigated factors that contributed to low church attendance and abstinence of congregations under the Methodist Church of Kenya at the Nyambene synod in Meru County, Kenya. Different factors such as cultural, economic, religious and natural factors have also contributed to the gender imbalance dilemma between men and women serving in leadership positions as pastors within in the church (Muli et al., 2022). Thiga et al. (2021) conducted research to assess the impact of church leadership disputes on the expansion of Pentecostal congregations in Nairobi. Thus, conflict is not a new thing in churches in Kenya.

Within the context of the church institution, there are various umbrella bodies under which churches in Kenya are affiliated to. The two that were considered for the

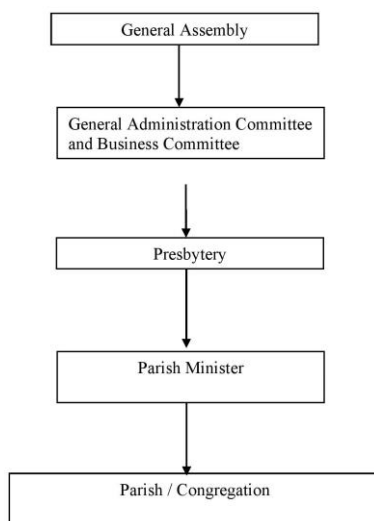
current study were the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya, EAK, and the National Council of Churches in Kenya, NCCCK (Tarus, 2022). Two churches were selected, one from each main body to represent an urban protestant church and an urban Pentecostal church. Through purposive sampling, Christ Is The Answer Ministries (CITAM) was selected as the Pentecostal church affiliated to EAK, and Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) was selected as the protestant church, affiliated to NCCCK. These two churches were also selected because of their presence in the urban towns of Kenya, their robust governance structures with a central head quarter situated in Nairobi, and their financial ability to ensure formally employed multiple pastors in their churches. The study focused on pastors from selected urban Protestant and Pentecostal churches as the population. Limiting the study to these two churches was deemed necessary because it would not be practical to study all the current churches in Kenya and yield reliable results. Additionally, according to Droz and Gez (2021), the PCEA is the largest of the protestant churches in Kenya, which gives this study a good reach and representative sample of the other protestant denominations. CITAM was included in this study because it is a progressive Pentecostal church that has experienced a rapid expansion in urban towns, leading to vertical and lateral growth despite local and national global challenges (Kimiye, 2019).

The PCEA church in Kenya started in 1891 through the work of the Church of Scotland. The first Presbyterian Church was established at Thogoto after the first Kikuyu convert was baptized in 1907. According to the PCEA Kenya website, there are 450 parish ministers and over 1,000 congregations in Kenya. The parish minister is responsible for over one or several congregations. An evangelist and an administrator work alongside the parish minister. Other positions such as youth pastor and children's' pastor depend on the size of the congregation and are appointed at the

parish level. For this study, the parish ministers and evangelists were the respondents of this research.

Within the PCEA Kenya leadership structure, the highest authority is vested in the General Assembly. The Moderator is the leader of both the General Assembly and the overall leader of the Presbyterian Church throughout the country. The PCEA church in Kenya is further clustered into five regions which are; Nairobi region, Eastern region, Central region, Mt. Kenya region and Rift Valley region. Within the regions are the presbyteries, and there are a total of 56 Presbyteries in Kenya. Each presbytery is headed by the parish minister, appointed by the PCEA head office, to offer pastoral services to one or more congregations. The parish minister is assisted by other clergy, elders, deacons, and the administrator. The evangelist is also appointed to an area by the PCEA head office, and supports the parish minister by serving the congregation through catechism classes and outreach activities. Figure 1.1 shows a diagram of the leadership structure of PCEA in Kenya.

**Figure 1.1 PCEA Leadership Structure**



Source: Presbyterian Church of East Africa (2024)

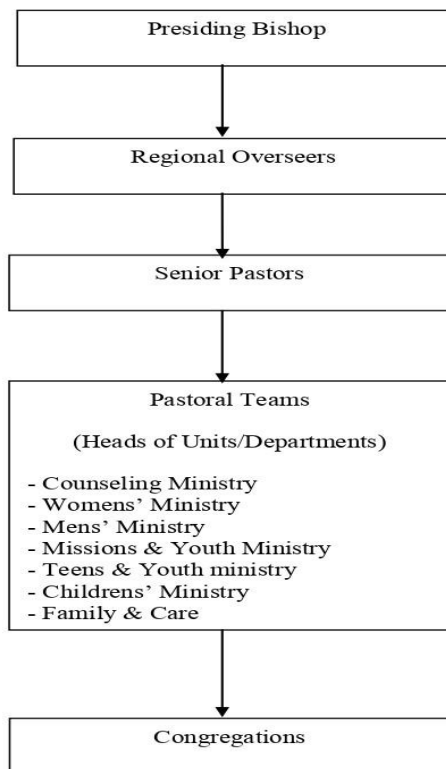
Christ is the Answer Ministries (CITAM) was founded in Nairobi in 1959 under the auspices of the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada (PAOC), and was initially named Nairobi Pentecostal Church (NPC). CITAM has a total of 29 local assemblies in Kenya with each assembly headed by a Senior Pastor. Within each assembly are various departments such as Children's' Ministry and Youth Ministry among others, which are also headed by pastors. The respondents included in the study were the heads of department or pastors in charge of a ministry and the senior pastors.

Within the CITAM leadership structure, the church is headed by the Bishop. The Bishop provides guidance and oversight to the local church congregations, also known as assemblies, through the senior pastors and ministry coordinators. The local assemblies are clustered in three regions, namely Northern Region, Southern Region and Western Region. CITAM also has four international assemblies with one assembly located in Namibia, Africa, and three assemblies located outside of Africa, in Romania, East Timor and the USA.

CITAM has a robust management and governance structure that has been put in place to promote accountability and stewardship. To this end, the CITAM constitution systems have been put in place to separate spiritual or pastoral ministry, governing bodies such as the Annual Delegates Conference, Regional Annual Meetings, over which the Bishop presides. Additionally, there is the Deacon Board and Council of Elders, whom the Bishop is accountable to. Each of these components of the governance structure has their defined roles and responsibilities. The Presiding Bishop supervises day to day management of CITAM and oversight of the assemblies

through the deputy bishop. The spiritual leadership structure of CITAM is presented in the Figure 1.2.

**Figure 1.2 CITAM Spiritual Leadership Structure**



Source: CITAM Revised Constitution 2019

Church leaders in Kenya face numerous obstacles. In his study, Wainaina (2021) discovered that leadership transition into the Bishop's role within the Anglican Church of Kenya was a tainted political process, compromised by intimidation, bribery, ethnic divisions and rewarding voters with incentives, which in turn caused the transition process to become corrupted. Other research investigations have documented the prevalence of interpersonal conflicts among church pastors. For instance, Mwabonje (2019) discovered that disagreements among pastors in leadership hampered the spiritual growth, development and cultivation of faith among the church members and congregants. Muhanji (2021) investigated the underlying

causes of conflicts among leaders in the Quaker Church in Kenya. The prevalence and existence of conflicts among church leaders is thus not breaking news. Mwanika (2020) contends that the management of conflict is at the heart of the gospel and thus, a responsibility for every Christian. As a result, this current study was undertaken to evaluate the use of servant leadership in interpersonal conflict management among pastors from specified urban counties in Kenya.

### **Statement of Problem**

The difficulty among pastors in addressing interpersonal conflicts among themselves has been highlighted in the previous section on the background to the study. Several studies carried out among pastors have shown that when interpersonal conflicts are not handled well, their impact spread over to the members in their congregations causing division and strained relationships, splitting of the church, hinder church growth and negatively impact the spiritual development of its members (Banda, 2023; Mitu et al, 2023; Muhanji, 2021; Mwabonje, 2019; Thiga et al., 2021). Furthermore, although pastors in Africa are usually highly respected, consulted and considered as key leaders in influencing their members and their local communities, the background of the study has demonstrated that unresolved interpersonal conflicts among pastors have negative impact on the spiritual faith of congregants, causing disappointment, sadness, despair, giving up on their calling, compelled exits and even change of vocational calling altogether.

In the field of conflict management and servant leadership, limited studies have been conducted to examine the connection between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management from the perspective of Kenyan pastors. One such study was by Mwaniki and Muathe (2021), who looked into how organizational

conflict management strategies affected employee performance from among selected public universities in Kenya. In a different study, Shee et al. (2020) looked at strategies that the school management teams used to contain conflicts within the public primary schools in Lamu County, Kenya. In another research, Odhiambo et al. (2023) investigated the reasons behind the conflict between principals and the teachers in Homa Bay County among public secondary schools in Rachuonyo South. However, prior studies among pastors in Kenya have not explored the relationship between servant leadership, conflict management styles and emotional intelligence.

The current study therefore sought to determine the impact of servant leadership as an independent variable on conflict management as the dependant variable, among pastors from churches in selected urban counties in Kenya. Furthermore, research on the relationship between servant leadership, interpersonal conflict and emotional intelligence among pastors in urban churches in Kenya has been under reported. Therefore, this study attempted to bridge this conceptual gap.

Regarding urban areas, Macharia et al. (2021) identified eight predominantly urbanized counties in Kenya as these counties account for approximately 70% of the countries urban centres. According to the 2019 population census in Kenya, urban counties are identified as locations where 70% of the urban population in Kenya reside. Identification of the urban counties is critical because a higher general population means the churches in the urban towns are well-staffed with at least more than a single pastor to suit the demands of the bigger congregation. The Centre of Expertise for Urban Planning (CEUP) describes urban areas as those that have a high concentration of key services like schools, hospitals and churches and is also characterized by a high population density (CEUP 2017). Additionally, a growing number of urban churches have moved fully into online ministry, which includes

digital integration, streaming their church services and programs live, hosting their own media stations and engaging social media accounts (Ndereba, 2023).

### **Purpose of study**

This study looked into the connection between particular servant leadership dimensions and the styles that the pastors use to handle their interpersonal conflict. Using one of the most widely used servant leadership conceptual framework SLQ28 developed by Robert Liden and The Thomas Kilmann Conflict Management Model, convergent parallel mixed methods approach was used to gather data from pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban towns in Kenya. Additionally, the researcher created a qualitative questionnaire to obtain qualitative information from the participants.

### **Objectives of the study**

The objectives of this study were divided two categories; the general objective and the specific objective. The general objective was to examine the connection between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors from two denominations in the specified urban counties in Kenya. Furthermore, the study set out to examine how emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management. The specific objectives that guided the investigation were as follows:

1. To determine the effect of emotional healing on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
2. To establish the influence of conceptual skills on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA in churches in urban counties in Kenya.

3. To investigate the effect of putting followers first on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
4. To determine the effect of behaving ethically on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
5. To assess whether emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
6. To explore pastors' perspectives on the causes of interpersonal conflicts, their suggestions for effective interpersonal conflict management tips, and the impact of servant leadership, conflict management skills and emotional intelligence in addressing interpersonal conflicts in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were used to test the associations between the variables in the study:

1. H01: There is no significant relationship between emotional healing and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
2. H02: There is no relationship between conceptual skills and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
3. H03: There is no relationship between putting followers first and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.

4. H04: There is no significant relationship between behaving ethically and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.
5. H05: Emotional intelligence does not moderate the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management style among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya?

#### Research question

The qualitative strand of the study was guided by the following research question:

What are the perceptions of pastors on:

- i. The causes of interpersonal conflicts
- ii. How to deal effectively with interpersonal conflicts
- iii. The impact of servant leadership, conflict management skills and emotional intelligence in addressing interpersonal conflicts among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.

#### **Assumptions of the study**

The study anticipated that the two designated church institutions entities would grant consent and provide access to the respondents for the survey. Secondly, the study anticipated that the respondents would offer sincere, true and genuine feedback during data collection, therefore bolstering the integrity of the results. This assumption was made because the participants were self-reporting on their responses. The third assumption was that the staff had experienced some form of conflict with other pastors. This assumption was necessary since the study was on interpersonal

conflicts among pastors. The study operated under the assumption that employing a convergent parallel mixed methods approach would afford each participant an opportunity to give feedback on the research subject. The utilization of the mixed methods approach for the study was considered as it anticipated that the combination would produce more beneficial results regarding the research problem compared to the application of either quantitative or qualitative methods alone. Fourthly, the study assumed that the respondents were willing to share information without being afraid of any victimization or penalties. The respondents were informed and assured that the data collected would be anonymous and treated with confidentiality. Finally, the study assumed that pastors, churches and similar institutions in Kenya would be willing to embrace the study's findings and utilize them in addressing, training and equipping pastors on the management of interpersonal conflicts.

### **Justification of the study**

This study warranted carrying out for various reasons. First, while there are substantial studies on conflicts and interpersonal conflict management in various contexts such as nursing, education, and corporate organizations, there are few that focus on servant leadership styles and interpersonal conflict management in religious organizations and among pastors. For instance, Fields (2021) carried out a research study on how servant leadership relates with conflict management at work for personnel in the social services sector in the USA. Freebourough (2021) also carried out a study among non-profit employees in the USA, to ascertain whether servant leadership behaviours lowered interpersonal conflict at the workplace. Therefore, the current investigation aimed to contribute to scholarly knowledge in the domain of

servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.

Secondly, this study was necessitated by conceptual gaps that it aimed to address. Various studies have focused on the relationship between conflict management styles and emotional intelligence only. For example, Al Hamdan et al. (2019) examined the impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management styles among nurse managers in Jordan. Chen et al. (2019) used a multi-level strategy to explore the impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management styles of the Chinese managers when dealing with conflicts between themselves and their peers, subordinates, and bosses. Valente and Lourenço (2020) investigated how the teachers' emotional intelligence affects their conflict management in the classroom. The absence of recent studies that explored the interrelationship between the three variables of servant leadership, interpersonal conflict management, and emotional intelligence especially among pastors therefore, necessitated the current study.

Thirdly, this study was prompted by recognized methodological gaps. Mixed methods research enables more precise and in-depth reporting, and often confirms, contrasts or complements the data analysed (Hammond & Wellington, 2020). In mixed methods research, both quantitative and qualitative data are collected together to provide a richer understanding of the research problem (Baran, 2022). Methodological gaps extend to the research design and methods employed. Mwanja (2020) used a focus group to find out how pastors of the Africa Inland Church (AIC) in Nairobi understood conflict among the clergy. In contrast, the current study adopted the convergent parallel mixed methods approach to examine the impact of

servant leadership on conflict management among pastors in selected PCEA and CITAM churches in urban counties in Kenya.

Finally, this study was necessitated by recommendations from previous scholars. In Africa, Buffel (2020) and Resane (2020) opine that servant leadership is what is needed to address the conflicts and leadership problems facing the church. Similarly, du Plessis and Nkambule (2020) argue that servant leadership begins with theological training that will enable pastors as Bible scholars understand the characteristics, competencies and skills of servant leadership. Craun and Hensen (2022) also insist that pastors are not immune to conflict, and practising servant leadership will help them navigate conflict by learning how to navigate it, understanding the tension brought about by conflict, leadership maturity and effectiveness of servant leadership amid differences. The current study therefore incorporated the recommendations for further research by including all three variables, namely; servant leadership, conflict management, and emotional intelligence.

### **Significance of the study**

This study held significance in the discourse surrounding the influence of servant leadership style on the management of interpersonal conflict, particularly among pastors working in churches. It provided empirical findings that would offer valuable insights to researchers studying servant leadership and conflict management, particularly within the church setting in Kenya, the broader Africa region and globally. Therefore, it was anticipated that by the conclusion of this study, research findings would contribute to the addition of new knowledge in the realm of servant leadership, interpersonal conflict management styles, and emotional intelligence. This

contribution would enrich the existing body of knowledge, theory, and practical applications within the scholarly community.

Additionally, the findings would be beneficial to pastors, churches, para-church ministries and church associations like the NCKK and EAK, theological seminaries, Bible colleges, congregations, as well as international associations and all ministry workers that would be interested in knowing how to improve and manage better interpersonal conflicts that take place at the church or ministry level. Mediation, conflict management professionals as well as future researchers could also benefit from the findings of the study. The study's results would provide valuable support for the implementation of servant leadership behaviours in addressing interpersonal conflicts among people in general and specifically, to pastors. Doing so would reduce levels of interpersonal conflict and mitigate the consequences stemming from unresolved or poorly managed conflicts.

The study also contributes to improving conflict management through the use of emotional intelligence. Both servant leadership and emotional intelligence significantly affect a leader's ability to be effective. Therefore, the outcomes from the study would benefit and provide pastors and those closely involved in ministry with a deeper understanding of how servant leadership influences conflict management and the pivotal role of emotional intelligence in this process. Conflict management is ultimately a leadership issue. Findings from the study could enable pastors to confidently engage in conflict management using servant leadership and emotional intelligence.

The study also contributes to human resource management policies by establishing the training required to help pastors manage and resolve interpersonal conflicts in a better way. The findings and recommendations from the study provides

useful insights that would be beneficial in training and equipping pastors with the correct tools for effective conflict management, either at theological training schools or leadership training departments within the church.

### **Scope of the study**

The scope of the study was limited to two church denominations; the Protestant denomination represented by the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and the Pentecostal denomination represented by Christ Is The Answer Ministries. The study focused on pastors of churches within the eight urban towns in Kenya namely, Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos, Nakuru, Mombasa, Kisumu, Eldoret and Mombasa. Given that the study population was spread out across the eight urban counties, the research considered online dissemination of the questionnaire to ensure access to all. The questionnaire was administered online through a link to the Google form to ensure privacy, anonymity and confidentiality in responses. Respondents were not required to include their names, email or contacts.

Conceptually, the study focused on the servant leadership as the independent variable, interpersonal conflict management as the dependent variable and relationship management as the moderating variable. The methodology used was the mixed methods study, limited to QUAN+QUAL approach where each approach was given equal weight and data was collected simultaneously. The unit of analysis was all the pastors in the two denominations. The entire target population of pastors at different strata were identified using simple random sampling since the population was relatively small. The unit of observation were senior pastors and heads of department in CITAM churches, and moderators and evangelists in the PCEA churches.

## **Limitations**

Several key limitations were anticipated in this study. First, due to the specific focus of the research topic, relevant prior studies were limited, making it challenging to contextualize the findings within existing literature. However, this presented an opportunity to identify gaps in the literature and underscored the need for further development in the area of study.

Secondly, information about conflict management may be deemed by some pastors as sensitive and thus limit access to data required for the study. For this reason, the researcher ensured and reassured respondents of total anonymity in their responses and the privacy of all data collected through the online survey.

Thirdly, some respondents took longer than anticipated to respond to the questionnaire, posing a challenge to the timeliness of data collection. To mitigate this, plans were made for follow-up with respondents through research assistants, email and text messages.

Fourthly, the study also faced a limitation on competing priorities among the pastors. The busy calendar of activities that pastors were engaged in included retreats away from the office, staff and management meetings, conferences, and preparation for weekly ministry. Follow-up calls and emails were used to give reminders to the pastors to participate in the research.

Lastly, this study adopted the convergent mixed methods approach as the data collection strategy. This approach involved the simultaneous collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, which generated a substantial volume of information requiring considerable time and expertise to analyse effectively. According to Almeida (2018), relevant expertise is required in concurrent mixed

methods research. Therefore, the researcher worked alongside a research statistician to ensure all the data was correctly analyzed and reported.

### **Delimitations**

This research was limited in its inability to generalize its findings to all pastors in all churches in Kenya. Kenya is estimated to have over 4,000 churches that represent vast numbers of pastors, according to the Kenya National Bureau Census (2019). Therefore, it was not possible to include all in this study. The study was also limited to PCEA and CITAM churches. Thus, participants from other churches were left out.

The study also sought to cover a wide scope of the CITAM and PCEA churches in the selected urban towns. To produce a manageable and concise work, the study focused on current pastors within the identified churches. The study did not gather information from volunteers such as elders or congregants who actively serve in the church as part time or volunteer pastors. The study also specifically focused on selected aspects of servant leadership, conflict management styles and relationship management in emotional intelligence that aligned with the stated objectives. It did not explore other dimensions of these constructs that fell outside the scope of the research.

### **Chapter Summary**

The first chapter of the study has offered a broad overview of the three variables involved in this study which are; servant leadership, conflict management styles and relationship management in emotional intelligence. The three variables were presented from the global, African, and Kenyan perspectives. Additionally, the

chapter has provided the background of the study and problem statement, the study's objectives, hypotheses, significance, assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. Chapter two delved into the literature review, theoretical framework and the conceptual framework.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The chapter begins with a review of the published research that is available on the variables that were considered for the study. Additionally, the literature review attempts to draw a link between the characteristics of servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence. In so doing, the literature review seeks to bring out conceptual gaps, methodological, and contextual gaps within the area of study and proposes how those gaps shall be addressed within the current study. Subsequently, it presents the theoretical framework, synthesizes the identified research gaps, and proposes a conceptual framework. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary.

### **Servant Leadership**

The term ‘servant leadership’ originated from Robert Greenleaf’s writings (Song et al., 2022). According to Greenleaf, servant leadership represents both a theoretic framework of leadership theory and a distinct leadership style (Northouse, 2022). Greenleaf was inspired and driven by a desire to see a shift in business practice and conduct where the consumer as customer or employee was prioritized and well served in a positive work environment (Sobralke, 2020). Greenleaf questioned and objected the common leadership theories at the time, such as transactional leadership that was driven by motivation for business growth and profit rather than focused on the employees and customers (Sobralke, 2020). Servant leadership seeks to involve others in the making of decisions, emphasizing caring behaviour, upholding ethical standards, fostering employee growth, and uplifting others, while also increasing the

care and general quality of life for the employees in the organization (Song et al., 2022).

Various research investigations have looked into how servant leadership style might be used in the management of conflict. In some instances, servant leadership has been found to contribute to productive management of conflict management in work environments (Hough, 2021; Obi et al., 2020). Buffel (2020) opined that servant leaders make more effective choices and decisions, in both conflict prevention and management when it occurs. According to Freeborough (2021), exercising higher levels of servant leadership among non-profit employees in America resulted in reduced interpersonal conflict at work.

Similarly, studies undertaken in Africa have also indicated a positive and substantial link between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management. Similarly, research undertaken in Africa reveals a good and significant link between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict resolution. For example, Obi et al. (2020) found that the servant leadership style supports the collaborative conflict management style in a research on the link between servant leadership and emotional well-being through team conflicts among Catholic nuns in Nigeria. The findings from the preceding research demonstrate the applicability of servant leadership in the setting of the current investigation. The next section delves into the four servant leadership traits that served as the study's independent variable, beginning with emotional healing.

### ***Emotional Healing and Interpersonal Conflict Management***

Emotional healing is one of the key components of servant leadership, which was the independent variable in the current study. Interpersonal conflict is likely to cause anger and hurt in the hearts of those engaged in conflict (Kohlrieser & Kohlrieser, 2024). Emotional healing, integral to servant leadership, encompasses

forgiveness as a central part of the healing journey as it is the first step to peace and resolution for both parties involved (McCully, 2021). The servant leaders create an environment of hope in times of conflict by offering to listen, with the aim of fostering healing and restoration to repair the relationships with self, others and God (Cook, 2022). The components of emotional healing include compassionate listening, collaboration, demonstrating sensitivity to the needs of others, displaying concern for their wellbeing, being attuned to the personal concerns of others through empathy and awareness, among other virtues McCully (2021). Engaging emotional healing during conflict involves care-fronting, which implies addressing the conflict without fear of facing it head-on, and choosing healthy conflict management methods so that emotional healing is possible (Slotta, 2020). The following section presents several studies on emotional healing and interpersonal conflict management that have been carried out, beginning with some global studies.

Ghayas et al. (2023) conducted research in Pakistan to investigate the role that trust played in mediating the relationship between several servant leadership dimensions and organizational commitment in the country's post-COVID IT industry. A self-administered survey was used to collect data from 283 IT professionals from all over Pakistan. The data was analyzed using structural equation modelling. The findings from the analysis revealed that trust in their leaders played an important role in the relationship between servant leadership and organizational commitment, albeit partially. On the specific servant leadership dimension of emotional healing, the study discovered that trust or confidence in the leader completely mediated the relationship between emotional healing and continued organizational commitment. Similarly, the current study examined the unique servant leadership dimensions of emotional healing, but in the context of interpersonal conflict management among pastors.

In another study, Domínguez-Escrig et al. (2021) investigated the link between the servant leadership behaviour of emotional healing and radical innovation in Spain. The hypotheses were tested using structural equation modelling, which included an explanatory variable. The study analyzed data from 292 questionnaires collected from 146 Spanish organizations in two phases carried out five year apart. Findings from the study confirmed that emotional healing enhances organizational learning capability, which subsequently fosters radical innovation. Domínguez-Escrig et al. (2021) studied the relationship between emotional healing and radical innovation, while the current study focused on the relationship between emotional healing and interpersonal conflict management among pastors.

Cook (2022) undertook a study to investigate how servant leadership characteristics are utilized by parish clergy through their lived experiences in the USA. The research design used was the single common case study that would allow what was going on to be viewed. The data was collected by interviewing 20 parish clergy who were currently serving in different roles as parish leaders. Purposive sampling was used to identify the interviewees. A semi-structured questionnaire was utilized as the interview tool. The interviews were videotaped and responses written down to ensure accuracy. The researcher also used ministry plans, mission statements and other valid material with additional information about the parish ministry. The study found that parish clergy employed the listening and empathy elements of servant leadership to establish trust through one-on-one relationships. Both listening and empathy are servant leadership traits that enhance the environment for emotional healing to take place. While the current study took place among pastors who are similar to clergy in role, it went further to examine specific servant leadership dimensions in relation to servant leadership.

Stoddard (2023) used his personal story to outline situations from his life that demonstrated the discomfort caused by conflict and how the discomfort was corrected through servant leadership. In the articles, he explored different conflict experiences that brought criticism, bitterness, hostility, suffering, and separation between the individuals involved in the conflict. According to Stoddard (2023), emotional healing requires one's decision and ability to love and forgive consistently, genuinely and unashamedly. Stoddard (2023) described how he and the individuals involved in conflict had to attune themselves to the principles of servant leadership that included listening to, being aware of each other's feelings, moving towards love, having empathy and working towards healing in order to lead to restored relationship. While Stoddard's study relied on the auto-ethnography to share a personal lived experience, the current study utilized a pragmatic approach to analyze servant leadership and conflict management concepts, both quantitatively and through lived experiences. Additionally, the current study engaged more respondents in order to gather more data on the subject. The next section presents empirical studies carried out in Africa.

In South Africa, Heyns et al. (2020) carried out a research to assess features of servant leadership at a power utility located in the Free State Province. The researchers wanted to look into servant leadership in a different setting to acquire a better understanding of how it works. Servant leadership was specifically chosen because various studies have strongly associated it with improved performance in various organizations. A convenience sample of 771 people was surveyed using the servant leadership 30-item instrument by van Dierendonck and Nuijten to solicit feedback from a follower perspective. The statistical analysis comprised of descriptive, reliability and validity tests, as well as ANOVA assessments. Results from the analysis indicated the power utility was not a healthy servant leadership

organization because it failed to prioritize the needs of others first. The researchers concluded that servant leadership behaviours were not valued or practiced in the power utility. However, the servant leadership behaviour of forgiveness recorded the highest mean score  $m=3.26$ , which was within the 'agree' range, meaning that participants believed that their supervisors demonstrated forgiveness. The current study similarly investigated the specific servant leadership behaviours, but in relationship to conflict management. Additionally, the current study considered a religious context, while the study by Heyns et al. (2020) considered a government owned power utility plant.

Gelan and Gelan (2024) investigated servant leadership and its impact on workplace conflict management in Ethiopia, in the state administration bureau of Oromia. The study involved a total of 385 respondents consisting of both employees and management at the state bureau. Respondents were identified through both stratified and simple random sampling. A structured questionnaire was used to collect quantitative data, while a semi-structured questionnaire was used for interviews to collect qualitative data. The tool used to collect servant leadership information was the Servant Leadership Survey (SLS), created by van Dierendonck and Nuijten. SPSS Version 25 was used for descriptive analysis, and AMOS 23 used to analyze data using the structural equation model data. According to the study's findings, the forgiveness aspect of servant leadership was found to have a significant and favourable impact on organizational conflict management at a  $p=0.01$  significance level. Leaders, who refrained from excessive criticism, let go of past grievances and maintained a compassionate attitude towards those who made mistakes contributed to better conflict resolution among subordinates in the study. The present study used the short form Servant Leadership measure which was developed by Liden and others

(Flotman & Grobler, 2020). Furthermore, while the study by Gelan and Gelan (2024) was conducted in a state administration office, this study focused on pastors in selected urban counties in Kenya.

Still in Ethiopia, Lapiso (2023) undertook a case study on the impact of servant leadership style on the performance at the Behran Bank in Ethiopia. The study sought to determine how specific servant leadership behaviours impacted on the performance of the bank. Questionnaires were distributed among 120 respondents from selected branches. A quantitative approach was used. Exploratory research design was used and quantitative research. Comprehensive sampling was used since the population of the study was small. The researcher used a measured scale that was adapted from established scales. Five servant leadership dimensions were included in the study, namely: organizational stewardship, emotional healing, altruism, wisdom, and persuasive mapping. The study's hypothesis was that the manager's emotional healing significantly affected organizational performance in the bank. The findings demonstrated that emotional healing contributed to the mental and emotional well-being of their workforce, and also fostered unity and teamwork. The current study used a specific servant leadership scale, while Lapiso's study used an amalgamation of different servant leadership measurement scales. Furthermore, while the aforementioned study focused at the bank, the present study targeted pastors in selected urban towns in Kenya.

Coming down locally to Kenya, Marambi (2022) explored how Seventh Day Adventist pastors in Central Kenya Conference experienced emotional healing. The study collected data using a questionnaire and interviews. The questionnaire was disseminated to 40 pastors who were purposefully selected from eight stations, while interviews were conducted on 8 pastors to learn about their ideas and opinions on

emotional hurt and healing from their ministry experience. Findings from the study indicated that prayer, sermons, forgiveness, counselling support and good relationships were necessary for emotional healing to take place. The survey by Marambi was pertinent to the current study since pastors were participants, and thus, similar in its audience. Additionally, both Marambi's and the current study looked at the dimension of emotional healing among pastors. However, the current study extended its scope to investigate pastors from more than one denomination to gather data on emotional healing. These were the CITAM and PCEA churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

### **Conceptual Skills and Interpersonal Conflict**

The second element of servant leadership considered for this study was conceptual skills. Conceptual skills refer to one's capacity to conceive ideas and grand visions for the organization that extends beyond operational thinking toward directing attention to the overarching vision and mission. Conceptual skills are a competency that leaders can develop in their followers through valuing their growth, prioritizing their needs at work, empowering employees to engage in the community, and being responsive to personal problems that the employees may have (Eva et al., 2019; Mahmood & Baskaran, 2022). In so doing, servant leaders empower followers to contribute to the company goals, build a sense of belonging, and increase their confidence in their work and leadership skills, resulting in increased performance output, joy, fulfilment, and well-being (Meuser & Smallfield, 2023). This implies that when conflict situations arise, the servant leader can respond in a manner aligned with the institutional goals and organizational objectives.

According to Santora et al. (2020), the servant leader can conceptualize the inevitability of conflict and develop an approach that ensures an outlined process of managing relationships. Santora et al. (2020) argues that because the essence of servant leadership is service first and leadership second, servant leaders transcend their self-interests by putting into subordination their ego and need for power. Thus, when conflict situations arise, the servant leader can respond in a way that relates to the vision in the long term, targets of the institution and its objectives. Such a servant leader is not caught unaware when conflict happens. Unexpected and unmanaged conflict leads to resignations which in turn affect the long-term plans of the institution.

Scazzero (2021) presents the opinion that an effective leader must know his/her capacities well enough as well as their limits, so as to steer the organization in the direction of its purpose. This applies to the area of conflict management while running a body such as a church. The pastor as a leader understands that his/her abilities can hinder or foster growth for better interpersonal relations in the presence of conflict. Their capacity can either balance long-term concerns when managing present-day interpersonal conflicts for better or for worse. With a strong awareness of their positions as servant leaders, during conflict, pastors in conflict consider how best to manage their interpersonal conflict and not leave matters unattended which might jeopardize the attainment of the church's long range objectives. Next is a review of empirical studies which looked into the area of conceptual skills in servant leadership.

Fields (2021) conducted a study among staff in American non-profit organizations involved in social work activities, on servant leadership and conflicts at their place of work. The study assessed several servant leadership behaviours as separate dimensions, including conceptualization. Correlation analysis results

indicated that the more servant leaders emphasized the good of the whole organizational entity, communicated a long term vision and encouraged employees to act and make decisions in the shared benefit of the whole, conflicts regarding relationships, performance, work tasks and organizational differences were greatly reduced. The focus on servant leadership was similar to that of the current study on servant leadership behaviours. However, the present study focused on the five interpersonal conflict management styles, while Fields (2021) focused on interpersonal work place conflict sub-scales that included task process, task outcome, non-task organizational conflict and relational conflict. Further to that, while Fields (2021) focused on non-profit organizations, the current investigation concentrated on pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya.

In Jordan, Melhelm et al. (2023) explored the effect of servant leadership on the job performance of employees in the airline industry. Melhem et al. (2023) investigated several behaviours of servant leaders, including conceptualization. The researcher anticipated that the leader's conceptualization had a positive and beneficial impact on work performance of the employees. The short form Liden servant leadership scale was used to collect information from the employees. From a population of 800 employees, 201 responded to the survey. In the study, one of the hypotheses stated that the leader's conceptualization had a positive impact on job performance as perceived by employees. The study's findings showed that the impact of conceptualization on job performance was significant at  $p > 0.05$  but not substantial, with a regression value of -0.017, hence the hypothesis was rejected. Conceptualization was found to have no impact of job performance. The current study considered the servant leadership subscale of conceptualization in relationship with interpersonal conflict management styles.

In Italy, Canavesi and Minelli (2022) undertook a qualitative study to investigate the relationship between various aspects of servant leadership and engagement among staff workers through a qualitative research. A consulting firm with more female leaders than other consulting firms was chosen, on the reasoning that women leaders are more communal, affiliative and more likely to show servant leadership behaviours than males. The researchers collected data using questionnaires to assess the level servant leadership implementation in the firm using the Liden short form data collection instrument. The qualitative data was gathered using a semi-structured questionnaire that had three open-ended questions. The financial division was selected and 250 junior employees selected as the sample and 151 responded to the survey. The survey was administered online to ensure effectiveness of data entry and integration. In the analysis of the servant leadership results, all the scores of each servant leadership dimension were added together and divided to get an average score. However, the researchers noticed that the results for conceptual skills were particularly high. This indicated that there was a link connecting conceptual skills and engagement of the employees. The current study focused on specific servant leadership dimensions including conceptualization. However, while the study by Canavesi and Minelli (2022) focused on job performance, the current study investigated servant leadership behaviours in the context of conflict management. Additionally, the current inquiry employed a mixed-methods approach.

In Africa, Malingumu (2023) undertook a longitudinal study in Tanzanian higher education institutions, investigating the influence of servant leadership and conflict behaviour on the performance of staff. Data was collected over two waves conducted in one year. Out of a population of 800 respondents, 361 responded in the initial wave of collection of data, while 198 questionnaires were returned in the

subsequent phase of data collection. The study used Liden's multi-dimensional measure of servant leadership with 28 items, while the Dutch test of handling conflict was used to assess conflict behaviours. The hypotheses of the study were tested using correlation and regression analyses. One of the study's specific findings was that the servant leaders in the universities were not using problem solving, which is associated with conceptual skills of leaders, as expected. While Malingumu's study considered overall servant leadership behaviours against individual conflict management behaviours, the current study looked at specific servant leadership behaviours in order to identify how each was related to the specific conflict management behaviours. Additionally, while Malingumu's study was longitudinal, the present investigation was a cross-sectional.

Still in the East Africa region, Onaga (2022) undertook a study in order to comprehend better the concept and application of servant leadership in Uganda at the Watoto Church in Uganda. Using a qualitative case-study design, the research was carried out to collect information about personal experiences, emotions and feelings of the participants. Purposeful sampling was used to identify ten pastors from different levels of leadership who were deemed to be relevant to the objectives of the investigation. The findings demonstrated that servant leadership behaviours were evident among the leaders, such as visionary leadership and empathy among others. Of specific interest to the current study was visionary leadership which is an aspect of conceptual skills in servant leadership style. The results demonstrated that practical application of servant leadership had influenced and brought benefits enhancing ownership of the ministry, commitment and dedication, thus leading to drastic growth of the church and paving the way for smooth leadership succession. The current study is similar to that of Watoto church in that pastors were involved in the study as

respondents. The aspect of servant leadership was similar in both studies. However, the current study differed because it went further to investigate specific servant leadership behaviours. Additionally, the current study considered a mixed methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data while Onaga (2022) used a qualitative approach only. Finally, the current study specifically investigated the linkages between servant leadership and conflict management, unlike the study on Watoto church which only focused on servant leadership.

Coming down to Kenya, Karanja et al. (2021) carried out a study to investigate the impact of servant leadership style on public engagement in the county governments in Kenya. The research designs that were used in the inquiry were descriptive and explanatory. While the population of the study consisted of all registered voters in all 47 counties of Kenya, two-stage sampling method was utilized to narrow down to eight counties. The study used a sample size of 400 respondents, of whom 296 completed the questionnaires. Out of four servant leadership behaviours of modelling, wisdom, authenticity and organizational stewardship investigated, the study revealed that modelling and wisdom were the strongest components that were instrumental in influencing public participation. Wisdom, which is closely connected to conceptual skills, implies that the leader is aware of the surrounding context, able to correctly anticipate cues and consequences, and good at combining knowledge and utility. The study therefore indicated that servant leadership style had a favourable impact on public participation. In the same way, the current study intended to look into the impact of specific servant leadership behaviours. However, while Karanja et al. (2021) focused on public participation, the current study looked at conflict management styles.

Still in Kenya, Mburu and Gichira (2022) carried out a study in Kirinyaga County to investigate the impact of servant leadership on the work performance of faith based self-groups organizations in the area. The study was based on the Servant Leadership Theory. Questionnaires were distributed to 80 participants for data collection. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. One of the specific aims of the study was to investigate the impact of stewardship, which is associated with conceptual skills, on organizational performance. The outcome of the investigation indicated that stewardship had a beneficial and substantial effect on organizational performance. Similar to the current study, both studies looked at specific servant leadership dimensions in faith-based environments. However, while Mburu and Gichira (2022) examined servant leadership effect on performance, the current study looked at conflict management.

Another study on servant leadership in Kenya was done by Mbogori (2020). The study looked into whether there was a link between servant leadership and church performance at Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK) in Meru County. The researcher used a descriptive cross-sectional survey approach and stratified sampling through which 97 respondents were identified. The study was quantitative and tested seven servant leadership attributes, namely; conceptualizing, helping followers to advance and thrive, putting followers first, exhibiting ethical integrity, creating value and empowering others,. Although the overall study indicated that all the servant leadership attributes had an effect on organizational performance, it also indicated that a unit increase in conceptualization had the most effect on organizational performance. While the study by Mbogori (2020) considered organizational performance, the current study considered the connection linking servant leadership to conflict management approaches. Additionally, while Mbogori (2020) considered Full

Gospel churches in Meru, the present study considered CITAM and PCEA churches in eight urban counties in Kenya.

### **Putting Followers First on Interpersonal Conflict**

The third element under the servant leadership independent variable was 'putting followers first'. Leaders bear the crucial responsibility of managing conflict among their followers (Obi et al., 2020). According to Xiu et al. (2024), leaders who practice servant leadership value the wellbeing of those they lead over their own needs and foster a culture of service which directly influences performance positively. Instead of the hierarchical top-down strategy, servant leadership upholds and embodies a bottom-up strategy in influencing followers (Kenion, 2024). The emphasis is not to please followers but to develop followers so as to grant them a sense of agency and autonomy in their lives as well as seeing their participation toward achievement of organizational goals as valued and needed (Schaufeli, 2021). A servant leader who puts followers first is a leader who pursues developing a sense of organizational loyalty among the followers, cooperation, collaboration, and cultivating a sense of inclusion and community (Lee et al., 2020). Such a leader demonstrates respect, humility and compassion during conflict management and enables followers to openly discuss difficulties, disagreements and frustrations (Adham, 2023; Johnson & Johnson, 2024).

So as to look into the effect of servant leadership on conflict resolution in faith-based organizations in the USA, including churches, Segundo (2021) carried out a qualitative research study. Purposive sampling was utilized to identify a sample of 20 religious leaders from various denominations that were suitable to the objectives of the study. Semi-structured interviews were employed to collect data, giving

participants the opportunity to share detailed opinions about their conflict resolution and leadership philosophies. To find trends and make inferences from the qualitative data, thematic analysis was utilized. The study postulated that servant leadership approaches, particularly those that prioritize followers, greatly enhance leaders' relationship trust and authenticity. Findings from the study indicated that participants shared values in five areas, namely; communication, biblical standards, vision, unity, and empowerment, which helped them in conflict management in their faith-based organizations.

Wang et al. (2020) conducted a cross-cultural study with samples of participants from Canada, Pakistan, China, America and Brazil. The study investigated how servant leaders, distinguished by their practice of putting others first, prioritizing needs of their followers, promote employee well-being, enhance workplace relationships and foster a conducive environment for growth and innovation. This study went on to show that de-escalation of conflict is also due to the kind of environment nurtured by the existing form or forms of leadership modelled. Wang et al. (2020) revealed how servant leadership outperformed other kinds of leadership styles because the core of servant leadership is the call to meet the needs of followers and inspiring them to take action. This supported and reinforced the intention of the present study to examine the effect of four servant leadership characteristics on the five conflict management styles among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

Still in the global arena, Suppra et al. (2023) took up a study to investigate how servant leadership influence the conflict management styles of workers in Pakistan's textile industry. In order to obtain data from the leaders in managerial positions, cross-sectional survey design was used and a sample size of 193

respondents participated in the study. The researchers used Liden's servant leadership scale and Rahim's organizational conflict inventory to assess servant leadership and conflict management styles respectively. Findings from the study indicated that servant leadership had a positive impact across the different conflict management styles. The study concluded that putting followers first as a servant leadership behaviour evidenced by giving mutual respect, active listening and empathic understanding produced a positive work environment that reduces the likelihood of disagreements and disputes from growing. Although the study found a clear link between servant leadership and conflict management styles, it did not show how the specific behaviours of servant leaders interacted with the conflict management styles. The present inquiry aimed to address this gap.

Still within the United States, Kenion (2024) undertook a qualitative inquiry to explore how non-profit leaders' use of servant leadership characteristics impeded or enhanced their work-life balance. The inquiry sought to help with the practical application of servant leadership in existing organizations. The research involved the purposive sampling of 15 participants working in non-profits organizations at director level residing in the tri-state areas of Philadelphia, Delaware and New Jersey. A crucial outcome from the investigation was that servant leaders put the development and welfare of their followers first by creating a climate where everyone felt appreciated and supported. The sense of community therefore improved work life balance by fostering a network of people who could rely on each other for responsibility sharing, understanding and support. Thus, the influence of the servant leadership behaviour of putting followers first was found to positively affect work life balance among employees in the non-profit organizations involved in the study. In a similar way, the present study considered the impact of putting followers first in the

non-profit religious context, under which churches operate in Kenya. However, while the study considered the effect of putting followers first on work-life balance, the current study considered the effect of putting followers first on interpersonal conflict management styles. The next section considers empirical studies within Africa.

In Ghana, Sarpong (2024) conducted research on servant leadership and the satisfaction with work among healthcare providers who were based in Southern Ghana. The study attempted to determine whether and the degree to which servant leadership constructs, including putting followers first through empowerment, affected their job satisfaction. The study was quantitative in nature. Through the use of convenience sampling, 111 surveys were completed through pencil-paper. Eight aspects of servant leadership were measured using validated servant leadership and job satisfaction scales. The data analysis showed that servant leadership had no major effect on the job satisfaction of the employees, whether individually among the specific servant leadership behaviours with  $p=.117$ , or collectively at  $p=.575$ . Sarpong (2024) therefore noted that further research should investigate the servant leadership-job satisfaction relationship across different contexts in Ghana. Whereas Sarpong's (2024) took place among healthcare providers in Ghana, the current study considered pastors in urban churches in Kenya. However, Sarpong considered the certain features of servant leadership, which this present study also explored.

In another study carried out in South Africa, Heyns et al. (2020) investigated servant leadership features among leaders at a power plant. Applying the quantitative cross-sectional survey study design and convenience sampling, responses were collected from 771 participants who completed the survey. On the servant leadership feature of putting followers first, the findings from the investigation revealed that there was a positive correlation in the use of servant leadership and employees from

diverse backgrounds in multiple South African organizations whereby, the variables of commitment to the organization, work satisfaction and no intention quitting was positively associated. While the investigation by Heyns et al. (2020) was conducted at a power plant, the current study investigated servant leadership attributes among pastors in PCEA and CITAM churches in Kenya. Additionally, the current study considered servant leadership behaviours relationship with conflict management styles, while the study by Heyns et al. (2020) considered servant leadership against organizational performance.

### **Behaving Ethically and Interpersonal Conflict**

The fourth and final element under the independent variable of servant leadership was behaving ethically. Behaving ethically includes moral principles such as integrity, honesty, modesty, reliability, trustworthiness and respecting others (Funga & Sambu, 2023). Trustworthiness, integrity and honesty are all indicators of ethical leadership behaviour (Dahlin & Schroeder, 2022). Ethical behaviour is that which is accepted as good and right in the context of the governing code, which in turn is influenced by a person's upbringing, family, friends, local culture and religion, among others (Schermerhorn et al., 2020). Religious values and spirituality are regarded as critical in developing and influencing organizations with strong ethical standards (Astrachan et al., 2020).

In China, Chi et al. (2020) undertook a study on how servant leadership can minimize scepticism about the organization and foster corporate engagement in leadership among institutions of higher learning. The study targeted one university in America and another university in China. Online survey was used to collect data from 475 full time employees of both universities. Data was analyzed using SPSS Version

22 and AMOS software. The servant leadership behaviours that were investigated in the study included: moral integrity, interpersonal support, altruism, building community and equality. The study found that all five servant leadership dimensions significantly contributed to the organizational citizenship behaviours. Specifically, the servant leadership behaviour of moral integrity, which is similar to behaving ethically was, key in helping the leaders develop explicit policies and procedures to address ethical matters, setting the tone as a moral leader and arbitrator in resolving conflicts and tensions among employees, and in presenting ethical values. The similarity between the current study and that of Chi et al. (2020) was in the target group of leaders. However, while Chi et al. (2020) considered servant leadership behaviours against corporate engagement, the current study considered conflict management styles.

In Jordan, Hamdan et al. (2020) carried out a research to identify the influence of servant leadership on the citizenship behaviour of employees in the banking sector, while also investigating the mediating function of job satisfaction. The study sample was drawn from three Islamic banks in the Jordanian State. The survey had 168 respondents who participated in the study through random sampling. The study specifically included a hypothesis that ethical behaviour had no substantial impact on the corporate citizenship behaviour. The short form Liden servant leadership scale used to capture data from the participants. To determine the impact of every specific dimension of servant leadership, multiple regression analysis was used. Findings from the analysis indicated that behaving ethically had an impact on organizational citizenship behaviour with a co-efficient of 0.284 at  $p > 0.05$ . The current study focused on behaving ethically as one of the servant leadership characteristics, similar to the study by Hamdan et al. (2020). However, the present study included conflict

management as a dependant variable, which was not included in the research by Hamdan et al. (2020).

Coming to studies within the Africa Region, Satena et al. (2024) conducted research to examine the impact of servant leadership behaviours on corporate performance among the administration staff of Bule Hora University, Ethiopia. The research used explanatory research design and quantitative data collection method. The sample size consisted of 361 participants selected through random sampling. Data was collected through structured surveys. To determine the relationships, as well as the strength and direction of the associations between servant leadership dimensions and corporate performance, regression and correlation analyses were carried out. Ethical behaviour was one of the servant leadership elements that was considered in the study. The analysis of the results revealed that behaving ethically exhibited a strong correlation with authenticity and accountability in organizational performance. The current study differs from the aforementioned in that it considered the association involving behaving ethically and conflict management styles. Additionally, while Satena et al. (2024) focused on employees and management at the university level, the current study considered pastors working in urban churches in Kenya.

In Kenya, Shaasha et al. (2024) undertook a study to determine the moderation impact of servant leadership on the spiritual growth of three church denominations. The study was guided by pragmatism research philosophy and use of the mixed methods research approach. Three denominations were considered for the study, which were the Pentecostal Evangelical Fellowship of Africa (PEFA), the Pentecostal Assemblies of God (PAG), and Full Gospel Churches of Kenya (FGCK). The sample size was made up of selected Pentecostal churches within five urban counties, namely; Nairobi, Machakos, Murang'a, Kiambu and Kajiado. The study

used the mixed methods approach, and therefore, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. All the respondents were required to fill out the survey questionnaire, while interview guides were prepared and used for the focus group interview sessions. Data was gathered from a total of 333 church leaders and selected church members from all three denominations. The study used 3 servant leadership behaviours namely; building the community, dedication to the development of people and stewardship community building.

Findings from the study indicated that the pastors demonstrated elevated ethical practice and expectation in how they conducted themselves in their service to God, which was covered in the area of stewardship. This area had the highest mean of 4.26 compared to other areas such as community building and commitment to church growth. Holding high ethical standards was considered as crucial in making a leader successful (Northouse, 2022). The aforementioned study and the current study were similar in the religious context as well as in the study of the servant leadership behaviours. However, the instruments in both studies were different with the current study utilizing the Liden short-form servant leadership tool.

Matisi (2020) carried out a study to investigate unity and conflict on the establishment and expansion of the PEFA church in Bungoma County, Kenya. The church had been plagued with conflicts due to leadership wrangles. Mixed methods research design was used to get responses from a stratified and purposive sample size of 164 respondents from over 300 churches. The study found that the moral fabric of the pastors and leaders contributed most to the disintegration of the church, and not necessarily the leadership styles of the pastors and leaders. Inefficient leadership during conflict resulted in withdrawal of members, formation of splinter groups, break-up of the church and loss of faith among the congregants who eventually left

the church altogether. While the study by Matisi (2020) considered visionary and shepherd leadership in conflict, the present inquiry looked at the association of servant leadership behaviours with the various conflict management styles. The following section looks at studies that have incorporated emotional intelligence as a moderating variable.

### **Moderating role of emotional intelligence**

Bradberry (2023) describes emotional intelligence as the capacity to be aware of, comprehend, and control personal emotions, and which involves some skills such as emotional awareness, understanding, control and social skills. Emotional intelligence is a crucial part of the range of conceptual skills a servant leader needs to possess to aid in their conflict resolution technique (Winardi et al., 2022). Emotional intelligence has a variety of advantages when it comes to conflict resolution as it incorporates more elevated levels of instinct, sympathy, compassion and the capacity to break down these emotions effectively Bradberry(2023). Since leadership is largely relational and interpersonal, these elements can mark the difference between a leader and an emotionally intelligent leader in the way conflict is handled. The following section looks at global, regional and local studies about the moderating effect of the variable; emotional intelligence.

In Pakistan, Sarmad et al. (2021) investigated the moderating influence of emotional intelligence on work behaviour that was detrimental, how the negative work behaviour interfered with delivery of work in the organization, and the unpleasant emotions that arose with the negative work behaviour, within the development sector in the country. Their study involved 258 respondents. The results indicated that for the variables of negative emotions at work, work behaviour that was

counterproductive and interference with work, emotional intelligence indeed served as a moderating variable. Sarmad et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of understanding the significance of emotional intelligence across all levels of management within the development sector to foster desirable work place behaviours. The current study similarly investigated the moderating role of emotional intelligence. However, while Sarmad et al. (2021) concentrated on the development sector in Pakistan, the present investigation explored the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the religious context among pastors from churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

Still in Pakistan, Ullah (2022) investigated the patterns of process and task conflicts and how they relate to interpersonal conflict, how emotional intelligence played a moderating role and identified the mediating role played by negative emotions in the workplace. Ullah's investigation gathered data from 142 employees across various organizations. The findings demonstrated that individuals involved in process and task conflicts or disputes with others were more likely to experience relationship conflict in the workplace. Furthermore, the study found that employees who tested as having greater levels of emotional intelligence were more effective in regulating and managing the negative emotions they experienced at work. The study by Ullah (2022) was comparable to the present as both studies chose the moderating variable to be emotional intelligence. However, whereas Ullah's (2022) study investigated how emotional intelligence moderated the link between process, task and relationship conflicts, the current study addressed emotional intelligence's moderating effect in the relationship between servant leadership as the independent variable and conflict management as the dependent variable, among pastor leaders from churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

In yet another study conducted in Pakistan, Shehzadi and Khan (2024) carried out a study to explore how the connection between incivility and engagement among staff working at Pakistani higher education institutions is moderated by emotional intelligence. The study used survey approach and utilized an empirical questionnaire to collect quantitative data. Data was collected from academic faculty members through convenience sampling. The questionnaire was administered online through email, Whatsup, LinkedIn and other social media applications. The study had a total of 346 respondents who participated in the investigation. The study's findings demonstrated that emotional intelligence positively influenced and strengthened the engagement of innovative employment behaviour. Shehzadi and Khan (2024) administered the research questionnaire online, which the current study did as well, to engage respondents. For the current study, online platforms were chosen as pastors were spread out in workplaces located in different parts of the selected counties in Kenya. Both studies took into account emotional intelligence as the moderating variable. However, the present research considered how emotional intelligence played a moderating role in the connection between the independent variable 'servant leadership', and 'conflict management' as the dependant variable among pastors in Kenya.

In France, Michinov (2022) undertook an exploratory study to look into the links between emotional intelligence, conflict management and burnout among French fire fighters. The study employed the use of validated scales that were already developed, for all the three variables of the study, which were; burn out, emotional intelligence, and conflict management styles. The survey was administered online to 240 fire fighters. Findings from the study indicated that self awareness of emotions, which is one of the aspects of emotional intelligence, positively facilitated the

relationship between integrating style of conflict management and burnout. Thus, emotional intelligence was important in reducing emotional exhaustion because it allowed the firemen to detect and manage their emotions during disagreements, stress and confrontation and in times of crisis. Similarly, the current study used online platforms to reach the respondents who were spread out in different parts of the country. Both studies used emotional intelligence as the moderating variable. However, while the study by Michinov (2022) looked at conflict management and burnout as the independent and dependant variables, the present research considered how emotional intelligence played a moderating role in the connection between the independent variable of servant leadership, and conflict management as the dependant variable among pastors in Kenya.

Within the Africa region, Fianko et al. (2024) undertook a study in Ghana. The study sought to explore whether a leader's emotional intelligence level boosted or lessened the effect of organizational climate on the job satisfaction of employees. Employees from 602 youth-owned and managed small businesses were randomly selected to participate in the study. SMART PLS, a software tool used in research to analyze complex relationships between variables, was used to analyze the data collected using partial least squares and structural equation modelling. The analysis from the results of the investigation indicated that emotional intelligence positively impacted the connection between the variable organizational climate and the variable job satisfaction. Thus, emotional intelligence was found to amplify greater job satisfaction. The purpose of the current study was to determine the role of emotional intelligence in the association between the variables servant leadership and conflict management styles.

In Nigeria, Olowodunoye and Irewole (2022) examined the moderating influence of emotional intelligence on the link between academic stress as perceived by students and the academic adjustments. The research was carried out among first degree university students in Ondo State, Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey methodology was employed in the course of the investigation. Through the use of multi-stage sampling, a grand total of 500 respondents were sampled from three universities. From the results, emotional intelligence was strongly demonstrated to predict how the undergraduates responded to academic adjustments. Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that emotional intelligence played a significant moderating role in the relationship between felt stress and academic adjustment. Thus, the study concluded that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between the perceived stress and academic adjustment by mitigating the harmful impact of the same among the undergraduate students. The current study considered the moderating effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management among pastors in urban churches in Kenya.

In Kenya, Bonnyventure et al (2022) investigated the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between integrative leadership and performance among airfield personal based in various airfields across Kenya. The research investigation was underpinned by three theories: the Full Range Leadership Theory as the main theory, reinforced by Emotional Intelligence Theory and the Resource Based View Theory. The researchers adopted a cross-sectional survey design and utilized a mixed methods approach. A census survey was utilized to obtain information from 180 participants who took part in the study across 60 airfields in the country. On the research objective regarding the moderating impact emotional intelligence had on the link between intergrative leadership and airfield performance,

emotional intelligence was seen to significantly moderate relationship between the two. Emotional intelligence boosted the impact of integrative kind of leadership on the airfield performance. The current study looked at how emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between specific sub-variables of servant leadership and the five conflict management styles, among pastors in churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

In summary of the moderating influence of emotional intelligence, the various studies cited in this current research from a global, regional and local perspective have explored the variables of emotional intelligence and conflict management styles. The studies have added to the academic knowledge and understanding of how emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between the identified independent and dependant variables investigated by the different researchers. However, there is a considerable study gap in research, particularly in Africa and specifically in Kenya in the church context, where emotional intelligence and conflict management styles are under-researched. Currently, there is a shortage of published empirical studies on the extent to which pastors in Kenya utilize emotional intelligence when addressing interpersonal conflict in Kenya, highlighting a significant research gap. The current study addressed this gap by examining how emotional intelligence moderated the association linking specific sub variables of servant leadership style to the five conflict management styles among pastors from purposely selected urban churches in selected counties in Kenya. The section that follows presents the theoretical foundation that informed the present study.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Theories are valuable because they can explain complex phenomena in comprehensive ways, through their practicality and ability to be operationalized, as well as through their empirical validity and transferability (Dugan, 2024). Leadership theories seek to define what constitutes leadership and attempt to identify what makes an effective leader (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). Three theories were used in this study to guide the research. The three theories are Servant Leadership Theory, Organizational Theory and Emotional Intelligence Theory. In the following section, the independent variable that was undergirded by servant leadership theory is discussed first.

### **Servant Leadership Theory**

One of the main themes in Christian tradition is servant leadership, which greatly influenced Robert Greenleaf's writings on the subject (Finch, 2020). It is an interdisciplinary concept that features in multiple fields such as organizational management, healthcare, education, hospitality, and spiritual practice or religious entities (Tirmizi & Tirmizi, 2020). A review of behaviours considered unique to servant leadership include; empowerment or enabling followers, stewardship, inspiring or influencing followers and spiritual support, alongside the skills of empathy, listening and communication (McQuade et al., 2021). Servant leadership distinguishes from transformational or transactional leadership by the aspect of emphasis on the well-being and betterment of those around them over their own individual needs or priorities, displaying a mindset and perspective of helping and supporting others through a value-driven principle of stewardship (Martinez & Leija, 2023). Servant leadership is also distinct because achievement of organizational

objectives is secondary to the focus on follower growth and development. Personal values have a vital part in the leadership behaviours of servant leaders (Halton, 2024).

Servant leadership has received criticism. For example, Locke (2019) argues that servant leadership as a leadership philosophy should not be equated with Christ, Christianity, or the Bible. However, Kimotho (2019) posits that there are Christian elements in servant leadership. Kimotho (2019) presents the concept of servanthood as found in various Bible verses (New International Version NIV, 1984, Matthew 12:18, Matthew 20:25-28, Acts 3:3, 4:27, Romans 15:8, Philippians 2:7). According to Kimotho (2019), Jesus identified himself as a servant to God (NIV 1984, Matthew 20:28). All Believers are also called upon to be servants, following in the footsteps of Jesus (NIV 1984, Colossians 4:12; John 15:15; Matthew 20:28; Hebrews 3:5). Serrano (2020) in further support of servant leadership posits that all leadership theories and leadership itself ultimately come from God, who created mankind in His image and likeness (NIV 1984, Genesis 1:26).

Another concern about servant leadership is whether servant leadership behaviours are distinct to other leadership styles. Eva et al. (2019) reject the idea that servant leadership can be likened to or compared with value-based leadership approaches. Several studies have attempted to distinguish servant leadership from other leadership styles such as transformational leadership, authentic leadership, and ethical leadership (Legutko, 2020; Lin et al., 2021; Uhl-Bien et al., 2023). The studies mentioned demonstrate that servant leadership style differs uniquely from other leadership styles.

Servant leadership has been used in a variety of settings, due to its strong predictive value for effective leadership, individual performance and organizational outcomes (Saleem et al., 2020; Sarwar et al., 2021). Its application spans diverse

fields including education (Alemayehu, 2021; Latif et al., 2021), health (Maglione & Neville, 2021), business (Al-Azab & Al-Romeedy, 2024; Gaskova, 2020; Muzira & Muzira, 2020), religious organizations (Du Plessis & Nkambule, 2020; Jabarkhail, 2020), sports (Dahlin & Schroeder, 2022; Vinson & Parker, 2021), and government institutions (Awasthi & Walumbwa, 2022; Slack et al., 2020) among others.

The practices and principles of servant leadership have been found to motivate employees to actively participate in addressing their relational conflicts, as well as between themselves and their superiors or managers (Fields, 2021). Servant leader behaviours have demonstrated a capacity to improve crucial aspects of effective conflict management including communication, collaboration, respect and trust among team members (Fields, 2021; Freeborough, 2021). Given these findings, servant leadership is highly applicable in the present study whose context is church in Kenya. Particularly, the study was keen to investigate the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management styles among pastors as leaders. The Servant Leadership Theory was thus relevant in addressing objectives one through four of the study. The four objectives focused on specific servant leadership attributes or characters and their influence on choice of conflict management styles among pastors in two denominations who serve in churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

### **Organizational Conflict Theory**

Various researchers have contributed to the knowledge of the evolution and understanding of The Organizational Conflict Management Theory (Rahim, 2023). The Organizational Conflict Theory centres on the battle over scarcity of resources among individuals or groups of people in a society (Mills & Mene, 2020). There are

at least three different views of conflict. First, is the traditional understanding of conflict which holds that all conflicts are negative, damaging and must be evaded completely. The second view is the human relations view which sees conflict as completely natural such that it cannot be avoided or done away with. The third view is the interactionist view, which posits that conflicts are necessary for groups to perform effectively and should be encouraged to get creativity, multiple ideas and solutions to the problems at hand, thus avoiding group think, stagnation and low performance (Folger et al., 2021).

The commonly used conflict-type framework distinguishes four types of conflicts (Qayyum et al., 2022). These include; relationship conflicts, task conflicts, relationship process conflicts and status conflicts (Michelson & Humle, 2020). Task conflicts occur when individual disagree about the task outcome or content of the task. Relationship conflicts occur when people are in opposition (Giebels & Janssen, 2020). Process conflicts occur when team members disagree on the methods or process needed to execute a task. Status conflict refers to disagreements or disputes that arise from individuals competing for or defending their relative status positions within a social hierarchy (Pai & Bendersky, 2020). Conflict management therefore, is the process where group members engage, communicate and collaborate with each other with the goal of resolving and working out the type of conflict that they are encountering with each other (Todorova et al., 2022).

Classical studies on conflict have laid the groundwork for the theoretical framework in conflict management. Such studies include; the constructive and destructive processes of conflict by Deutsch, the managerial grid by Blake and Mouton, Pondy's concepts and models of organizational conflict, Rahim's measures on the styles of handling conflict, Jehn's typology of conflicts and DeDreu's types of

organizational conflicts (Caputo et al., 2019). The constructive and destructive processes of conflict have led to the categorization of types of organizational conflict. Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann created and designed the Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode instrument in the 1970s, a significant contribution in the conflict management area (Pennington, 2024). The instrument categorizes five interpersonal conflict approaches or styles which are; avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing, and collaborating (Kilmann, 2022). The Thomas Kilmann conflict instrument is discussed next, as it was used as one of the research tools in the present research.

The conflict styles instrument by Thomas and Kilmann has been applied in various contexts. The various contexts include but are not limited to, the religious sector (Rowe, 2022; Salim & Rosada, 2023; Umeanwe, 2024), the health sector (Delak & Širok, 2022; White et al., 2020), the education sector (Mahajan & Sutar, 2022; Rapatalo, 2020), and business sector (Abdulraheem et al., 2020). According to Qadir (2020), the Thomas Kilmann model is widely used in both academic and applied domains because the model offers a further explanation of how conflict styles can be employed and at what point they should be used. For this study, objectives one to four were covered by this theory.

Conflict management styles (CMS) refer to how individuals respond to conflict using a structured pattern of response to conflict scenarios. These styles indicate various ways that people respond behaviourally when confronted with a disagreement or dispute (Caputo et al., 2019). In 1940, Mary Parker Follet developed the initial conflict management styles (Héon, Damart & Nelson, 2021). This was followed in 1949 by Morton Deutsch, who developed the cooperation–conflict dichotomy (Stevahn, 2021). In 1964, Robert Blake and Jane Mouton devised the two-

dimensional managerial grid (Todarita, 2021). Building upon Blake and Mouton's framework, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed the Thomas Kilmann conflict management styles expanding the spectrum of conflict management based on the inclination to satisfy personal and others' concerns (Kilmann, 2022). Although they use distinct terminology, Thomas and Kilmann identified five styles of conflict management that are similar with those used in the Rahim conflict inventory tool. The five conflict management styles based on the terminology used by Thomas Kilmann are: collaborating, competing, compromising, accommodating and avoiding. These conflict management approaches or styles are discussed next, starting with the avoiding conflict management style.

Avoiding is the act of removing oneself from an instance, an environment or someone with whom they are in conflict with (Hample & Hample, 2020). It is passive, withdrawn and unhelpful. This style is distinguished by a lack of concern for both self as well as others (Valente & Lourenço, 2020). The individual neither pursues personal concerns nor those of the other person (Valente et al., 2020). Individuals who opt for avoidance do not directly address the conflict. Instead, they diplomatically side-step the issue, postpone resolution or withdraw from the situation altogether. Avoiding in some instances can be desirable if: the individuals involved or the subject that needs to be addressed is not ready for discussion and resolving, the matter at hand is insignificant, if emotions are running high and preserving harmony is paramount, and if there is no possibility of future contact between the individuals (Folger et al., 2021; Hakiki et al., 2023; Jordan & Troth, 2021). Temporary avoidance, achieved by postponing a conflict encounter to a specified time, can allow the parties in conflict to regroup and adjust. However, when conflict is suppressed instead of being exposed, it may manifest in other dysfunctional ways such as withdrawal,

complaining to others, keeping score of grievances, gradual erosion of relationships, outburst, verbal aggressiveness or other extreme measures (Johnson et al., 2024).

Accommodating is the complete opposite of competing; it is unassertive yet cooperative. Individuals who adopt an accommodating style prioritize the satisfaction of the other party's concern over their own (To et al., 2021). Accommodating is often perceived as an act of self-sacrifice, demonstrating selflessness as individuals willingly defer to the perspectives of others or comply with directives even against their own wishes (Bhardwaj & Sharma, 2024). In conflict situations, the accommodating style is helpful and beneficial when the individual giving way has little or no interest in the outcome, the risks are minimal, the potential losses are insignificant, there is high concern for self-preservation, or the relationship has either very high or very low commitment (Johnson et al., 2024). However, the accommodating conflict management style becomes disadvantageous if power becomes imbalanced between the people, if personal goals remain unfulfilled and if the relationship is stagnant. If habits are condoned instead of setting boundaries, the overbearing person may take advantage and thus, it becomes much harder to negotiate change of behaviour in the future (Johnson et al., 2024).

Compromising conflict management style presents a balance between competing and collaboration. It is often adopted by individuals who downplay differences and stress similarities to accommodate the worries and issues of the two sides engaged in the conflict (Chen et al., 2019). Compromising exhibits strong regard for others and little concern for self, alongside little personal assertiveness along with substantial cooperation (Valente et al., 2020). This conflict style is described as a loose-win of conflict. According to Palmer (2020), compromising follows the give and take philosophy where the interests and goals of each party are negotiated and

bartered. It involves self sacrifice and may include generosity, charity or obedience to others (Rahim & Katz, 2020). Compromising proves beneficial when the issue of conflict holds moderate importance, if time is limited, if a temporary solution is needed, or where both parties are willing to accept a partially satisfying solution. Effective use of compromising conflict management style requires a leadership style that is assertive yet flexible, and willing to engage in persuasion and negotiation as needed. Brewer (2023) considers compromising style as willingness among the parties involved to negotiate an agreement that represents giving up their first preference in order to make a deal.

Competing conflict management style is both assertive and uncooperative. It is often characterized as a power-oriented approach where an individual prioritizes their own concern over those of others (Johnson et al., 2024). This style is synonymous with a power struggle where the individual emphasizes their own concern to the detriment of the others, employing various power tactics such as argumentativeness, leveraging authority, or imposing sanctions (Folger et al., 2021). The individuals who apply the competing style firmly believe in advocating for their rights, defend positions they deem correct, or exhibit a strong desire to win at all costs. The competing style can be effectively used in situations when there are genuinely limited resources, time constraints are pressing, or when achieving the goal outweighs consideration for the relationship (Johnson et al., 2024). However, competing is disadvantageous if there is a relationship at risk of being ruined or the other party is humiliated in the achievement of the goal (Stevenson & Wilkin, 2025).

Collaborating conflict style emerges when two or more individuals work together to exchange information and collectively make significant decisions (Raines, 2019). According to Raines (2019), collaborating views conflict as an opportunity to

solve problems constructively, working positively with others with a win-win mindset. Individuals who employ the collaborating style strive to find solutions that fully satisfy both their concerns and those of others. They are open to exploring disagreements, seeking to understand the perspectives of others, identifying underlying needs and desires and devising creative solutions to interpersonal issues. Collaborating offers several advantages, including the maximization of goal-achievement of all parties involved, engagement in innovative troubleshooting and solutions, as well as encouraging dedication towards the solutions agreed upon (Johnson et al., 2024). However, collaborating also presents drawbacks, such as the time and energy investment required, and the chance for manipulation if the process takes too long and drawn out (Johnson et al., 2024).

Collaborating conflict management style is considered best in conflict management for several reasons. Firstly, studies on conflict management in various sectors such as business, education and nursing indicate that collaborating is a preferred style of conflict management (Lahana, 2019; Rapatalo, 2020; Shariq et al., 2022). Secondly, the collaborating conflict management style indicates a significant sense of concern for other people as well as oneself, ensuring that the worries and interests of everyone who is engaged in the conflict will be taken into consideration as a solution is sought (Stevahn, 2021). Thirdly, Fields (2021) and Obi et al (2020) argue that leaders who practice servant leadership shun avoiding and competing approaches of managing conflict, and instead, opt for collaborating style. According to available research, pastors who practice avoidance as a conflict management style are more likely to experience stress, tension and emotional exhaustion (Boyd, 2020). The collaborative conflict management method is regarded as the ideal, optimal and recommended style among pastors when dealing with conflicts as it increases trust,

stronger relationships, confidence in managing future conflicts and leads to positive decisions for the church, especially if used consistently (Palmer, 2020).

### **Emotional Intelligence Theory**

In 1990, two psychologists, Peter Salovey and John Mayer introduced the concept of emotional intelligence by publishing an article in a well-known journal (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). It was until nine years later that the idea of emotional intelligence got popularized through the publication of Daniel Goleman's book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why Emotional Intelligence Matters* (Goleman, 2020). Since the printing and release of Goleman's book in 1999, there has been a great wealth of academic study, debates, countless journal articles, the invention and establishment of multiple theoretical models and instruments that are used to assess presence of and measure of emotional intelligence. Other additional emotional intelligence proponents over the years include Reuven Bar-On, alongside Goleman (Lubbadeh, 2020). Emotional intelligence has been adapted, implemented and utilized in different environments in both non-academic and academic contexts such as business (Goleman & Cherniss, 2024; Sharma & Tiwari, 2024), education (Halimi et al., 2021; Molero et al., 2020), family and parenting (Cameron et al., 2020; Olutope et al., 2019), nursing (Al-Hamdan et al., 2019; Dugué, 2021), and therapy (Foye et al., 2019; San-Juan-Ferrer & Hipola, 2020), among others. The present research used emotional intelligence which was the moderating variable.

Emotional intelligence has four distinct areas of focus, namely; relationship management, social awareness, self management and self awareness (Bonesso et al., 2020). All together, these four divisions comprise a total of 12 competencies. Goleman (2020) outlines the 12 competencies as; self-awareness, achievement

orientation, empathy, self-control, adaptability, positive outlook, influence, inspirational leadership, organizational awareness, coaching, mentoring and finally, team work.

Self-awareness is a positive state in which people can recognize and understand their own emotions, emotional state and intentions, alongside an understanding of the effect of their emotions on others (Carden et al., 2022). Emotional maturity in awareness of oneself is demonstrated through self-confidence, capacity and willingness to laugh at oneself and realistic self-assessment. Self-management refers to capacity to be aware of self, remain flexible, and direct behaviour positively (Igbokwe et al., 2023). It involves controlling impulses and moods, as well as the ability to suspend judgement and think before taking action. Trustworthiness, integrity, taking responsibility of one's actions and openness to change are examples of emotional maturity in self- management (Doblinger, 2022).

Social awareness pertains to the ability and skill in managing relationships, fostering networks, and finding common ground to build rapport (Blank, 2020). It is demonstrated through empathy, a service-oriented approach to others, and organizational awareness (Chernis & Adler, 2023). Relationship management comprises the capacity of an individual to properly navigate encounters by being aware of one's own emotions and those of others (Baba, 2020). This involves cultivating relationships over time, leading though influence, connecting with diverse individuals, effective communication, visionary leadership, conflict management, team work, driving change and collaboration (Kanesan & Fauzan, 2019).

Different definitions of emotional intelligence exist. This is a result of its classification either as an ability, a trait or a mixed model (Bru-Luna et al., 2021). When viewed as an ability, the most common definition used for emotional

intelligence is the one primarily provided by John Mayer and Peter Salovey. Bradberry (2023) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to recognize and express emotion, integrate emotions with thinking, interpret and use emotions in reasoning, and finally, to control emotions in oneself and others. The ability to use reasoning or cognitive intelligence when dealing with emotional situations, such as identifying the emotions in someone's face, understanding the importance of emotional language, properly and efficiently managing emotions to guide decision-making and choosing conduct that appropriately reacts to difficulties, pressures and stresses in the environment is what emotional intelligence is all about (Bru-Luna et al., 2021).

The mixed model of emotional intelligence combines ability with personality characteristics (MacCann et al., 2020). Models such as the Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Model, and Goleman's Emotional Intelligence fall under this category. Goleman's model encapsulates a number of skills including; the capacity to self-motivate, persevere in challenging situations, regulate one's emotions, prevent emotional overload from hindering one's cognitive function, empathize and maintain optimism (Rivers et al., 2020). Additionally, Goleman's model emphasizes traits like emotional awareness, self-control, problem-solving, conflict management, and leadership, among others (Pretorius & Plaatjies, 2022). Goleman's model of emotional intelligence for leaders comprises of four main areas which are: relationship management, self management, self and social awareness (Fianko, Junior & Dzogbewu, 2020). Goleman's model enjoys wide popularity because of its self-report nature and that it is based on the opinion of individuals about themselves (Prentice, 2023). The present study utilized Goleman's Model due to its inclusion of

conflict management within its relationship management competency. The Goleman Model of Emotional Intelligence is discussed next.

The idea of emotional intelligence gained popularity after the publication of Daniel Goleman's book in 1999. The four categories that make up Goleman's emotional intelligence model are; self-awareness, self-management, relationship management and social awareness (Goleman, 2020). Goleman asserts that emotional intelligence affects practically every aspect of human lives and is essential, thus making it an indispensable ability (Spytska, 2023). Goleman considers emotional intelligence as a natural competency that can be learned by anyone at any level (Chernis & Adler, 2023). In carrying out a meta-analysis to investigate the effectiveness and impact of emotional intelligence training in the workplace, Mehler et al. (2024) found that individuals from all professions benefit from such training and that the training impact lasts over three months post-training. This suggests that emotional intelligence can indeed be learned. In a number of industries, including the Indian banking sector, Goleman's Model has shown positive impact on workplace behaviour in various sectors such as in the Indian banking sector (Makkar & Basu, 2019). Additionally, it has forecasted successful leadership in Ghana's banking industry (Fianko et al., 2020).

There have been various concerns about emotional intelligence. These include; its definition and measurement, whether emotional intelligence is new or similar to existing constructs, and the importance and relevance of emotional intelligence above other intelligence for success in a variety of fields. Researchers such as Dasborough et al. (2022) and Bowen (2019) continue to document principles and updates on emotional intelligence models and measures.

Emotional intelligence is considered a key ingredient to effective and successful leadership, especially in the workplace (Alsalmi & Omrane, 2023; Harahap et al., 2023; Saha et al., 2023). Several studies have investigated and proven the beneficial relationship between emotional intelligence and specific characteristics of leadership such as team leadership effectiveness and leadership styles (Aldiabat, 2019; Lee & Wong, 2019; Mortazavi & Nazemi, 2021). Other studies have also investigated the mediating effect of emotional intelligence, such as in the linkage connecting transformational leadership to employee engagement (Milhem et al., 2019), and between leadership style and voluntary work behaviours (Mekpor & Dartey-Baah, 2020). The present investigation looked into emotional intelligence's moderation influence in the link between servant leadership and conflict management among pastors from two denominations in Kenya. Specifically, the relationship management domain of the Goleman Emotional intelligence model was utilized in this research. Objectives five and six of this study were covered by this theory.

### **Summary of Research Gaps**

Several research investigations have examined the connections involving servant leadership style and conflict management styles (Fields, 2021; Freeborough, 2021; Guzman, 2023). Other studies have addressed the association between the various conflict management styles and emotional intelligence (Al Hamdan et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2019; Valente & Lourenço, 2020). In Kenya, studies in different sectors have also been carried, testing at least two of the variables that were considered in this paper. For example, in the education sector, Kalai and Njiro (2022) investigated the impact of conflict management styles on the organizational climate in government-owned secondary education schools in Nyeri County. Also in Kenya,

Wainaina et al. (2020) focused on the conflict management strategies that secondary school principals in Murang'a used to resolve conflict in the schools they lead. In the area of servant leadership, studies carried out in Kenya have investigated the setting of the faith-based not-for-profit organizations and the effect of servant leadership on church growth (Awino et al., 2021; Ogochi et al., 2022). However, despite the existing research on the various variables, the researcher did not encounter any studies that integrated servant leadership as an independent variable, conflict management as a dependent variable, and emotional intelligence as a moderating variable, in one study, and among pastors as leaders in Kenya. This observed lack in empirical investigations motivated the present research study to address this conceptual gap.

Another conceptual gap in literature is the tendency of most studies to focus the composite aspects of the three variables in the current study. For example, although Fields (2021) took into account all the seven characteristics of Liden's Servant Leadership Model and all the five conflict management styles, the study did not specifically isolate the variables for a deeper understanding of the relationships. Therefore, the present study sought to isolate four specific four servant leadership characteristics in order to carry out a more in-depth analysis of how each of them related to the five conflict management styles.

The context in which previous studies have been carried out was also considered. The literature reviewed in this study has brought out the fact that the bulk of research studies on the three variables that were included in this investigation has primarily targeted leaders in fields such as nursing, business, education, banking, graduates, and top or senior leadership. There are fewer studies that have considered similar variables in the church context. For instance, West et al. (2019) focused solely on male Canadian pastors only. Older studies in Africa on interpersonal conflict

among pastors focused on retired pastors, senior pastors, elders, and other senior leaders (Joynt, 2018; Pali, 2018). Additionally, very few studies focused on leadership styles and conflict management among pastors (Fields, 2021). Despite the extensive literature reviewed, no study on servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence among pastors in Kenya was found. The current study endeavoured to also fill this gap by presenting a more recent or new study in this field and to establish any new and significant findings. This present study also extended the context to include a Pentecostal and a Protestant denomination in Kenya, as well as considering that pastors are leaders who serve in the church institution. The pastors selected for the current study were from churches in selected urban towns in Kenya.

Methodological gaps were also found in previous studies during the literature review. Methodology pertains to the approaches employed for data collection during research. For instance, Hamm and Eagle (2021) reviewed empirical literature to determine why clergy in protestant denominations and in the Roman Catholic Church in USA left full-time ministry. In Kenya, studies on conflict in church leadership have predominantly taken the case study and qualitative approaches (Mwabonje, 2019). In contrast, the present study employed a mixed methods approach. Furthermore, random sampling was applied to determine the pastors who would be contacted and requested to participate for inclusion in the research by responding to the data collection tool.

Table 2.1 presents a summary of the gaps that were identified during the literature review and analysis, the conceptual framework and chapter summary follow thereafter.

**Table 2.1 Summary of Research Gaps**

Authors	Key study area	Focus of the study	Methodology	Findings	Research gap	How the current study addressed the gaps
Ghayas et al. (2023)	Servant leadership and Organizational commitment	To explore the relationship between servant leadership dimensions and organizational commitment in the IT sector in Pakistan.	Quantitative study. Use of self-administered survey	Emotional healing dimension of servant leadership had a relationship with continuance in organizational commitment.	Emotional healing in relation to interpersonal conflict management styles	This study considered the relationship between emotional healing and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in urban churches in Kenya. This study also included a moderating variable. It focused on peer-to-peer conflict. This study also used mixed methods methodology and was carried out in a Christian context targeting pastors in Kenya.
Freeborough (2021)	Servant leadership and interpersonal workplace conflict	Impact of servant leadership on workplace conflict in non-profit in the USA.	Non-experimental survey research design. Quantitative correlational study. Simple random probability	Results revealed that increased levels of were associated with decreased instances of interpersonal conflict within the work environment.	Conflict management styles were not included in the study.	This study examined the correlation between four specific dimensions of servant leadership behaviours and five distinct conflict management styles.

			<p>sampling was used. Eight dimensions of servant leadership and four categories of interpersonal conflict were used. Use of web-based online questionnaire. 329 respondents.</p>			
Domínguez-Escrig et al. (2021)	Emotional healing, organizational learning and radical innovation	To examine the relationship between emotional healing as a leadership behaviour and radical innovation in Spain.	A quantitative, longitudinal study. A total of 292 respondents.	Findings revealed that emotional healing enhances organizational learning which therefore fosters radical innovation	The study did not consider other servant leadership dimensions.	Four servant leadership dimensions were considered in this study. The study used cross-sectional survey approach. Mixed methods research methodology was employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.
Obiet al.(2020)	Servant leadership, team conflict	To examine the relationship between servant leadership, team conflicts and	Quantitative study. A total of 453 respondents from 166	Findings from the study indicate that servant leaders applied problem solving behaviours like those used on	Focused on women only. Also focused on leader-follower team conflict.	The study focused on both male and female leaders/pastors of PCEA and CITAM churches in Kenya. The study focused

		emotional exhaustion among Catholic sisters in Nigeria.	Catholic religious convents participated in the study.	collaborating conflict management style. Additionally, avoiding and dominating did not complement servant leadership style.		on pastors as peers.
Malingumu (2023)	Servant leadership, conflict management	The relationship between servant leadership, conflict management behaviours and organizational outcomes in public higher learning institutions in Tanzania.	Longitudinal research was carried out at four public universities in two waves over the course of one year. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Responses were received from 198 participants.	A positive relationship between servant leadership and collaborating conflict management styles.	The study was carried out in public universities. The study also used longitudinal approach and considered the relationship between two variables, namely, servant leadership and conflict management styles.	The study was carried out in selected urban churches in Kenya. The study also included emotional intelligence as a moderating variable.
Awino et al. (2021)	Servant leadership	Influence of servant leadership on the growth of evangelical churches under the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya umbrella	124 churches were sampled. 124 church leaders were invited to participate in the study. Questionnaires were used to	Findings from the study indicated that servant leadership style had a significant effect on the growth of evangelical churches. The study also found a significant intervening effect of leader power on the	Use of servant leadership style in conflict management in Kenya.	The study focused on four servant leadership dimensions and conflict management styles. The study context involved both Pentecostal and protestant denominations.

		body.	collect data quantitative and qualitative data. SPSS and NVivo were used to analyse the data.	relationship between servant leadership and evangelical church growth.		
Cook (2022)	Servant leadership	Servant leadership among clergy through lived experiences.	Case study approach. Purposive sampling used to identify respondents. Interviews used to collect data.	Emotional healing was enhanced by an environment of listening and empathy.	Only one variable was used. Conflict management was used included in the study.	Servant leadership style was used in the current study as an independent variable and conflict management style as the dependent variable. Mixed methods were used to collect data from pastors.
Heyns et al. (2020)	Servant leadership	Servant leadership features in a power utility plant in South Africa from a follower perspective.	Quantitative, cross-sectional study. Convenience sampling used. A total of 771 respondents. Study used van Dierendonck and Nuijten servant leadership scale.	Forgiveness dimension of servant leadership recorded the highest mean score compared to all other dimensions.	Focused on only one variable.	The study focused on pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya. Emotional intelligence was considered as a moderating variable in the relationship between servant leadership and the five conflict management styles. Study used the short form servant leadership scale developed by Liden and others.

Lapiso (2023)	Servant leadership	Effect of servant leadership dimensions on performance at banks in Ethiopia.	Exploratory study. Comprehensive sampling used.	Results from the study indicated that emotional healing contributed to the mental and emotional wellbeing of the workforce.	The researcher combined different servant leadership scales for data collection.	The study used the short form servant leadership scale developed by Liden and others. The study also focused on pastors in leadership roles.
Al Hamdan et al. (2019)	Emotional intelligence and conflict management styles	Impact of emotional intelligence on conflict management styles used by nurses managers in Jordanian hospitals	Descriptive cross-sectional correlational survey research. Non-random sampling was used to identify Jordanian hospitals that had more than 200 beds. A total of 248 respondents participated in the study. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS and Pearson correlation to examine the influence of	There is a significant relationship between Emotional intelligence and the use of collaborating and integrating conflict management styles.	Only two variables were used in this study, emotional intelligence and conflict management styles.	The current study had three variables. Emotional intelligence was used as a moderator variable in the relationship between servant leadership style and conflict management styles.

			emotional intelligence on conflict management styles.			
Fields (2021)	Servant leadership and work place conflict	In non-profits in the USA.	Workplace conflict sub-scale was used to measure types of conflicts.	On the conceptualizing dimension of servant leadership, the more servant leaders emphasize the goal, the more task and relationship conflicts reduce.	Only two variables were used.	The study focused on interpersonal conflict management styles. Additionally, the study also considered the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management styles.
Melhelm et al. (2023)	Servant leadership and job performance	Impact of servant leadership on job performance among airlines employees in Jordan.	Servant leadership dimensions were captured used the short form servant leadership scale by Liden et al., (2011). Quantitative study.	Conceptualizing dimension of servant leadership had no effect on job performance of airline employees.	Conceptualizing dimension of servant leadership in relation to conflict management	The study investigated conceptualizing dimension of servant leadership on conflict management among pastors. The study also used a mixed methods approach.
Mburu (2020)	Emotional intelligence	Explore how emotional intelligence and transformational leadership	The study used descriptive design and non-	The study revealed significance presence of emotional intelligence skills among respondents such as self	One variable was used in this study. One organization involved in the	This study used servant leadership as an independent variable and conflict management style as a dependent variable.

		increase staff engagement on a virtual team at Save the Children non-governmental organization in Kenya	probability sampling. Embedded design was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. Data was collected through online questionnaires to staff using survey monkey. Data analyzed using Excel.	awareness, empathy and social intelligence	study	Emotional intelligence was tested as a moderating variable. Additionally, the study included pastors selected urban churches in Kenya.
Sarmad et al (2021)	Emotional intelligence as a moderator	Investigating the moderating role of emotional intelligence among counterproductive work behaviour, work interference, and negative emotions in the development sector of Pakistan	258 respondents. Responses were collected over two weeks. Data were analysed using SPSS.	Emotional intelligence found to be a moderator in the relationship between counterproductive work behaviour, work interference, and negative emotions. The study concluded that emotional intelligence is significant at all organizational levels for desirable work behaviours.	The study focused on workplace behaviour and negative emotions.	This study will use emotional intelligence as a moderator in the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management style. Responses from the research instruments were collected concurrently.

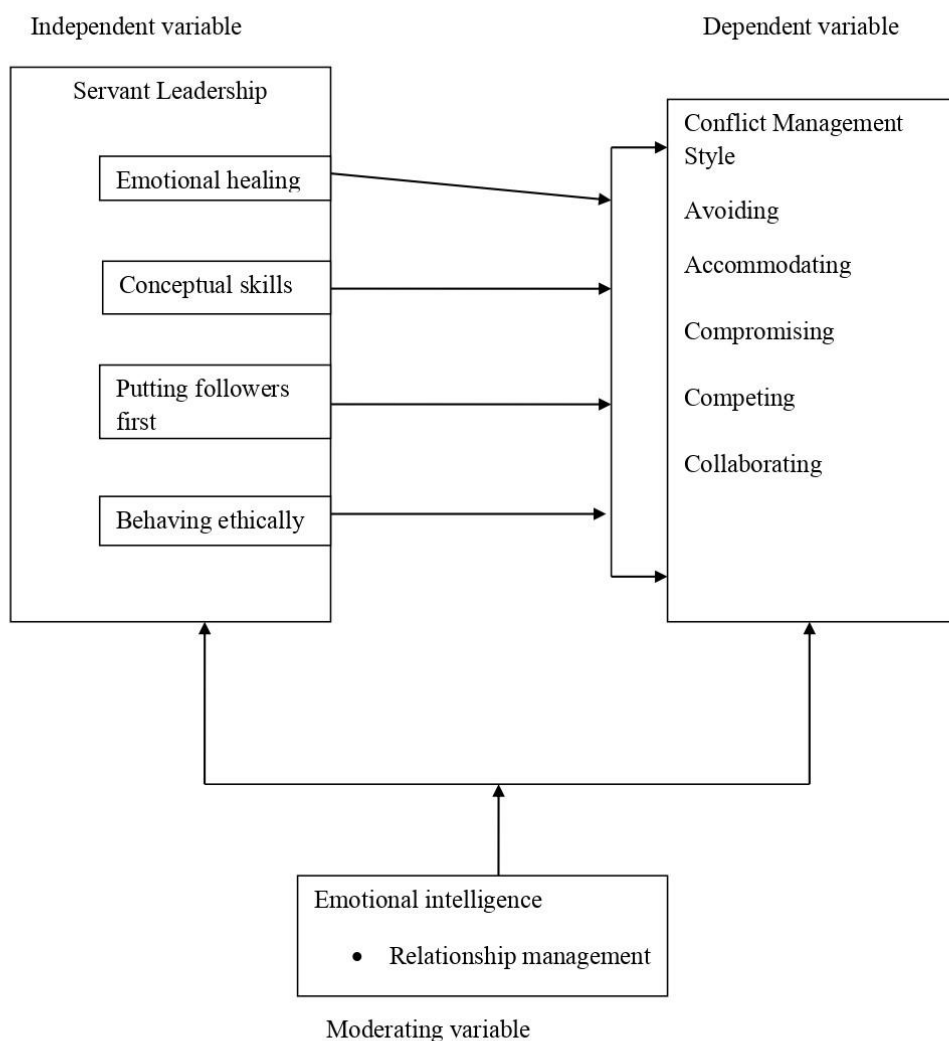
In summary, the research gaps from Table 1 indicated that while multiple research investigations studies have been done in the United States on servant leadership style and conflict management, no published study has been conducted in Kenya yet, that examined the independent variable servant leadership and the dependent variable conflict management among pastors in their capacity as leaders in Kenya. Additionally, while there have been studies that have considered emotional intelligence and conflict management such as Valente and Lourenço (2020) among teachers, and Assi and Eshah (2023) among nurse managers, no recent research in Kenya has examined the relationship between conflict management and emotional intelligence among pastors as leaders in Kenya. Regarding research methodology, the studies done in the United States by Freeborough (2021) and Fields (2021) employed the quantitative approach. The current study used a mixed methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods in equal measure. The present study therefore concentrated on how servant leadership affected conflict management styles of pastors from CITAM and PCEA churches in Kenya within the urban counties using emotional intelligence as a moderator variable.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A diagram that shows the assumed relationships between the variables in a research study is known as a conceptual framework (Mensah et al., 2020). This study's conceptual framework diagrammatically illustrates the assumed connections among the three variables that were used. Servant leadership captured in the literature review is presented in the conceptual framework as the independent variable, composed of four sub-variables. The first sub-variable is emotional healing, followed by conceptualization which is the second sub-variable. The third sub-variable is

putting followers first and the final sub-variable is behaving ethically. Conflict management is the dependent variable with five sub-variables which are: avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing and collaborating. Emotional intelligence is presented as the moderating variable with one sub-variable, relationship management. The research objectives and hypotheses were structured based on the elements of each study variable and its sub-variables. Figure 2.1 displays the conceptual framework diagram.

**Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework**



Source: Author (2024)

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter has presented a review of the empirical and theoretical literature, pertinent to the study's key variables. The key variables covered were: servant leadership as the independent variable, conflict management as the dependent variable, and emotional intelligence as the moderator variable. By linking the empirical review of the literature with the primary variables, the chapter aimed to identify gaps in existing research that this study sought to fill. Furthermore, the chapter has delved into the theories that anchored the research investigation which were; Servant Leadership Theory, Organizational Conflict Theory and Emotional Intelligence Theory. In addition, the conceptual framework showing the linkages between the variables was given diagrammatically. The chapter that follows focused on the research methodology, research philosophy, research design, the target population, sample size, sampling procedures used, the data instruments, the process of data collection, the data analysis techniques and the ethical considerations that were put in place.

## **Chapter Three: Research Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this chapter is to present the research methods that were used to investigate the research problem in a systematic and logical way. The areas presented include: the philosophy guiding the research, the research design used, the target population, the sampling procedure and sample size. It also includes the data collection methods, validation and reliability of the research instruments, the methods used for data collection and the ethical measures that were considered. The first section of the chapter starts with an explanation of the research philosophy that was applied in the research.

### **Research Philosophy**

Research philosophy refers to an approach in research that guides a researcher's thoughts and actions, and through which new knowledge is obtained (Panya & Nyarwath, 2022). The research philosophy is a world view or belief system through which knowledge is filtered through (Tamminen & Poucher, 2020). The selection of a research philosophy determines the research strategy that will be adopted, how the research questions will be formulated, the data collection methods, and finally, the processing and analysis of the data collected (Ganesha & Aithal, 2022). Social research adheres to four main research philosophies, namely; positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism and realism (Tshabangu, Ba & Madondo, 2020). Pragmatism research philosophy was utilized for this present study.

The philosophy of pragmatism is a worldview that focuses on what works rather than what might be considered objectively true (Shook, 2023). Pragmatists

argue that social research inquiry requires the use of more than one scientific method to uncover truths in the world (May & Perry, 2022). Moreover, pragmatism permits the flexible use of diverse tools tailored to the specific research inquiries under consideration (Leavy, 2022).

Pragmatism world view has several features. The first feature concerns ontology, which deals with the nature of reality. Pragmatism embraces both singular and multiple realities. A singular reality means that the researcher tests a hypothesis, and multiple realities mean that the researcher captures different perspectives (Sim et al., 2024). A second feature of pragmatism is that its epistemology is focused on its practicality. The researcher can collect data objectively, ensuring there is distance and impartiality between the researcher and the respondents, as well as collect data by being close and subjective with participants (May & Perry, 2022). This approach enables the researcher to gather data based on its effectiveness in addressing the research question. The third feature of pragmatism is in axiology, whereby, the researcher includes both unbiased and biased perspectives (Omodan, 2021). The unbiased perspective means that measures are put in place to eliminate bias, while the biased perspective means that the researcher can actively talk about and engage use of their personal bias and interpretation. The fourth feature of pragmatism is on methodology. Pragmatism supports collecting of qualitative and quantitative data from respondents, which are then combined to create a thorough and exhaustive overview of the problem being investigated (King, 2022).

Pragmatism research philosophy was used in this study for several reasons. First, a pragmatic approach proves beneficial when researcher aim to obtain practical and actionable insights capable of addressing tangible issues (King, 2022). The underlying goal in the current study aimed at understanding the impact of servant

leadership on interpersonal conflict management among pastors from two denominations working in selected urban counties in Kenya, using emotional intelligence as a moderator. Secondly, pragmatic research is generally associated with the mixed-method research design that this study used (McBeath, 2023, Sim et al., 2024).

### **Research Design**

Every research philosophy has its unique research design. A research design is the type of investigation or inquiry that becomes the strategy for answering the research questions in a study (Harrison et al., 2020). Research design also includes the approach that provides specific directions on the methods to be used for carrying out quantitative, qualitative or mixed methods research (Leavy, 2022). In light of the pragmatic research philosophy used in the present study, the mixed methods research design was used. Given the pragmatic research philosophy employed in the current study, the mixed methods research approach or design was adopted (King, 2022).

According to Hirose and Creswell (2022), a mixed methods research design involves gathering qualitative and quantitative data to answer the research questions of the study. Mixed methods studies have three major designs which are: explanatory sequential mixed methods, convergent parallel mixed methods and exploratory sequential mixed methods (Dawadi et al., 2021; Harrison et al., 2020).

In the explanatory sequential mixed methods design, quantitative data is collected first, then analyzed, after which follows a more detailed qualitative data collection to build on and expand on the results of the quantitative analysis. For the convergent parallel mixed methods approach, quantitative and qualitative data are gathered simultaneously, analysed separately and the findings merged in order to offer

a comprehensive analysis of the problem being investigated. Finally, in the exploratory sequential mixed method design, the researcher starts off with qualitative inquiry, and then the findings from the qualitative analysis inform the subsequent quantitative data collection stage. The present research inquiry used the convergent parallel mixed methods research design, which allowed for the simultaneous gathering of data from respondents, separate analysis and synthesis of the findings in order to provide a thorough overview regarding the topic being researched.

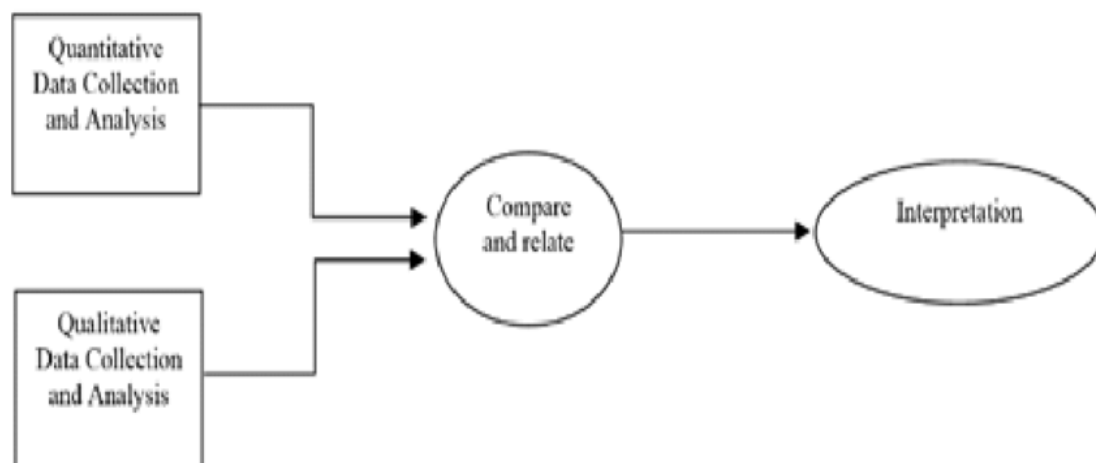
Convergent parallel mixed methods research collects qualitative and quantitative data simultaneously, analyzes each data set separately and then integrates the results (Kimmons, 2022). This is also referred to as QUANT + QUAL mixed design. Equal importance is attributed to both the quantitative and qualitative methodologies. By collecting the two kinds of data at the same time, separately analyzing them, and finally integrating the results from the two sets of data, the researcher's aim is to compare, collaborate or cross-validate the findings (Leavy, 2022).

Mixed methods are particularly well suited for research in leadership because leadership is a fundamentally social phenomenon rooted in the interactions shaped by individuals' thoughts, values, convictions, emotions, and ideas. By combining quantitative rigor with qualitative depth, this approach not only captures the complexity of pastors' lived experiences but also yields a fuller understanding of the issues at hand (Leavy, 2022). It also overcomes the limitations of each method while leveraging their respective strengths (Hirose & Creswell, 2022). Thus, provides an intuitive, holistic framework for inquiry.

To capture both the breadth and depth of how servant leadership and emotional intelligence interact to influence interpersonal conflict management among

pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya, the current study used a convergent mixed methods approach. The quantitative component investigated four essential elements of servant leadership: emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first, and ethical behaviour, and evaluated their direct consequences on interpersonal conflict. The quantitative component also used standardized surveys and statistical analysis to assess emotional intelligence's moderating role. This enabled exact assessment of effect sizes, hypothesis testing, and generalizable insights into how each leadership behaviour contributes to conflict outcomes, as described in objectives one through five.

Further, the qualitative component elicited in-depth, contextualized insights from pastors using open-ended questions. It looked into the experienced causes of conflict, the participant's own advice for dealing with interpersonal conflicts, and observations on the relationship between conflict management abilities and emotional intelligence in real-world ministry settings. This was addressed in objective six. By combining these strands, the study not only quantified patterns of association and moderation, but also shed light on the nuanced, experiential mechanisms by which servant leadership and emotional intelligence work together to create healthy conflict dynamics, yielding both empirically robust findings and richly textured practical guidance. A visual representation of the convergent mixed methods research design is shown in Figure 3.1.

**Figure 3.1 Convergent Mixed Methods Design**

Source: Creswell and Clark (2018)

### Target population

The whole pastorate of the CITAM and PCEA churches in Kenya was the study's target. This is captured in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Distribution of the Target Population**

Category	Number	Percentage
CITAM pastors	90	50%
PCEA pastors	90	50%
Total	180	100%

Source: Author (2024)

### Population Sample

Researchers employ various sampling techniques because studying an entire population is often impractical. Thus, it is necessary to select a representative subset

to derive actionable insights. The study used various sampling techniques. In the first stage, purposeful sampling was used to identify CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya. According to Macharia et al. (2021), there are eight urban counties in Kenya. Urban counties are identified as areas where 70% of the urban population in Kenya live, according to 2019 population census. Identification of the urban counties is important because a higher general population means the churches in the towns are well-staffed with more pastors to accommodate the growing needs and requests of the large congregation.

In mixed methods research design, sampling refers to the procedures for selecting participants in the study's qualitative and quantitative aspects, along with the sampling strategy employed in each design (Taherdoost, 2022). Harrison et al. (2020) describe the four sampling strategies used in mixed methods research. First is identical sampling which involves collecting both quantitative and qualitative data from every single participant in the study sample. The second sampling strategy is the nested strategy, which involves getting quantitative data from a greater number of participants first, followed by collection of qualitative data from a smaller selected group of the same individuals (Tanner, 2023).

The third sampling technique in mixed methods is separate sampling, in which one group acts as a sample for one kind of data, and another group with a comparable demographic is chosen for a different kind of data (Leavy, 2022). The fourth technique is the multi-level strategy in which distinct units of analysis are fitted within one another (Harbers & Ingram, 2020). For this study, identical sampling strategy was used whereby, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected from all the respondents (Hands, 2022). All the participants responded to the same survey and the same interview questions (Lohr, 2021). Furthermore, identical sampling was

used because of the time-orientation of the research in regard to time-concurrent data collection (Fetters & Tajima, 2022). Additionally, the identical relationship of the respondents implies that exactly the same sample members will participate in both the quantitative and qualitative study (Taherdoost, 2022).

In research investigations, a sampling formula is used to allow the researcher to calculate an accurate sample size, by combining the desired study levels of variability, confidence and precision of the study and based on the study's population (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The Yamane sampling size formula was used to calculate how many respondents from the target population would be sampled for the study (Muyembe & Anselemo, 2023). In order to achieve the sample size  $n$ , with  $N$  as the known population and confidence level  $e$  at 95%, the sample size for the study was calculated as follows:

$$n = N/(1+Ne^2)$$

$$180/(1+180(0.05)^2) = 124$$

Using the above formula, from the total population of 180 participants that were eligible for the study, the sample size of 124 individuals was arrived at. The participants were reached out to through the Moderator of the General Assembly for PCEA, and the Deputy Bishop for CITAM.

The pastors in the churches serve in different categories depending on their roles. For example, within the CITAM church are the senior pastors who have oversight role over a congregation, and other pastors who lead different ministry areas as department heads. In the PCEA church, the parish minister is responsible for oversight to the congregation and is assisted by the church or parish evangelist. Further, some of the PCEA churches have youth pastors who are responsible for the youth ministry department. To obtain a proportion of respondents from each category

among the pastors in both denominations, the proportional allocation technique was used. Proportionate stratified sampling ensures that the sample size of each stratum is proportional to its share in the population (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). The calculations were done as follows:

- a) PCEA Parish ministers and CITAM Senior pastors

$$124(45/180) = 31 \text{ Parish ministers}$$

$$124(29/180) = 20 \text{ CITAM senior pastors}$$

- b) Evangelists from PCEA and CITAM ministry pastors/head of departments

$$124(45/180) = 31 \text{ PCEA evangelists/heads of departments}$$

$$124(61/180) = 42 \text{ CITAM ministry pastors/head of departments}$$

A visual presentation of the calculated sample size for each stratum is indicated in Table 3.2

**Table 3.2 Sample Size**

Category	Total	Sample
CITAM Senior Pastors	29	20
PCEA Parish Ministers	45	31
CITAM heads of departments	61	42
PCEA Evangelists	45	31
Total	180	124

Source: Author (2024)

### **Data collection methods**

The integration of both quantitative and qualitative methods during data collection is a crucial component of mixed methods research (Leavy, 2022). In line

with concurrent data collection, two types of data were gathered through the same instrument, a semi-structured survey questionnaire, for this study. The concurrent data collection approach, typical of convergent mixed methods design, ensures efficiency because the two kinds of data are gathered during one phase of the research simultaneously and at the same time (Dawadi et al., 2021). Timeliness in gathering data from the field within the desired timeframe and meeting the timing orientation of concurrent design was thus ensured (Asimov & Blohm, 2024). Additionally, both the quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from the same sample, indicative of the concurrent mixed methods study design (Taherdoost, 2021).

For the descriptive assessment, likert-type responses can be used to measure attitudes, while open -ended questions can used to elicit qualitative information about the subject being investigated (Fetters & Tajima, 2022). Thus, for the present study, quantitative data was collected through a standardized likert-scale from validated tools for each of the three variables. The quantitative data was used for statistical analysis. Qualitative data was collected through open-ended questions where the respondents aired their experiences, views and opinions freely. The convergent mixed methods design enables a direct comparison of the perspectives from participants, giving voice to the participants, while also reporting on the statistical trends (Dawadi et al., 2021). This facilitated the achievement of the research objective on assessing the relationship between servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence from CITAM and PCEA pastors in selected urban counties in Kenya.

#### ***Data collection procedure***

Before commencing data collection, the questionnaire that would be used for data collection was pre-tested through a pilot study. In a pilot test, the entire data collection procedure is done (Leavy, 2022). It is recommended that a pilot test be

conducted before distributing self-completion questionnaire – that is, a questionnaire that participants complete on their own without the presence or assistance of a researcher – for several reasons. These include identification of key issues and challenges that are likely to be encountered during administration of the questionnaire, assessment of whether the research instruments can collect the required data effectively, and the establishment of the ease of understanding of the document by participants ( May & Berry, 2022). This allows the researcher to address any issues or concerns and apply corrective measures before initiating the final data collection.

Participants in a pilot study are not necessarily selected on a statistical basis. However, the determination and selection of respondents is pegged on the costs and time available for the study. For quantitative studies, Bell et al. (2022) advised that the percentage of people that participate in the pre-testing of an instrument should range between one and ten percent depending on the overall sample size. This current investigation complied with the given recommendation. The participants for the pilot study were identified from similar Pentecostal and Protestant churches affiliated to EAK and NCKK respectively. Through purposive sampling, the Deliverance Church from EAK and Kenya Assemblies of God from NCKK were identified. Respondents were recruited through snowball sampling. The pilot study results were not included in the analysis of the results from the main study. Ismail et al. (2018) states that the rationale for excluding results from the pilot study in the main study is crucial because any issues arising from the research tool and its modification may render data from the pilot study to be faulty or inaccurate, thus affecting the results of the final study.

In order to initiate data collection for the study, contact was made with the headquarters of both CITAM and PCEA for introduction and to secure authorization

and consent to collect data from the pastors. Contact was made through email messaging, use of phone calls and actual visits to both headquarters. After obtaining permission, a master list was compiled that included the names, phone numbers and email addresses of the pastors, using the CITAM church website and the PCEA diary. Initial contact with the sampled pastors was through emails, inviting them to participate in the research. The emails also included instructions on how to participate in the study with a link to the Google form used for data collection included. Thus, the online link to the questionnaire facilitated data collection from the pastors located in different counties and answered from the ease of their computers or phones.

In keeping with the objectives of the research investigation, the questionnaire employed in the study encompassed both closed-ended and open ended items. Utilizing mixed methods approach offers a more robust methodology compared to solely conducting a survey or a qualitative interview (Hirose & Creswell, 2022). The quantitative section of the questionnaire used the five-point Likert scale, which ranged from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) to track the respondent's perception concerning the variables of the study. The qualitative questions which were open-ended were positioned after each variable tracked the written responses from the respondents. Leavy (2022) asserts that the advantages of written interviews include the ability to allow participants from varied locations to participate, allowing more time for individuals to thoughtfully respond to the questions and giving them privacy as they respond to subject matter that is sensitive.

Lastly, the questionnaire was divided into three sections. The first part of the questionnaire collected the demographic data of the respondents. Data on servant leadership, conflict management styles and relationship management in emotional

intelligence was captured in the second, third and fourth sections of the questionnaire, respectively.

### **Reliability**

The internal consistency of a research tool, such as a questionnaire, is referred to as reliability (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020). It indicates capacity to yield similar results when repeated measures are made under identical conditions (Meeker et al., 2021). Reliability scores indicate that the questionnaire can accurately measure what it is supposed to measure multiple times and across samples (Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021). Statistically, a score of .80 indicates how true the score is, and not likely to be influenced by external factors (Sürücü & Maslakci, 2020).

For the present study, the tools used in the research were the short form servant leadership questionnaire SL-28, the Thomas Kilmann conflict management assessment and the emotional intelligence inventory by David Goleman. The developers of the short-form servant leadership questionnaire SL-28 tested and found a reliability of .80 (Gocen & Sen 2021). Reliability of the Thomas Kilmann Conflict Management Model has been ascertained by researchers such as Kulesa et al. (2023) and Villa et al. (2022), with a score of .89. The reliability of the Emotional Intelligence Inventory Model by Daniel Goleman has been supported (Kurdi & Hamdy, 2020; Safarlı, 2021). The reliability measure for the individual emotional intelligence item 'relationship management' has also been ascertained by Iliev (2022).

To verify and guarantee the reliability of the questionnaire used for this current study, all the questions from the validated servant leadership style inventory, the conflict management styles instrument and the relationship management sub-variable from the emotional intelligence questionnaire were on a form in order to

conduct the Cronbach alpha reliability test before data collection. The Cronbach alpha test is a commonly used internal consistency measure which can be determined through the use of data analysis software. Taber (2018) described alpha values of 0.64 – 0.85 as adequate. The alpha value for the questionnaire that was used for the current study was  $>0.7$ . Thus, the questionnaire was deemed trustworthy for this study.

### **Validity**

Validity in research refers to the degree a research instrument adequately covers all the significant aspects of the area under investigation (Ahmed & Ishtiaq, 2021). In the convergent approach of mixed methods research, establishment of both quantitative validity and qualitative validity is required for each database. Quantitative validity involves construct validity, which entails thorough coverage of all objectives (Leavy, 2022). Use of already existing research instruments that have already been tested for validity is acceptable in research (Duckett, 2021). The researcher used research instruments that were already validated through other studies to ensure they met the required criteria. The Servant Leadership Questionnaire SL-28 has been validated and used by researchers such as Gašková (2020), who used the SL-28 in his research on servant leadership in relation to work performance. The Thomas Kilmann Inventory for Conflict Management has also been used by researchers to assess conflict management styles of professionals such as school administrators (Rapatalo, 2020).

Qualitative validity pertains to the appropriateness of the tools, processes and data (Coleman, 2022). According to Ahmed (2024), elements such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability ensure the validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research. Ahmed (2024) further explains that credibility

is achieved through triangulation, transferability through the detailed explanations; dependability through rigorous documentation and creation of an audit trail, and confirmability achieved through peer audit. For the current study, the pilot test was done to check for the readability, clarity and comprehensiveness of the qualitative questions in the research instrument. Feedback obtained was used to review the instrument accordingly. The documentation and creation of the audit trail was captured in the data analysis process. Triangulation was also employed during data analysis by seeking both an expert opinions of other researchers and a peer audit.

Creswell and Hirose (2022) indicate that in mixed methods data analysis, researchers integrate various dimensions including the researcher's dimension. The dimension of the researcher entails using the professional and personal experience of the researcher that led to the consideration of using mixed methods approach to give sense to the world. The researcher had worked for 18 years at a religious non-profit organization and held several leadership roles within that same organization for 15 years. No respondent had a direct relationship with the researcher such as a reporting relationship or contractual agreement. Thus, there was no researcher bias imparted in the research study.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data was subjected to both descriptive analysis as well as inferential statistics. For descriptive analysis, mean and standard deviations were calculated for the continuous variables, while frequencies and proportions were calculated for the categorical data (Cooksey & Cooksey, 2020). The quantitative

questions used the 5-point Likert scale with 1 denoting ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 denoting ‘strongly agree’ as well as, 1 signalling ‘very low extent’ to 5 signalling ‘very great extent’. For each category, a continuous composite score was generated by summing the responses from each of the questions within that category. The composite scores were then summarised analytically using means and standard deviations.

Individual questions were grouped as follows: agree and strongly agree were grouped to represent the positive response, while disagree and strongly disagree were grouped together to represent the negative response. This resulted in three-level categorical variables (agree, neutral and disagree) which were summarised using frequencies and proportions. Gender disaggregation was employed in the entire analyses to explore the potential differences between genders.

Linear regression analyses the association or connection between the independent and dependent variables using the least squares principle (Park et al., 2020). According to Murphy (2024), a straightforward linear regression model can be used to explain the relationships between the independent and dependent variables as follows:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \dots + \beta_k X_k$$

Where  $\beta_0, \beta_1, \dots, \beta_k$  are the model coefficients,  $X_1, \dots, X_k$  the independent variable and  $Y$  represents the dependent variable. This regression approach was selected because the outcome variable was generated as a composite score from the questions used to measure interpersonal conflict management. Shapiro Wilk test and normal residual plots were used to assess adequacy of the regression models (Khatun, 2021). All quantitative data were analyzed using STATA v17.

Coefficient plots present a clear, visual summary of estimated effects between variables that are being compared (Janse et al., 2021). Using likelihood ratio tests, comparisons of models was done to examine the effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management styles of pastors and presented using coefficient plots. All results were analyzed at the 5% significance level. P-values less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. Coefficients were reported with 95% confidence intervals.

### **Qualitative data analysis**

Qualitative data for the study was collected with the aim of conducting thematic analysis. Thematic analysis involves identifying, describing and interpreting patterns in qualitative data collected in order to develop themes (Lochmiller, 2021). Qualitative data was gathered through the open-ended questionnaire section. In preparation for analysis, the data was checked, sorted, cleaned and organized. The following section provides a detailed explanation of the seven steps that were taken during the analysis of the qualitative data for the present study. The seven steps show the methodical procedures which follow a structured sequential approach where each stage builds on the previous one in order to extract meaning and insights from data.

Data familiarization is the first step. This step involves immersing oneself in the information collected from the respondents by rereading it over and over again to gain a thorough grasp of the responses (Sekar & Bhuvanewari, 2024). During this step, researchers actively note patterns, key phrases, or initial insights that stand out, transcribing interviews, organizing notes, and reading through textual data multiple times (Naeem et al., 2023). Annotated memos can also be used to capture early ideas for coding or themes. Braun and Clarke (2021) emphasize the importance of

familiarization in their thematic analysis approach, arguing that it sets the foundation for subsequent analysis. Similarly, Nowell et al. (2021) highlight this step as crucial for credibility and transparency in qualitative research.

The second step is coding. Coding involves labelling segments of data with descriptive or interpretative tags that reflect their essence. Researchers systematically work through the data, assigning codes to relevant text segments. Codes may be predefined, also known as deductive, or emerge during the process, also known as inductive. Saldaña (2021) underscores the iterative nature of coding, advocating for multiple coding cycles to refine categories. Further, DeCuir-Gunby et al. (2020) recommend using qualitative software to enhance accuracy.

The third step is pattern identification. In this step, researchers look for recurring codes or relationships that suggest patterns. Similar codes are grouped into categories, using matrices or charts to visualize connections. Creswell and Poth (2021) describe pattern recognition as essential for creating meaningful categories. Further, Guest et al. (2020) suggest using a codebook to maintain consistency during pattern identification.

Thematic analysis is the fourth step. This involves grouping patterns into overarching themes that address the research questions. Themes are identified by clustering related patterns, identifying the recurring patterns and continuously revisiting the data to confirm their relevance (Braun & Clarke, 2021). It is important at this step to ensure that the emerging themes are coherent and distinctly address the research objectives. Maguire and Delahunt (2021) stress iterative refinement to validate themes.

The fifth step is narrative construction. This step involves organizing themes into a cohesive narrative that explains the data's meaning. Researchers write descriptions or construct stories that capture the essence of each theme, while linking them to the research questions. Saldaña (2021) discusses the importance of storytelling in presenting qualitative findings. Riessman (2020) advocates using narratives to highlight participants' experiences and contextual nuances.

Data display and visualization is the sixth step. Data visualization aids in representing findings in an accessible and systematic format through the use of matrices, diagrams, or graphs to illustrate relationships between themes and codes. Miles et al. (2020) emphasize the value of visual displays in summarizing and communicating complex data. Guest et al. (2020) recommend visuals to enhance data transparency and interpretability.

The seventh and final step is drawing and verifying conclusions. This final step involves synthesizing findings, interpreting their implications, and verifying their validity. The researcher reflects on the findings and how they are aligned to the research questions. Member checking is also used for validation and cross-referencing the emerging themes with existing literature on the variables under study. Creswell and Poth (2021) suggest using triangulation and peer debriefing of the findings to ensure the robustness of conclusions. Nowell et al. (2021) advocate ongoing reflection to enhance the credibility of findings.

To summarize convergent design data analysis that has been discussed in the previous paragraphs of the current dissertation, the two sets of data were first examined independently and thereafter combined (Harrison et al., 2020). During the discussion of results, data collected from the two research methods was compared. The comparison of data is synonymous with triangulation (Dawadi et al., 2021). The

themes identified from each narrative answers were then applied to clarify, expand understanding, collaborate or refute the findings from the quantitative analysis (Hendren et al., 2023). Findings from the qualitative data analysis were included at the end of every section.

### **Ethical considerations**

To ensure ethical conduct throughout the study, various considerations were addressed before, during, and after data collection, as well as during publication. Prior to starting data collection, the churches participating in the study were asked for their permission and consent to collect data from their pastors through the respective leadership at the headquarters in order to gain their consideration and approval to proceed with the data collection. Additionally, the Pan Africa Christian University Ethics Review Committee granted ethical clearance at the university level to proceed with the data collection. Further, before starting data collection from the human subjects, a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), which is the legally authorized institution permitting research in Kenya.

Upon receiving consent from both the church and NACOSTI, participants were contacted through their phone and email contacts. All of the participants received an email inviting them to participate in the research. A digital copy of the consent from their head office leadership was also included so that they were assured that the institution was aware of the data collection exercise. In the invitation email, the respondents were assured of privacy, confidentiality, and the link to the Google form was included. The introduction section of the online questionnaire included the consent information. Participants were required to acknowledge their consent digitally

before they could proceed with filling out the rest of the digitally-administered questionnaire.

During data collection, respondents remained anonymous. No names or email addresses were collected. Participants were made aware that their participation was entirely voluntary and could exercise their right to withdraw from the exercise if they so desired. The researcher ensured that the collected data remained unaltered and free from falsification.

Dissemination of the results would occur through various formats. First, was through publishing of the findings in research journals. The researcher shared with the participants via email, a link to the published studies in the journals. Secondly, findings shall also be shared through presentation at the Annual PAC Research Conference. Participants shall receive an email invite to attend the research conference. Finally, the researcher shall also prepare a report or presentation and submit to the appropriate contact person of both the CITAM and PCEA churches. The report shall be shared via email.

### **Chapter Summary**

The research methodology chapter has described the approach and strategies that were applied in this study. Being a pragmatic research, the convergent parallel mixed methods design was utilized for gathering and analyzing the responses given by the participants. From a target population of 180 pastors from both CITAM and PCEA churches, a sample size of 123 pastors from the selected urban churches participated in the study. Quantitative and qualitative data was obtained concurrently through the same research tool. Quantitative data underwent analysis through STATA v17. Qualitative data was analyzed through qualitative analysis software, Atlas.ti.

Ethical concerns addressed in all phases of the data collection exercise have been presented. Finally, the chapter has discussed how the study's findings shall be shared.

## **Chapter Four: Results and Discussion**

### **Introduction**

The main purpose of this study was to look into the impact that servant leadership behaviours have on conflict management styles used by pastors from churches in selected urban counties in Kenya, while also taking into account how emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between servant leadership style and conflict management. This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis collected through the mixed methods approaches used in the study. It encompasses descriptive statistics, inferential statistics and thematic analysis. The findings and discussions are based on the study's specific objectives. The descriptive statistics of the respondents is presented first.

### **Response Rate**

A total of 123 participants were sampled. Out of all the respondents contacted, 75 completed the questionnaire, reflecting a 60.9% response rate. Response rates in mixed research studies range from 29% to 100% depending on the method of survey distribution (Tomasini et al., 2018). An online web survey was utilized, with the research questions captured on Google forms. A hyperlink to the questionnaire was included in the introduction that was emailed to participants. According to Wu et al., (2022), a meta-analysis of online survey response rates revealed that the average response rate was 44.1%. For the current study, the response rate was 60.9%. Table 4.1 presents an analysis of the respondents.

**Table 4.1 Response Rate**

<b>Respondent category</b>	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>Sample size</b>	<b>Response Rate</b>	<b>Response %</b>
CITAM Senior Pastors	29	19	13	17%
PCEA Parish Ministers	45	31	20	27%
Heads of Departments/Ministry	61	42	29	39%
Evangelists	45	31	13	17%
Total	180	123	75	100%

Source: Author (2024)

### **Demographic Information**

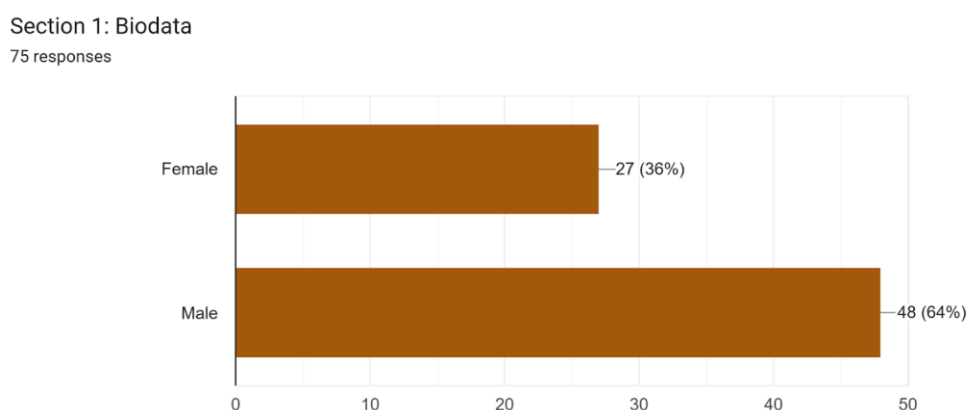
The demographic information used in the study included gender, age range, tenure of years worked in the church and level of education of the respondents. The gender distribution information is presented first.

### **Gender Distribution**

The gender distribution for the respondents was 27 (35.1%) female and 50 (64.9%) male. Male representation was predominant in comparison to female pastors. According to a research by Maina et al. (2018), men make up a majority of pastors serving in churches within Nairobi. Kairu et al. (2020) also indicated that there are more men than women in the PCEA leadership. The findings of the current study further point to the assertion that there are more males than females serving as leaders in churches in Kenya. This gender imbalance suggests that structural and cultural barriers may still exist that limit the advancement of women within church leadership in Kenya. Additionally, gender balance may shape how servant leadership and conflict management are enacted in church leadership. For instance, Obi et al. (2021) found that in female-led religious settings, servant leadership strongly aligns with

third-party conflict resolution studies, Nguyen et al. (2024) found that female supervisors often leverage servant leadership more effectively than their male counterparts, by fostering commitment and relational focus. The gender distribution is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents**



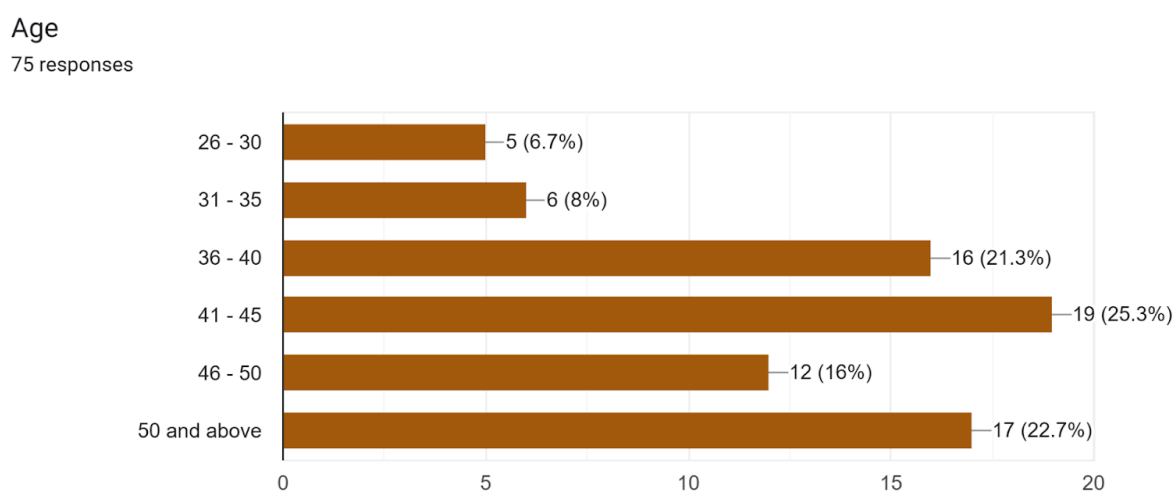
Source: Author (2024)

### **Age Distribution**

The following breakdown shows the different age distribution of the respondents. Among them, 5 (6.7%) were aged between 26 to 30 years, while 6 (8%) were aged between 31 to 35 years. Those aged between 36 to 40 years were 16 (21.3%) and 19 (25.3%) were aged 41-45, making up the majority. 12 (16%) of the respondents were between the ages 46 to 50, while 17 (22.7%) were over the age of 50. In summary, majority of the respondents, 48 out of 75, were aged 41 and above at 64%, with majority falling in the 41 - 45 years bracket (25.3%). This result was comparable to that of Thiga et al. (2021) who discovered that majority of the pastors (83.3%) who took part in their survey among pastors in Nairobi were 41 years of age and older. With 64% of the respondents aged above 41 and majority in the 41-45 age

bracket in the current study implies that their conflict management preferences and capacity to live out servant leadership behaviours may be shaped by their past experiences. It also implies that their current leadership behaviours are more established compared to the pastors who are still young and new in their leadership roles. The age distribution of the respondents is demonstrated in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Age**



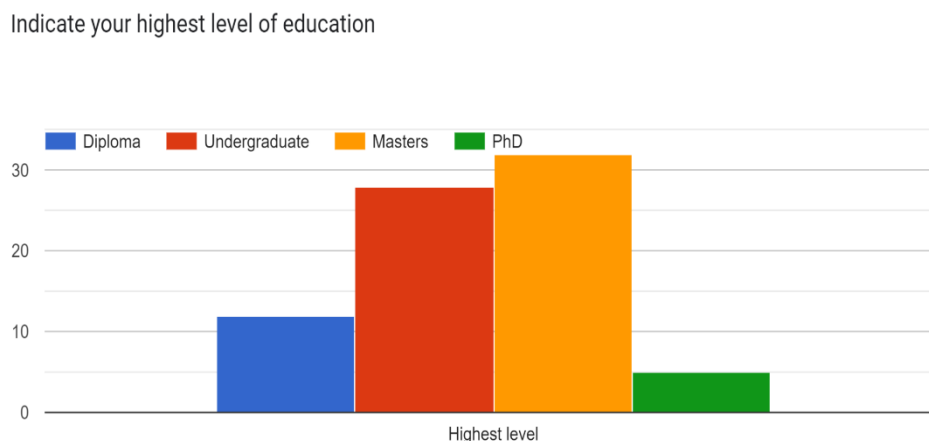
Source: Author (2024)

### Education Level

In terms of education level, 31 (41.3%) respondents had obtained a Master's degree, while 28 (37.3%) had an undergraduate degree. There were 5 (6.6%) PhD holders among the respondents and 11 (14.6%) were diploma holders. The largest percentage of respondents held a master's degree (41.3%) followed closely by those who had completed their undergraduate studies (37.3%). This result shows that 85% of those surveyed had attained university level education. This suggests that the respondents were highly educated and likely conversant with leadership theories, conflict management and emotional intelligence frameworks. Thus, the concepts in

the study were not unfamiliar to them, allowing for more genuine responses to the questionnaire. Figure 4.3 presents a summary of the education levels.

**Figure 4.3 Levels of Education among Respondents**



Source: Author (2024)

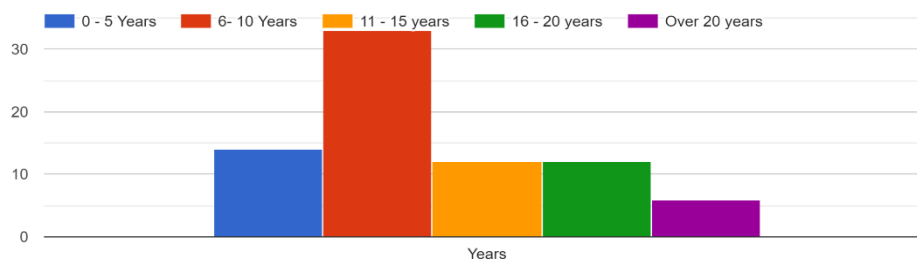
### Tenure of Service

The years worked in church were also determined in this study. Six respondents (8%) had served the longest, for 20 years and above. Twelve respondents (16%) had worked in the church for 16 to 20 years, and 11 (14.6%) had worked for 11 to 15 years. A majority of the respondents, 32 (42.6%), had worked for 6 to 10 years with 14 (18.6%) having served for just 0 to 5 years. Overall, the respondents were captured at different stages of both ministry experience and professional maturity. This tenure profile implies that there might be different perceptions of servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence. The younger pastors are likely to be still forming their leadership identity with little experience, while the middle career pastors have solid experience and openness to learn. The veteran pastors may already have well established leadership and conflict management habits,

and find difficulty in seeing their blind spots. Figure 4.4 depicts the years of service that the respondents had spent working in the church.

**Figure 4.4 Period of service as a pastor**

How many years have you served as a pastor in the church?



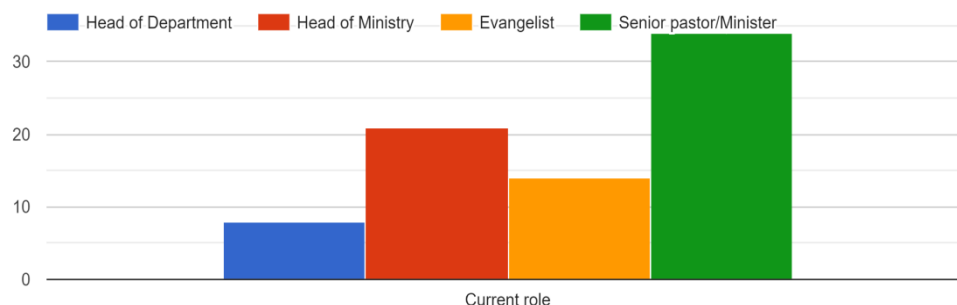
Source: Author (2024)

### **Current Leadership Role**

This study considered four leadership roles that pastors have within the church. These were: senior pastor, a role equivalent to the parish minister; head of department, head of ministry and evangelists. Within the PCEA church, the evangelist and parish minister were the key leadership roles, while in CITAM, the senior pastor and the head of ministry or head of department were the key leadership roles. A total of 33 (44%) senior pastors and parish ministers responded to the survey. In the category of evangelists, 13 (17.3%) responded to the survey. Pastors who were heads of ministry were 21 (28%), while heads of department were 8 (10.6%). Thus, majority of the respondents were senior leadership made up of senior pastors and parish ministers at 44%, followed by the heads of ministries at 28%. Figure 4.5 illustrates the current roles that the respondents are in.

**Figure 4.5 Current leadership role**

What is your current pastoral role?



Source: Author (2024)

The findings on the roles currently occupied by the respondents indicate that nearly three quarters occupy senior leadership roles, with 44% as senior pastors and parish ministers, and another 28% as heads of ministry. The 72% senior leadership has an implication on current practice of servant leadership and conflict management styles in the church context, as leaders set the tone on the organizational culture on how conflict is managed and resolved.

### **Summary of Demography of Respondents**

The summary of the demographics of the respondents in regard to their gender, age, education level, tenure and current leadership roles is captured in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Summary of demographic characteristics**

<b>BIODATA</b>	<b>N=75</b>	
<b>Gender</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Male	48	64%
Female	27	36%
<b>Age</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
26-30 years	5	6.7%
31-35 years	6	8%
36-40 years	16	21.3%
41-45 years	19	25.3%
46-50 years	12	16%
50 years and above	17	22.7%
<b>Highest level of education</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Diploma	11	14.7%
Undergraduate	28	37.3%
Masters	31	41.3%
PhD	5	6.7%
<b>Years worked as pastor</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
0-5 years	14	18.7%
6-10 years	32	42.7%
11-15 years	11	14.7%
Over 16 years	6	8%
<b>Current pastoral role</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Head of department	8	10.7%
Senior pastor/ Moderator	33	44%
Head of ministry	21	28%
Evangelist	13	17.3%
<b>Understanding of servant leadership</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>%</b>
Very well	36	48%
Well	35	46.7%
To some extent	4	5.3%

Source: Author (2024)

In terms of their understanding of servant leadership, an overwhelming 94.7% of the respondents reported a strong grasp of servant leadership. This implies that they were able to correctly understand the questionnaire used in the survey and able to respond meaningfully to the qualitative questions. This high level of conceptual clarity not only reinforces the internal validity of our survey but also means that any

observed relationships between servant-leadership style, conflict-management approaches, and emotional intelligence are likely reflective of genuine differences in leadership practice rather than respondent confusion.

### **Reliability Analysis**

Following data collection, reliability test for the questionnaire was performed to evaluate the reliability of the quantitative section of the instrument using the Cronbach alpha reliability test. Reliability refers to the extent an instrument yields consistent results across different sets of items purported to measure the same construct. The sections included in the test were the Servant Leadership Questionnaire, the Conflict Management Styles Questionnaire and Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1. The Cronbach Alpha's coefficient result of 0.836 showed that the results were very reliable. This was deemed acceptable according to Taber (2018) and Ahmad et al. (2024). Table 4.3 presents results from the reliability tests.

**Table 4.3 Reliability Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Servant leadership practices	16	0.765	Acceptable
Conflict management	28	0.814	Acceptable
Emotional intelligence	10	0.824	Acceptable
Overall Reliability Test (All questions)	54	0.836	Acceptable

Source: Author (2024)

In qualitative research, reliability is about the consistency, dependability and transparency on how the research was conducted and interpreted (Ahmed, 2024). The current study ensured reliability by maintaining a clear audit trail of the research process, including data collection procedures, coding frameworks, and analytical

decisions. Additionally, peer debriefing was utilized to validate interpretations and enhance the trustworthiness of the findings.

### **Diagnostic Tests**

The sections that follow describe the preliminary test for diagnosis conducted prior to the descriptive and inferential analysis of the results obtained for the study. The tests conducted included; the normality test for variables, the test for heteroscedasticity and the multicollinearity test.

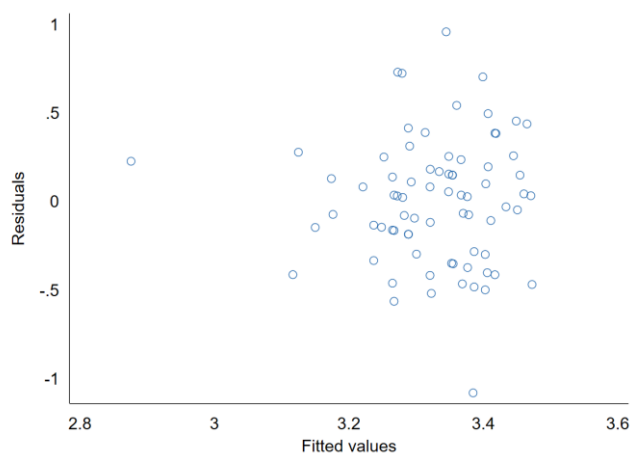
#### ***Test for normality***

A normality test is a test that determines if the data set is properly represented by a normal bell-curve distribution (Khatun, 2021). The Shapiro-Wilk test for normality of residuals was used to test the adequacy of the models used in the study. A p-value of  $<0.05$  means that the residuals are not normally distributed. Table 4.4 shows the Shapiro Wilk's test for normality. The results revealed a p-value of 0.540 which was an indication that the residuals were normally distributed.

**Table 4.4 Shapiro Wilk's test for normality**

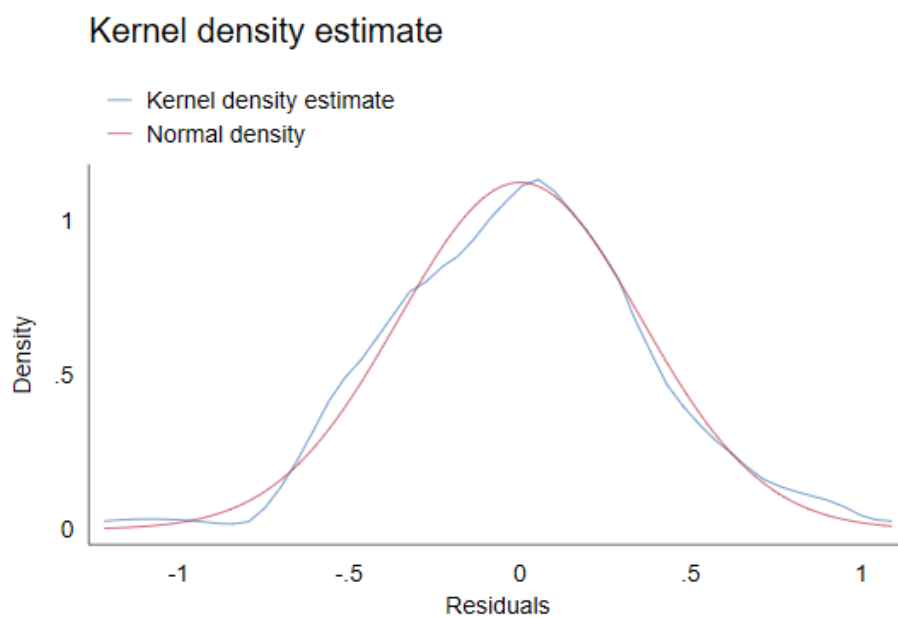
Shapiro-Wilk W test for normal data					
Variable	Obs	W	V	z	Prob>z
residuals	75	0.98533	0.955	-0.101	0.54017

The scatter plot in Figure 4.6 also showed no particular pattern in the residual plot, which means that the assumption of normality for linear regression was satisfied.

**Figure 4.6 Residual scatter plot**

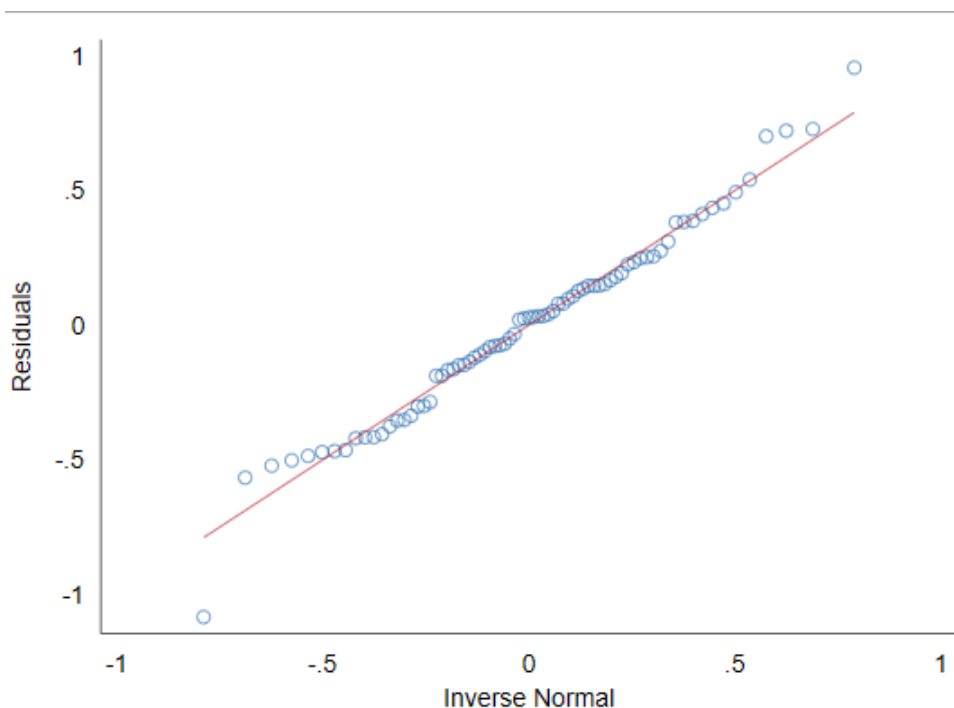
Source: Author (2024)

This was also confirmed by the density plot in Figure 4.7

**Figure 4.7 Density plot with a normal curve post linear regression estimation**

The QQ plots post linear regression also confirmed that the assumption of normality for linear regression was satisfied, as presented in Figure 4.8. The normal curve in the density plot confirmed the normality assumption.

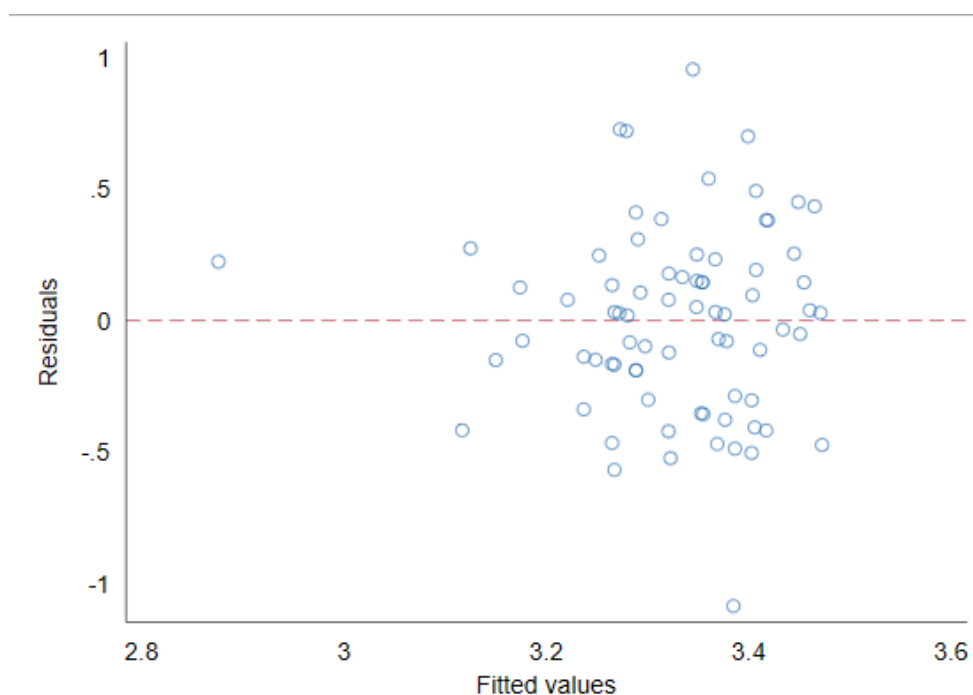
**Figure 4.8 QQ Plot post linear regression estimation**



Source: Author Data (2024)

***Test for heteroscedasticity of the residuals***

The heteroscedasticity test examines whether the variability of a dependent variable remains constant across the range of values of the independent variable(s) (Kumar, 2023). In this study, residual heteroscedasticity was assessed using the Residual vs. Fitted (RVF) plot, White's test (also known as the IM test), and the Breusch-Pagan test. These tests evaluate the null hypothesis that the residual variance is constant, also known as homoscedasticity. A very small p-value leads to the rejection of the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that the variance therefore, is not uniform, which is known as heteroscedasticity. Figure 4.9 presents the plot on the residual variance.

**Figure 4.9 Residual vs Fitted Plot**

The Information Matrix test, abbreviated as the IM test compares the observed information matrix to its expected counterpart under the null hypothesis of correct specification. A significant discrepancy indicates misspecification such as omitted variables, incorrect functional form, or violations of distributional assumptions, and flags the need for the model to be revised or adjusted. Results of the IM test are shown in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5 White's test for heteroscedasticity of residuals post linear regression model**

Cameron & Trivedi's decomposition of IM-test

Source	chi2	df	p
Heteroskedasticity	<b>5.90</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0.6581</b>
Skewness	<b>1.41</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0.7041</b>
Kurtosis	<b>0.55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.4592</b>
Total	<b>7.86</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>0.7962</b>

In contrast to the Information Matrix IM test, the Breusch-Pagan test focuses specifically on the homoscedasticity assumption in ordinary-least-squares regression. It tests whether the variance of the residuals is constant across observations by regressing squared OLS residuals on the original regressors. A significant BP statistic signals heteroscedasticity, which, if ignored, can lead to inefficient estimates and misleading standard errors. Results of the Breusch-Pagan test are shown in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6 Breusch-Pagan test for heteroscedasticity of residuals post linear regression model**

Breusch-Pagan/Cook-Weisberg test for heteroskedasticity  
Assumption: Normal error terms  
Variable: Fitted values of conflct\_avg

H0: Constant variance

chi2(1) = 1.08  
Prob > chi2 = 0.2993

Both tests, the IM test and the Breusch-Pagan test, confirmed that the residuals had a constant variance. The null hypothesis for both tests indicated that the variance was constant (homogenous). As a result, because the p-value generated was greater

than 0.05, we failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that the variance of the residuals was indeed constant.

### **Descriptive Analysis of Independent Variable**

In this study, servant leadership served as the independent variable. Four servant leadership constructs were considered under the independent variable. The first of these was emotional healing, followed by conceptual skills, with putting followers first as the third construct and behaving ethically as the final construct. The descriptive analyses are presented next, beginning with emotional healing.

#### **Emotional Healing**

Emotional healing was the first construct under the independent variable of servant leadership. The research objective was to determine the effect of emotional healing on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in the urban counties in Kenya. The findings revealed a strong tendency among pastors, both male and female, to engage in practices that support the *emotional well-being* of their colleagues. The mean score was 4.1 (sd=0.6) corresponding to 'agree' based on the scale used. The percentage agreement score was at 77% overall, and it was similar for both male and female. Majority of the pastors (82.7%), with 81.3% of males and 85.2% of females, agreed that other pastors seek their help for personal problems, indicating a high level of trust and emotional support within their community. This trend is further supported by the responses on caring about the wellbeing of fellow pastors, where 87.4% of male and an even higher 96.3% of female pastors agreed with the statement.

The findings also indicated that most pastors actively engaged in personal conversations with their peers. 87.5% of male and 74.1% of female pastors indicated taking time to talk on a personal level, indicating high levels of personal engagement and emotional availability among pastors. Finally, the ability to recognize emotional distress in others without being told was also notably high among pastors. A total of 79.2% of male and 85.2% of female pastors indicated their ability to discern when other pastors are feeling down. This high level of empathy and emotional awareness is a crucial aspect of emotional healing in a leadership context. According to Scazzero (2021), relational capacity can be enhanced by understanding, being at ease and open about one's own emotions as well as those of others, thus supporting the preceding descriptive analysis that the pastors who were respondents of the study demonstrated high relational capacity. Table 4.7 presents a descriptive analysis of emotional healing disaggregated by gender.

**Table 4.7 Emotional Healing**

<b>Emotional healing</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall score (mean (sd))	4.0 (0.7)	4.1 (0.5)	4.1 (0.6)	0.485
Overall mean percentage score	75.5 (18.3)	78.1 (13.3)	77.2 (15.2)	0.472
<i>Other pastors seek help from me if they have a personal problem</i>				
Disagree	4(8.3)	2(7.4)	6(8)	
Neutral	5(10.4)	2(7.4)	7(9.3)	
Agree	39(81.3)	23(85.2)	62(82.7)	0.896
<i>I care about the wellbeing of fellow pastors</i>				
Disagree	3(6.3)	1(3.7)	4(5.3)	
Neutral	3(6.3)	0	3(4)	
Agree	42(87.4)	26(96.3)	68(90.7)	0.360
<i>I take time to talk to fellow pastors on a personal level</i>				
Disagree	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	6 (12.5)	6 (22.2)	12 (16)	
Agree	42 (87.5)	20 (74.1)	62 (82.7)	0.204
<i>I can recognize when other pastors are feeling down without asking them</i>				
Disagree	1 (2.1)	1 (3.7)	2 (2.7)	
Neutral	9 (18.8)	3 (11.1)	12 (16)	0.645

Agree	38 (79.2)	23 (85.2)	61 (81.3)
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Source: Author (2024)

### Conceptual Skills

The second construct and under the independent variable servant leadership was conceptual skills. The research objective on conceptual skills sought to establish the influence of conceptual skills on interpersonal conflict among pastors in two denominations in Kenya. In the section on *conceptual skills*, the ability to detect issues related to work was notably high among the respondents. Conceptual skills are a quality of servant leadership whereby, a leader employs the ability to anticipate possibilities for the future and reconcile them with existing realities (Mathew, 2021). Servant leaders have the ability to set a compelling vision, connect previous events, and present trends and possible future scenarios (Meuser & Smallfield, 2023). Table 4.8 presents a descriptive analysis of conceptual skills disaggregated by gender.

**Table 4.8 Conceptual skills**

<b>Conceptual skills</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall score (mean (sd))	3.6 (0.4)	3.7 (0.5)	3.6 (0.5)	0.871
Overall mean percentage score	65.5 (10.5)	65.9 (13.1)	65.8 (12.2)	0.898
<i>I can tell if something work related is going wrong</i>				
Disagree	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)	
Agree	45 (93.7)	25 (92.6)	70 (93.3)	0.370
<i>I am able to think through complex problems</i>				
Disagree	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	3 (6.3)	0	3 (4)	
Agree	45 (93.7)	26 (96.3)	71 (94.7)	0.176
<i>I have a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals</i>				
Disagree	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	0	5 (18.5)	5 (6.7)	
Agree	48 (100)	21 (77.8)	69 (92)	0.003

*I can solve work problems with new or creative ideas*

Disagree	1 (2.1)	0	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	0	3 (1.1)	3 (4)	
Agree	47 (97.9)	24 (88.9)	71 (94.7)	0.049

Source: Author (2024)

The overall mean score on conceptual skills was 3.6 (sd=0.5) corresponding to 'agree' based on the scale used. The percentage agreement score was at 66% overall, and it was similar for both male and female. Specifically, 93.7% of male and 92.6% of female pastors agreed that they can detect when things at work are going wrong, demonstrating a great understanding and attention to organizational dynamics. Additionally, the capacity to think through complex problems was similarly high, with 93.7% of male and an impressive 96.3% of female pastors affirming their ability in this area. This suggested a high level of cognitive skills essential for effective leadership and problem resolution.

Regarding the understanding of their organization and its goals, all male pastors (100%) agreed they had a thorough understanding, compared to 77.8% of female pastors indicating possible variations in organizational engagement or differences in the perception of organizational clarity between genders.

In terms of having the capacity to address problems at the workplace with new or creative ideas, the scores indicated that 97.9% of males and 88.9% of females agreed with the statement. This indicates a strong inclination towards innovative thinking and creativity in addressing challenges by both genders. This finding on conceptual skills was supported by a previous study by Krisantana (2021), which observed that servant leaders demonstrated a long term view. Resane (2020) also noted that pastors as servant leaders influence each other and others towards a shared

vision where the interests of the common good are prioritized over the interests of the leader.

### Putting Followers First

Putting followers first was the third construct and research objective of servant leadership in the study. In the section on *putting followers first*, the responses from pastors reflected a commitment to the well-being and success of others, a characteristic of servant leadership. The mean score was 3.7 (sd=0.7) corresponding to 'agree' based on the scale used. The percentage agreement score was at 67% overall, and it was similar for both male and female. Table 4.9 presented descriptive analysis of putting followers first.

**Table 4.9 Putting Followers First**

<b>Putting followers first</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall score (mean (sd))	3.7 (0.7)	3.7 (0.7)	3.7 (0.7)	0.891
Overall mean percentage score	67.1 (16.7)	67.6 (16.4)	67.4 (16.4)	0.910
<i>I care more about the success of other pastors than my own</i>				
Disagree	4 (8.3)	3 (11.1)	7 (9.3)	
Neutral	18 (37.5)	12 (44.4)	30 (40)	
Agree	26 (54.2)	12 (44.4)	38 (50.7)	0.714
<i>I put the interests of other pastors above my own</i>				
Disagree	6 (12.5)	1 (3.7)	7 (9.3)	
Neutral	16 (33.3)	11 (40.7)	27 (36)	
Agree	26 (54.2)	15 (55.6)	41 (54.7)	0.427
<i>I sacrifice my own interests to meet the needs of other pastors</i>				
Disagree	5 (10.4)	3 (11.1)	8 (10.7)	
Neutral	14 (29.2)	9 (33.3)	23 (30.7)	
Agree	29 (60.4)	15 (55.6)	44 (58.7)	0.916
<i>I do what I can to make the jobs of other pastors easier</i>				
Disagree	0	0	0	
Neutral	7 (14.6)	4 (14.8)	11 (14.7)	
Agree	41 (85.4)	23 (85.2)	64 (85.3)	0.978

Source: Author (2024)

When asked whether they care more about the success of other pastors than their own, majority of male pastors (54.2%) and 44.4% of female pastors agreed with this statement. However, a notable number from both genders remained neutral (37.5% of males and 44.4% of females), suggesting a balanced view between personal success and the success of others. Pastors were also asked whether they put the interests of other pastors above their own. Similar proportions of male (54.2%) and female (55.6%) pastors agreed, with a high neutral response (33.3% of males and 40.7% of females) across genders indicating that majority of pastors demonstrate a selfless approach, putting others' interests first, yet a substantial portion are hesitant to fully commit to this aspect of servant leadership. The high neutral response may indicate the delicate balance between the human desire to focus on self, versus the desire to support others. Similar findings from the study by Wu et al. (2021) demonstrated that high self interest by an individual played a key role that positively impacted the servant leader-follower behaviours.

When asked whether they would put the needs of their fellow pastors above their own desires or interests, a large number of the leaders, 60.4% of males and 55.6% of females, were prepared to do so. However, about a third of respondents from both genders remained neutral. This finding presents the hesitation on how far to sacrifice for others. The hesitation to sacrifice the interests of self for others may be fear of missing opportunities such as promotions and recognition. Liao et al. (2020) assert that practising servant leadership behaviour daily can be costly for leaders. According to their study, leaders who participated less in perspective-taking exercises felt exhausted and exhibited greater *laissez faire* behaviour the next day, while leaders

who frequently engaged in perspective taking exercises experienced less depletion and exhibited less laissez faire behaviour the next day.

An overwhelming majority from both genders agreed (85.4% of males and 85.2% of females) that they do what they possibly can to make the jobs of other pastors easier, with only a small portion remaining neutral showing a commitment among pastors to actively support their peers, reflecting a core principle of servant leadership. Overall, pastors are often caught in daily demands of their time and service such that a healthy lifestyle of balance is difficult to maintain. A call to ministry is a vocation to self-sacrifice to meet the needs of others. The neutral results on desire and intention to sacrifice their own interests for the benefits of others are indicated in an investigation done by Moss and Snograd (2020). Moss and Snograd (2020) found that pastors selectively disclosed information and guarded their emotions from others, especially congregants, and relied more on God and self-care when battling health concerns.

### **Behaving Ethically**

The fourth construct and research objective of servant leadership in the study was behaving ethically. The objective was to determine the effect of behaving ethically on interpersonal conflict among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya. Responses to the questions on ‘interrogating pastors’ ethics’ revealed that there was strong adherence to ethical standards among pastors; a fundamental aspect of servant leadership. The mean score was high at 4.5 (sd=0.5) corresponding to ‘strongly agree’ based on the scale used. The percentage agreement score was at 87% overall, and it was similar for both males and females. All male

pastors (100%) and nearly all female pastors (96.3%) agreed that they held very high ethical standards, indicating a unanimous commitment to high ethical standards in their professional conduct. Further, a large majority of pastors, 89.5% of males and 85.2% of females, agreed with the statement that they are always honest. However, a small proportion, particularly among females (14.8%), remained neutral, suggesting some complexities in navigating honesty in every aspect of their roles. Table 4.10 presents a descriptive analysis of behaving ethically disaggregated by gender.

**Table 4.10 Behaving Ethically**

<b>Behaving ethically</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall score (mean (sd))	4.5 (0.4)	4.5 (0.5)	4.5 (0.5)	0.687
Overall mean percentage score	86.4 (10.4)	87.4 (11.9)	87.1 (11.3)	0.708
<i>I hold high ethical standards</i>				
Disagree	0	0	0	
Neutral	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Agree	48 (100)	26 (96.3)	74 (98.7)	0.179
<i>I am always honest</i>				
Disagree	2 (4.2)	0	2 (2.7)	
Neutral	3 (6.3)	4 (14.8)	7 (9.3)	
Agree	43 (89.5)	23 (85.2)	66 (88)	0.283
<i>I would not compromise ethical principles in order to meet success</i>				
Disagree	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	2 (4.2)	0	2 (2.7)	
Agree	46 (95.8)	26 (96.3)	72 (96)	0.234
<i>I value honesty more than profits</i>				
Disagree	0	0	0	
Neutral	0	1 (3.7)	1 (1.3)	
Agree	48 (100)	26 (96.3)	74 (98.7)	0.179
<i>To what extent do you disagree or agree, that the use of servant leadership is most effective in conflict management?</i>				
	Male n (%)	Female n (%)	Total N (%)	p-value
To a moderate extent	4 (8.3)	3 (11.1)	7 (9.3)	
To a great extent	29 (60.4)	15 (55.6)	44 (58.7)	
To a very great extent	15 (31.3)	9 (33.3)	24 (32)	
				0.889

Source: Author (2024)

All male pastors (100%) and nearly all female pastors (96.3%) agreed that they hold very high ethical standards, demonstrating a shared dedication to high ethical standards in their profession of ministry. Furthermore, a large majority of pastors, 89.5% of males and 85.2% of females, agreed with the statement that they are always honest. However, a small proportion, particularly among females (14.8%), remained neutral, suggesting some complexities in navigating honesty in every aspect of their roles.

When asked if they would concede on their ethical standards and values for success, nearly all pastors, 95.8% of males and 96.3% of females, agreed that they would not, indicating a strong commitment to ethical integrity over success. Finally, respondents were asked whether they valued honesty over profits and again, all male pastors and 96.3% of female pastors agreed with this statement, highlighting a unanimous view that honesty outweighs financial gains among the pastoral team indicating a profound commitment to honesty, aligning with the altruistic and service-oriented nature of pastoral work.

Overall, the pastors that responded to the study agreed to hold high ethical standards in their work. High ethical standards play a crucial role in effective conflict management, particularly in environments that demand trust, transparency, and moral accountability. Ethical leaders collaborate more and compete less during conflict management (Alan et al., 2022). Leaders who consistently uphold ethical values such as fairness, honesty, and respect are more likely to approach conflict resolution with integrity and impartiality (Hyatt & Gruenglas, 2023). This fosters a climate of psychological safety, where parties feel heard and respected, reducing defensiveness and resistance. In pastoral or leadership roles, ethical behaviour also sets a precedent, modelling constructive ways of handling disagreements (Chambers, 2023).

### **Thematic Analysis on Servant leadership**

In the servant leadership section of the questionnaire, one additional question was included. The purpose of the question was to assess the extent to which participants associated servant leadership with conflict management. The question included a scale from which participants could choose an answer. This helped determine whether servant leadership principles that were tested in the study were

perceived as practical and relevant in navigating and managing conflict within their organizational or ministry settings. The respondents were asked to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed that servant leadership style was the most effective leadership style to use in conflict management. STATA was used to analyze the responses. The range of the scales and the responses are summarized in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11 Use of servant leadership in conflict management**

	Male	Female	%
To a very low extent	-	-	-
To a moderate extent	3	3	8%
To a great extent	29	15	59%
To a very great extent	15	10	33%
	47	28	100%

Source: Survey Data (2024)

Majority of the respondents, 44 out of 75, representing 58.6% indicated that they agreed with the statement to a great extent. Of these, 29 were male and 15 were female. Another 25 respondents at 33.3% indicated that they agreed with the statement to a very great extent. Of these, 15 were male and 9 were female. Six of the respondents at 9.3% indicated that they agreed with the statement to a moderate extent, represented by 3 males and 3 females.

From this analysis on the use of servant leadership as the most effective in conflict management, it can be deduced that the majority of respondents viewed servant leadership as being used by pastors in conflict management. This majority view, encompassing 60.4% of male and 55.6% of female pastors, shows a strong belief in the power of empathy, active listening, and prioritizing others in resolving disputes. Furthermore, a significant proportion, 31.3% of males and 33.3% of

females, saw it to be extremely effective. These results are supported by previous studies which established the awareness, interpretation and application of servant leadership by pastors (Cook II, 2020; Omogo, 2019).

However, given that not all the respondents chose the option 'very great extent', it is possible that while there is knowledge of servant leadership and the general acceptance that it is appropriate for use in conflict management, servant leadership might not be the only style used on interpersonal conflict management. This was supported by a study carried out by Nwan (2021), who assessed the use of transformational leadership to address leadership conflicts among church leaders in evangelical churches in Nigeria. This level of uncertainty could also reflect varying interpretations of what constitutes servant leadership in practice, and the behaviours and skills within servant leadership that are useful in conflict management.

The purpose of the mixed methods data collection was to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining the findings from the quantitative data with the qualitative information given. This was done by comparing the P-values of the servant leadership behaviours with the question regarding whether servant leadership was relevant as a leadership style in managing interpersonal conflicts among pastors. Inferentially, none of the four servant leadership dimensions - behaving ethically ( $p = 0.708$ ), putting followers first ( $p = 0.910$ ), conceptual skills ( $p = 0.898$ ), or emotional healing ( $p = 0.472$ ) - showed a statistically significant deviation from a neutral benchmark, indicating that no single facet stood out on its own.

Descriptively, however, an overwhelming 92 % of respondents rated servant leadership as useful to a great or very great extent for conflict management, with no one rating it "to a very low extent." This combination of non significant p-values and

uniformly positive endorsements suggests that in practice, these four pillars are perceived not as isolated tools but as an integrated whole. The theoretical implication of this analysis is that, when it comes to managing conflict, servant leadership behaviours appear to operate in concert rather than as independent levers, reinforcing the value of presenting the style as a cohesive model.

The next section presented the descriptive analysis of conflict management styles, which was the dependent variable.

## **Descriptive Analysis of Dependent Variable**

### **Conflict Management Styles**

The outcome variable for the study was conflict management styles. Conflict management is an essential skill in any organizational setting, particularly in roles that require a high level of interpersonal interaction and guidance, such as pastoral work. This section investigated how pastors approach conflict within their peers, focusing on five strategies namely: avoiding, accommodating, compromising, competing and collaborating. Responses were segmented by gender to establish if there are any differences in approach between male and female pastors.

A composite score is used to summarize complex data into a simplified score or value (McKenna & Heaney, 2020). The composite score represents small sets of data that are highly related to each other both conceptually and statistically. Pooling individual measures into a single outcome provides a finer estimate of the dimension of interest and provides ease of understanding (Moreau & Wiebels, 2021). By adding up all of the questions under conflict management and dividing by the total number of questions, an aggregate or composite score was created to provide a summary of the conflict management variable. Table 4.12 shows the results for the mean score, the p-

value for each of the components of conflict management and the composite score to summarize conflict.

**Table 4.12 Conflict Management Scores**

<b>Score</b>	<b>Male mean (sd)</b>	<b>Female mean (sd)</b>	<b>Total mean (sd)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall conflict management score	3.3 (0.3)	3.3 (0.5)	3.3 (0.3)	0.536
Avoiding	2.8 (0.8)	2.8 (0.8)	2.8 (0.8)	0.977
Accommodating	3.4 (0.4)	3.4 (0.6)	3.4 (0.5)	0.941
Compromising	3.5 (0.5)	3.5 (0.7)	3.5 (0.6)	0.655
Competing	2.3 (0.7)	2.5 (0.7)	2.5 (0.7)	0.268
Collaborating	4.2 (0.4)	4.2 (0.4)	4.2 (0.4)	0.442

Source: Author (2024)

The findings indicate that the participants were more likely to agree to the questions under collaborating which had a mean of 4.2 and a standard deviation of 0.4, and compromising which had a mean of 3.5 and a standard deviation of 0.6. The findings also indicated that the participants were more likely to disagree to the questions under competing which had a mean of 2.3 and a standard deviation of 0.7. They were also likely to be indifferent or neutral on the questions under accommodating which had a mean of 3.4 and standard deviation of 0.5, and avoiding which had a mean of 2.8 and standard deviation of 0.8. Overall, the mean score was 3.3 which correspond to neutral but 58% agreement rate. This indicates on the whole, 58% of the respondents agreed with the statements presented in this section of the questionnaire. Sex-based differences were not statistically significant ( $p > 0.05$ ).

In terms of ranking, collaborating was the most preferred conflict management style, while competing was the least common. Prior research such as by Chandolia and Anastasiou (2020) and Palmer (2020) found that collaborating is a dominant conflict management style, a finding that supports the current study. The section that

follows presents how participants responded to each of the conflict management styles, beginning with avoiding.

### **Avoiding**

In the *avoiding* section, 45.3% of pastors disagreed with avoiding conflict and keeping it to themselves, with a higher disagreement rate among female pastors (51.9%) than male pastors (41.7%). However, 34.7% agreed with this approach. The analysis also shows that most pastors generally favour open dialogue in conflict situations, suggesting a tendency to address issues directly rather than avoiding them. This is because, a large majority, 78.7% of pastors, disagreed with the statement on avoiding open discussions with peers with more female (85.2%) than male respondents (75%) agreeing with this statement. Conversely, while many pastors were willing to engage in disagreements, a significant number also preferred to avoid them. This is because 45.3% of all pastors who took part in the survey disagreed with staying away from disagreements with peers whereas, 33.3% agreed to take this approach. Table 4.13 presents results on avoiding as a component of conflict management.

**Table 4.13 Responses on Avoiding**

<b>Avoiding</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>I attempt to avoid 'being put on the spot' and try to keep my conflict with my peers to myself</i>				
Disagree	20 (41.7)	14 (51.9)	34 (45.3)	0.489
Neutral	9 (18.8)	6 (22.2)	15 (20)	
Agree	19 (39.6)	7 (25.9)	26 (34.7)	
<i>I usually avoid open discussions with my peers</i>				
Disagree	36 (75)	23 (85.2)	59 (78.7)	0.341
Neutral	7 (14.6)	1 (3.7)	8 (10.7)	
Agree	5 (10.4)	3 (11.1)	8 (10.7)	
<i>I try to stay away from disagreement with my peers</i>				
Disagree	26 (54.2)	8 (29.6)	34 (45.3)	0.070
Neutral	7 (14.6)	9 (33.3)	16 (21.3)	
Agree	15 (31.3)	10 (37)	25 (33.3)	
<i>I avoid an encounter with my peers</i>				
Disagree	32 (66.7)	14 (51.9)	46 (61.3)	0.365
Neutral	8 (16.7)	8 (29.6)	16 (21.3)	
Agree	8 (16.7)	5 (18.5)	13 (17.3)	
<i>I try to keep my disagreement with my peers to myself in order to avoid hard feelings</i>				
Disagree	27 (56.3)	13 (48.2)	40 (53.3)	0.728
Neutral	9 (18.8)	7 (25.9)	16 (21.3)	
Agree	12 (25)	7 (25.9)	19 (25.3)	
<i>I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peers</i>				
Disagree	4 (8.3)	4 (14.8)	8 (10.7)	0.670
Neutral	5 (10.4)	3 (11.1)	8 (10.7)	
Agree	39 (81.3)	20 (74.1)	59 (78.7)	

Source: Author (2024)

Respondents were also asked whether they avoid encounters with peers. 61.3% of all pastors disagreed with avoiding encounters, suggesting a willingness to face conflict situations rather than evading them. Comparison by gender shows that more male pastors (66.7%) face encounters with peers head on in comparison to female pastors (51.9%). In addition, majority of pastors (53.3%) prefer not to withhold their disagreements with their peers by keeping the issue to themselves in order to hide any hard feelings. This indicates a readiness to express differing

opinions with consideration for others' feelings. 25.3% of respondents; however, did withhold disagreements in order to avoid confrontation and hide hard feelings.

Lastly, most pastors did not appear ready to engage in challenging discussions as 78.7% of all pastors agreed with the statement on avoiding unpleasant exchanges with peers to avoid potentially uncomfortable situations. This outcome is consistent with an investigation done by Rapatalo (2020) which found that school administrators in Bohol, Philippines, preferred avoiding style in managing conflict. In the present study, majority of males (81.3%) and 74.1% females chose avoiding conflict style. Next is an analysis of the second conflict management style; accommodating.

### **Accommodating**

When probed on matters concerning *accommodating* others, the analysis revealed that most pastors were inclined to prioritizing the needs of their peers, showing a strong tendency towards accommodation in their interactions. The majority of pastors, 77.1% male and 66.7% female, agreed with the statement that they normally endeavoured to serve the needs of their colleagues while a minority (6.7%) disagreed. This finding is collaborated by a study conducted by Hastings et al. (2019) which discovered that pharmaceutical students who scored high on accommodating were also more empathetic. Table 4.14 presents results on 'accommodating' conflict management style component.

**Table 4.14 Responses on Accommodating**

<b>Accommodating</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers</i>				
Disagree	2 (4.2)	3 (11.1)	5 (6.7)	0.447
Neutral	9 (18.8)	6 (22.2)	15 (20)	
Agree	37 (77.1)	18 (66.7)	55 (73.3)	
<i>I usually accommodate the wishes of my peers</i>				
Disagree	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)	0.732
Neutral	14 (29.2)	10 (37)	24 (32)	
Agree	31 (64.6)	16 (59.3)	47 (62.7)	
<i>I give in to the wishes of my peers</i>				
Disagree	17 (35.4)	5 (18.5)	22 (29.3)	0.301
Neutral	22 (45.8)	16 (59.3)	38 (50.7)	
Agree	9 (18.8)	6 (22.2)	15 (20)	
<i>I usually provide concessions to my peers</i>				
Disagree	5 (10.4)	2 (7.4)	7 (9.3)	0.149
Neutral	14 (29.2)	14 (51.9)	28 (37.3)	
Agree	29 (60.4)	11 (40.7)	40 (53.3)	
<i>I often go along with the suggestions of my peers</i>				
Disagree	11 (22.9)	0	11 (14.7)	0.026
Neutral	21 (43.8)	16 (59.3)	37 (49.3)	
Agree	16 (33.3)	11 (40.7)	27 (36)	
<i>I try to satisfy the expectations of my peers</i>				
Disagree	11 (22.9)	2 (7.4)	13 (17.3)	0.040
Neutral	12 (25)	14 (51.9)	26 (34.7)	
Agree	25 (52.1)	11 (40.7)	36 (48)	

Source: Author (2024)

Another study that contributed to the preference for accommodating conflict management style was conducted through a review of a synthesis of empirical studies. The review examined nurses' use of the various styles of conflict management. Nikitara et al. (2024) found that that accommodating was one of the two most frequent conflict management styles used by nurses. In the current study, the majority of the respondents, 64.6% of males and 59.3% of females, agreed with accommodating peers' wishes, with a small proportion disagreeing (5.3%) and 37% of all respondents remaining neutral. This indicates willingness and consideration of others when resolving conflicts. However, when respondents were asked whether they

give in to the wishes of their peers, fewer pastors, 18.8% of males and 22.2% of females, agreed with this, indicating a lower tendency to fully concede to others' wishes. A notable number disagreed (29.3%).

The qualitative analysis to the question regarding some of the challenges that cause interpersonal conflict among pastors to become difficult to manage revealed that there was a lack of empathy among pastors, an unwillingness to listen to different points of view, a lack of respect, judging others, and a lack of understanding of individuals' personal backgrounds. This contrasts with the quantitative data in which 77.1% of male and 66.7% of female pastors, agreed that they normally endeavour to meet the needs of their colleagues. Findings by Harris and Brown (2019) support this result. According to Harris and Brown (2019), variations between qualitative and quantitative datasets in research using mixed methods could be attributed to increased context sensitivity. Thus, the qualitative section of the questionnaire reflects the real life experiences of respondents are reflected in the qualitative part of the questionnaire, explaining the disparity in results.

From the analysis, there was high willingness among male pastors to use accommodating compared to female pastors. This is because majority of the males at 60.4% and 40.7% of females agreed with providing concessions for their peers, while a small minority disagreed (9.3%). This finding is collaborated by a research conducted by Rowe (2022) on African American pastors where 71.4% of the participants reported that they used accommodation most in conflict resolution. A third of all respondents, 33.3% of males and 40.7% of females, agreed to frequently follow the advice of their peers with a notable 14.7% disagreeing with the statement.

Finally, respondents were asked if they endeavour to meet the expectations of their fellow pastors. Over half of male pastors (52.1%) and a lesser proportion of

female pastors (40.7%) agreed with this statement, with 17.3% of all respondents disagreeing. Thus, while a good number of pastors strived to meet their peers' expectations, there was also a large number who preferred to maintain their own stance, particularly among female pastors. The third component of conflict management was compromising.

### **Compromising**

Responses in the *compromising* section showed that more female respondents 81.5% compared to 68.8% of male respondents attempted to find a middle ground to resolve a situation that was a deadlock or at a standoff whereas, 6.7% disagreed. This high level of agreement indicates a general tendency to find mutually acceptable solutions rather than persisting with rigid positions. The goal of compromising is fairness, with none of the parties fully realizing their benefits. 70.8% of male and 66.7% of female pastors agreed with proposing a middle ground for breaking deadlocks suggesting an inclination to avoid protracted conflicts by seeking shared solutions.

Majority of respondents, 64.6% of males and 77.8% of females agreed with the statement that they engage with colleagues to find a compromise, indicating that most pastors prefer a problem-solving approach that values consensus and balanced solutions over win-lose scenarios. This finding is corroborated by a study by Mahajan and Sutar (2022) that discovered that female college students were more prone than male students to engage in compromising conflict management style actions. According to Bhatia (2022), women are more expressive and courteous than their male counterparts, who are more assertive and power-hungry; thus, female employees are more likely to utilize non-competing methods such as avoidance than male

employees. Table 4.15 presents results on compromising as a component of conflict management.

**Table 4.15 Responses on Compromising**

<b>Compromising</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse</i>				
Disagree	3 (6.3)	2 (7.4)	5 (6.7)	0.353
Neutral	12 (25)	3 (11.1)	15 (20)	
Agree	33 (68.8)	22 (81.5)	55 (73.3)	
<i>I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks</i>				
Disagree	4 (8.3)	3 (11.1)	7 (9.3)	0.904
Neutral	10 (20.8)	6 (22.2)	16 (21.3)	
Agree	34 (70.8)	18 (66.7)	52 (69.3)	
<i>I negotiate with my peers so that a compromise can be reached</i>				
Disagree	5 (10.4)	3 (11.1)	8 (10.7)	0.348
Neutral	12 (25)	3 (11.1)	15 (20)	
Agree	31 (64.6)	21 (77.8)	52 (69.3)	
<i>I use 'give and take' so that a compromise can be made</i>				
Disagree	11 (22.9)	7 (25.9)	18 (24)	0.897
Neutral	13 (27.1)	8 (29.6)	21 (28)	
Agree	24 (50)	12 (44.4)	36 (48)	

Source: Author (2024)

### **Competing**

The fourth component of conflict management was competing. On *competing*, respondents were asked whether they used their own influence to get their ideas accepted. 44% of pastors disagreed with using their influence to get ideas accepted, with a fairly even split between males (43.8%) and females (44.4%). However, a minority of only 29.3% agreed with this approach. A large majority (80%) disagreed with using authority to sway decisions in their favour, indicating a reluctance to impose decisions based on position or power. 68% of respondents also disagreed with

using their expertise to influence decisions in their favour, suggesting a preference for broader input rather than relying solely on their expertise.

In regard to being firm in pursuing their side in an issue under conflict, 41.3% of respondents disagreed with being forceful in pushing for their position, while 29.3% agreed, indicating a balance between assertiveness and flexibility. The results of this research are reinforced by an investigation conducted by Fields (2021) among social care employees in the United States, which reported that dominating or using force to get one's way diminished trust in others and increased competition. Table 4.16 presents the results on competing as a component of conflict management.

**Table 4.16 Responses on Competing**

<b>Competing</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>I use my influence to get my ideas accepted</i>				
Disagree	21 (43.8)	12 (44.4)	33 (44)	0.489
Neutral	11 (22.9)	9 (33.3)	20 (26.7)	
Agree	16 (33.3)	6 (22.2)	22 (29.3)	
<i>I use my authority to make a decision in my favour</i>				
Disagree	37 (77.0)	23 (85.2)	60 (80)	0.677
Neutral	9 (18.8)	3 (11.1)	12 (16)	
Agree	2 (4.2)	1 (3.7)	3 (4)	
<i>I use my expertise to make a decision in my favour</i>				
Disagree	30 (62.4)	21 (77.8)	51 (68)	0.396
Neutral	9 (18.8)	3 (11.1)	12 (16)	
Agree	9 (18.8)	3 (11.1)	12 (16)	
<i>I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue</i>				
Disagree	21 (43.8)	10 (37)	31 (41.3)	0.248
Neutral	11 (22.9)	11 (0.7)	22 (29.3)	
Agree	16 (33.3)	6 (22.2)	22 (29.3)	
<i>I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation</i>				
Disagree	31 (64.6)	19 (70.4)	50 (66.7)	0.813
Neutral	12 (25)	5 (18.5)	17 (22.7)	
Agree	5 (10.4)	3 (11.1)	8 (10.7)	

Source: Author (2024)

### **Collaborating**

The fifth and final component of conflict management for this study was collaborating. A substantial majority of pastors, with 89.6% of males and 97.8% of females, agreed on investigating issues collaboratively with their peers, while only a small minority disagreed (5.3%) indicating a strong preference for collaborative problem-solving and shared decision-making among pastors. Almost all respondents, male (93.8%) and female (92.6%), agreed on the use of approaches that integrate their own personal ideas with that of their peers in order to achieve a solution acceptable to all parties to manage and resolve conflicts. This demonstrates open mindedness among pastors and the willingness to consider various perspectives in problem-solving. These findings are reinforced by a study conducted in Nigeria by Obi et al. (2020) on religious team conflict in a religious convent, which discovered that servant leadership complements a collaborative conflict management strategy.

The analysis also shows that pastors highly value collaborative efforts to meet shared goals. Majority of pastors, 91.7% of males and 96.3% of females, agreed on working together to find mutually satisfying solutions, with only a minimal disagreement (1.3%). Additionally, almost all pastors, 93.7% of males and 92.6% of females, agreed on the importance of exchanging accurate information with peers for collaborative problem-solving, with no one disagreeing underscoring the value pastors place on transparency and open communication in collaborative processes.

Furthermore, there seems to be a preference for open dialogue and transparency in conflict management among pastors as majority, 81.3% of males and 85.2% of females agreed with openly addressing concerns for effective resolution, while only a small proportion disagreed (2.7%). A large number of pastors, 89.6% of males and 92.6% of females agreed with the statement that they work with colleagues to make decisions that are acceptable to everyone.

Finally, a majority, 95.8% of males and 88.9% of females, agreed on working together for a proper understanding of problems, with no one disagreeing. This indicates a collective approach to understanding issues, where pastors prioritize gaining a comprehensive and shared understanding of problems before seeking solutions. The high preference for collaborating as indicated by the results from respondents has been captured in other studies (Boyd, 2020; Fields, 2021; Obi et al, 2020). Collaborating entails considerable concern for oneself and others, where the concerns and wants of both parties are considered to arrive at a solution. Table 4.17 presents results on collaborating as a component of conflict management.

**Table 4.17 Responses on Collaborating**

<b>Collaborating</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<i>I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to us</i>				
Disagree	2 (4.2)	2 (7.4)	4 (5.3)	0.371
Neutral	3 (6.3)	4 (14.8)	7 (9.3)	
Agree	43 (89.6)	21 (77.8)	64 (85.3)	
<i>I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to find a solution acceptable to us</i>				
Disagree	0	0	0	0.847
Neutral	3 (6.3)	2 (7.4)	5 (6.7)	
Agree	45 (93.8)	25 (92.6)	70 (93.3)	
<i>I try to work with my peers to find a solution to a problem that satisfies our expectations</i>				
Disagree	1 (2.1)	0	1 (1.3)	0.666
Neutral	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)	
Agree	44 (91.7)	26 (96.3)	70 (93.3)	
<i>I exchange accurate information with my peers to solve a problem together</i>				
Disagree	0	0	0	0.847
Neutral	3 (6.3)	2 (7.4)	5 (6.7)	
Agree	45 (93.7)	25 (92.6)	70 (93.3)	
<i>I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that issues can be resolved in the best possible way</i>				
Disagree	2 (4.2)	0	2 (2.7)	0.560
Neutral	7 (14.6)	4 (14.8)	11 (14.7)	
Agree	39 (81.3)	23 (85.2)	62 (82.7)	
<i>I collaborate with my peers to come up with decisions acceptable to us</i>				
Disagree	1 (2.1)	0	1 (1.3)	0.741
Neutral	4 (8.3)	2 (7.4)	6 (8)	
Agree	43 (89.6)	25 (92.6)	68 (90.7)	
<i>I try to work with my peers for a proper understanding of the problem</i>				

Disagree	0	0	0	
Neutral	2 (4.2)	3 (11.1)	5 (6.7)	
Agree	46 (95.8)	24 (88.9)	70 (93.3)	0.247

Source: Author (2024)

### **Thematic Analysis on Conflict Management**

The current study took a mixed methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative data was concurrently collected, but analysed separately. The qualitative data analysis is presented next. The qualitative analysis first examined how pastors themselves described and interpreted their interpersonal conflict management, against the five conflict management styles considered in the study. The respondents elaborated on their answers, revealing both the theological and organizational logics that underpin their responses when addressing interpersonal conflicts with fellow pastors. By virtue of the study being conducted in a faith-based work setting, in this case the church, the qualitative data from male and female respondents brought out the spiritual beliefs and practices that influenced their conflict management responses. The following section presents the qualitative responses against each of the five conflict management styles, beginning with avoidance.

In the case of avoidance, respondents from both genders described a tendency among pastors to retreat from or suppress conflict rather than address it directly. Female pastors frequently characterized this dynamic as “*sweeping issues under the carpet*”. The female pastors also attributed spiritual rationalizations such as “*prayerlessness*” and “*spiritual immaturity*” that paralyzed honest engagement with each other when managing conflict. They spoke of fear, “*fear of appearing unspiritual*” or of undermining ecclesial unity. This resulted in prolonged silences and

unresolved tension due to the conflicts. Male pastors echoed the picture of fear by drawing on wilful withdrawal, lamenting that having a “*closed mind*” and a “*denial of personal weaknesses*” prevented honest confrontation during conflicts. Both men and women attributed avoidance to not only personal discomfort but to a collective habit reinforced by church culture, suggesting that avoidance is normalized in pastoral teams when the stakes of offending or exposing faults feel too high.

When it came to accommodating conflict management responses, the qualitative data revealed that pastors were striving to yield to others’ needs and preserve harmony, albeit with varying degrees of intentionality. The female respondents highlighted humility and deference, urging the mindset towards colleagues to “*look at others as better than self*” and to “*embrace a servant*” posture rooted in Christian humility. They acknowledged that pastors who consistently acceded to their peers’ demands may forestall conflict escalation, yet they also hinted at the risk of masking true grievances. Men likewise value an accommodating spirit—citing “*servant-hood Jesus way*”, the “*importance of respect*” and bona fide “*humility*”, although they occasionally lamented that “*over-accommodation can be mistaken for weakness or fuel passive resentment*”. In both sets of responses, accommodation emerges as a double-edged practice: one that can defuse tension, but when unaccompanied by clear boundaries or genuine vulnerability, may only delay or deepen underlying conflict.

Competing, by contrast, was described almost universally as a source of discord among pastors. Both female and male respondents emphasize the corrosive impact of “*pride, power struggles, and self-interest*”. Women named “*micromanaging teams*,” “*position for power*,” and “*unhealthy competition*” as

drivers of interpersonal clashes, observing that pastors sometimes vie to “*shine*” or to “*court favour with supervisors*”. Men similarly called out “*domineering attitudes*,” “*big-man syndrome*,” and “*love of money and sex*” as manifestations of a competitive ethos that prioritizes personal advancement over collegial solidarity. Importantly, respondents framed these competitive impulses not as neutral strategic choices but as moral failings, biases of tribe or gender, and abuse of spiritual authority, that undermined the integrity of pastoral relationships. Competition, then, was depicted as both a relational style and an ethical lapse, inextricably linked to ego and moral compromise.

Although less explicitly labelled, compromising appeared in respondents’ calls for give-and-take and mutual adjustment. Women pastors described the need for “*everyone sticking to their lane*” and for recognizing that “*pastors bring varied gifts*”, implying that conflict can be managed through “*mutual concessions*” and “*shared purpose*”. Men similarly stressed the importance of “*dialogue*,” “*agreeing on similar goals*,” and early detection of tensions, suggesting a preference for negotiated settlements rather than zero-sum outcomes. Neither group frequently uses the technical term “*compromise*,” but both describe it as an intuitive, relationally grounded process where pastors agreed to cede some priorities in service of collective well-being. In this way, compromise was portrayed as a latent yet pervasive conflict style, one that pastors instinctively invoked to bridge differences when neither avoidance nor competition offered a viable long-term solution.

Finally, collaborating was envisioned as desired but logistically challenging approach to conflict management. Across genders, respondents emphasize the value of open, honest dialogue and joint problem-solving. Women pastors spoke about the

need for “*peer debrief sessions*,” “*trust-building forums*,” and genuine vulnerability as preconditions for true collaboration. Men pastors affirmed the need for “*neutral ground meetings*,” “*social interactions*,” and *clear structures* that enable pastors to work together toward shared goals. Both men and women acknowledge that collaboration often foundered on practical impediments such as *limited time to bond*, *diverse personality traits*, and *uneven levels of emotional intelligence* or *spiritual maturity*. Thus, collaboration was both celebrated as the ideal mode of engagement and critiqued for the infrastructural and cultural deficits that make it difficult to realize in many pastoral settings.

In conclusion, the responses from the pastors in regard to interpersonal conflict management among themselves showed the spiritual rationalizations that fuel avoidance, the humility and sensitive-driven practices of accommodation, the ethically charged power struggles of competition, the tacit negotiations of compromise, and the desired yet resource-constrained efforts at collaboration. By situating these patterns within a faith-based leadership context, the analysis illuminated how doctrinal imperatives, pastoral identity work, and institutional structures converge to shape conflict management among pastors, thereby laying a nuanced foundation for understanding how servant-leadership behaviours intersect with and are challenged by real-world conflict dynamics.

Table 4.18 presents a concise summary of the core themes that emerged from the qualitative analysis. The table aligns representative data excerpts with the underlying patterns they reveal and the corresponding conflict-management styles that they illustrated.

**Table 4.18 Emerging Patterns from Qualitative Data Excerpts on Conflict****Management Styles**

<b>Qualitative Data Excerpts</b>	<b>Emerging Patterns</b>	<b>Theme</b>
“sweeping issues under the carpet,” “silence over issues and avoidance to resolve issues,” “spiritual immaturity,” “prayerlessness”	Use of spiritual rationalizations to justify withdrawal; fear of appearing unspiritual; normalization of silence	Avoidance
“look at others better than self,” “servant-hood Jesus way,” “humility to accept and apologize,” “being honest and looking at others better than self”	Deference and self-emptying to preserve harmony; accommodation often coupled with unspoken boundaries	Accommodation
“competition,” “position for power,” “domineering attitude,” “big-man syndrome,” “love of money and sex,” “self-interest,” “ego”	Relational clashes driven by pride and power struggles; competition framed as moral/ethical lapse	Competition
“everyone sticking to their lane,” “dialogue,” “agreeing on similar goals,” “early detection of possible source of conflict,” “give-and-take”	Implicit give-and-take negotiations; mutual concessions in service of collective purpose	Compromise
“peer debrief sessions,” “neutral ground meetings,” “trust-building forums,” “open truthful discussions,” “time taken to learn each other and to bond,” “in-person meetings”	Desire joint problem-solving and integration; recognition of infrastructural and cultural barriers to full collaboration	Collaboration

The next analysis on the qualitative data under the conflict management variable examined how the four core dimensions of servant leadership that were considered in this study, namely: emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first, and behaving ethically, were reflected, contested, or extended in the pastors’ own accounts of interpersonal conflict management. Drawing on rich qualitative excerpts, this analysis interrogated and situated the four servant leadership behaviours within the lived realities of the pastors that shaped their theory and practice in faith-based conflict management, to draw out emerging patterns and themes. The first servant leadership behaviour that was considered was emotional healing.

The imperative of emotional healing emerges as a foundational condition for effective pastoral conflict management, resonating with Greenleaf's contention that servant leaders must "listen receptively" and nurture the emotional well-being of their followers (Spears, 2025). Female respondents emphasized the restorative power of shared vulnerability, reporting that "*moments of vulnerability with each other*" and "*self inner healing*" interrupted the cycle of "*sweeping issues under the carpet*" and mitigated the fear of appearing "*unspiritual*." Male pastors likewise linked conflict escalation to a "*hardness of heart*" and *insufficient "emotional intelligence,"* suggesting that without conscious practices of empathic listening and mutual support, unresolved personal hurts would harden into entrenched avoidance or aggressive posturing. In this way, the data affirmed that emotional healing is not peripheral but central as it enables pastors to move beyond defensive withdrawal and toward the relational trust necessary for collaborative problem solving.

In regard to the second servant leadership behaviour of conceptual skills, both male and female respondents agreed in the universal assertion that "knowledge is power". This universal response from the pastors underscored the critical role of conceptual skills, specifically formal conflict-resolution training, in empowering pastors to navigate interpersonal tensions with theoretical grounding and practical competencies. This theme aligns with Nwanekezie (2020) who asserted that that managerial effectiveness depends on task-relevant knowledge and analytic acumen. The pastors lamented that "*many are untrained on practical skills for resolving conflict*". However, a caveat arose in the male perspective that "*knowledge that is not applied is no knowledge,*" pointing to a perennial theory-practice gap. Moreover, participants called for faith-infused curricula, such as "*a biblical approach to conflict resolution*" or "*a dedicated counselling course*", thereby expanding traditional

conceptual skills models to encompass theological integration and context-sensitive pedagogy. Consequently, conceptual skills in this setting must bridge secular conflict frameworks with ecclesial values to achieve both legitimacy and efficacy among pastors.

The third servant leadership tenet of putting followers first manifested in the pastors' recommendations to "*seek the interest of my fellow pastor/leader*" and to practice a "*servant-hood Jesus way*," reflecting Spears's emphasis on empathy, stewardship, and community building (Wheaton, 2022). Female pastors described conflict resolution as an act of mutual care, "*supporting them to win*", reframing disagreements as opportunities for collective empowerment rather than arenas for self-assertion. Male respondents similarly championed "*respect*," "*appreciating other people's worldview*," and "*developing personal character*," signalling that follower-centric behaviour mitigated the ego-driven "*power plays*" and "*domineering attitudes*" that lead to competition. The data also revealed a boundary tension, where unqualified deference may morph into passive resentment when "*roles remain unclear*." This nuance invites refinement of the construct, suggesting that authentic follower-first behaviour combines heartfelt support with mutual accountability and well-defined responsibilities to prevent covert hostility.

The final servant leadership behaviour was 'behaving ethically', which was invoked repeatedly as both a prophylactic and corrective to pastoral conflict, echoing Northouse's (2021) argument that moral leadership fosters trust and legitimacy. The pastors' responses in the study called on attitudes such as "*raise the integrity bar*," "*ground interactions in the fear of God*," and "*adhere to biblical ethics*," affirming that ethical consistency can pre-empt the domineering attitudes and abuse of

spirituality that catalyze disputes. However, the data also exposed how ethical language can be co-opted as a conflict-avoidance strategy. One female pastor critiqued leaders who selectively “*extended grace*” to mask unresolved issues. This paradox highlights an emergent form of ethical dissonance in which spiritual norms are employed to justify both principled peace-making and manipulative silence. Theologically informed servant-leadership theory must therefore account not only for the presence of ethical ideals but also for the integrity of their enactment, ensuring that moral exhortations serve genuine reconciliation rather than rhetorical expedience.

Table 4.19 presents a synthesis of the alignment between pastors’ qualitative reflections and each of the four servant-leadership behaviours. The matrix offered a clear, side-by-side comparison that highlighted how emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first, and ethical conduct manifested and diverged actual conflict management contexts among clergy.

**Table 4.19 Qualitative Responses on Conflict Management Experiences against Servant Leadership Behaviours**

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Qualitative Data Excerpts</b>	<b>Emerging Patterns</b>	<b>Theme</b>
<b>Emotional Healing</b>	“moments of vulnerability with each other,” “self inner healing,” “hardness of heart,” “emotional intelligence”	Respondents link unresolved personal wounds and low empathic capacity to avoidance and escalation, arguing that only intentional inner-work and shared vulnerability build trust and enable collaboration.	Emotional healing as the linchpin for trust and collaborative conflict resolution
<b>Conceptual Skills</b>	“knowledge is power,” “many are untrained on practical skills for resolving conflict,” “knowledge that is not applied is no knowledge,” “a biblical approach to conflict resolution,” “counselling course”	Pastors demand structured, faith-integrated training to bridge the gap between secular conflict frameworks and ecclesial practice, emphasizing that mere information without context-sensitive application fails to reduce conflict.	Faith-integrated conceptual skills that translate theory into ecclesial practice
<b>Putting Followers First</b>	“seek the interest of my fellow pastor/leader,” “supporting them to win,” “servant-hood Jesus way,” “respect,” “appreciating other people’s worldview,” “lanes”	Mutual care and deference are prized, yet respondents caution that genuine follower-first service requires clear role definitions and mutual accountability to prevent hidden resentments under a façade of harmony.	Balanced servant-first posture combining genuine support with clear boundaries
<b>Behaving Ethically</b>	“raise the integrity bar,” “fear of God,” “biblical ethics,” “abuse of spirituality,” “extend grace selectively,” “domineering attitudes”	Ethical ideals are invoked as both preventive and corrective, but pastors warn that moral language can be co-opted for avoidance or power plays, revealing a gap between professed values and actual practice.	Ethical consistency and integrity as critical, yet vulnerable to manipulation in conflict contexts

The section that follows presents the analysis of relationship management, one of the dimensions of conflict management, which was the moderating variable in the study.

### **Relationship Management**

The ability to identify, comprehend and control one's own emotions as well and to understand, recognize and affect those of others is known as emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2020). Emotional intelligence is especially important in pastoral leadership because it influences their capacity to lead effectively, manage relationships, and navigate the complexities of pastoral care and community leadership. This section explores relationship management aspect of emotional intelligence which was the only sub-construct of emotional intelligence considered in this study. The descriptive findings on how participants responded to questions on relationship management. The results are shown in Table 4.20.

**Table 4.20 Descriptive Statistics on Relationship Management**

<b>Relationship Management</b>	<b>Male n (%)</b>	<b>Female n (%)</b>	<b>Total N (%)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Overall score (mean (sd))	3.6 (0.6)	3.8 (0.5)	3.7 (0.5)	0.230
Overall mean percentage score	66.1 (14.9)	69.9 (12.1)	68.6 (13.2)	0.230
<i>I am an excellent listener</i>				
Disagree	1 (2.1)	1 (3.7)	2 (2.7)	
Neutral	13 (27.1)	9 (33.3)	22 (29.3)	
Agree	34 (70.8)	17 (63)	51 (68)	0.757
<i>I never interrupt other people's conversations</i>				
Disagree	9 (18.8)	4 (14.8)	13 (17.3)	
Neutral	10 (20.8)	15 (55.6)	25 (33.3)	
Agree	29 (60.4)	8 (29.6)	37 (49.3)	0.008
<i>I am good at adapting and mixing with a variety of people</i>				
Disagree	0	2 (7.4)	2 (2.7)	
Neutral	4 (8.3)	6 (22.2)	10 (13.3)	
Agree	44 (91.7)	19 (70.4)	63 (84)	0.030
<i>People are the most interesting thing in life for me</i>				
Disagree	6 (12.5)	1 (3.7)	7 (9.3)	
Neutral	5 (10.4)	8 (29.6)	13 (17.3)	
Agree	37 (77.1)	18 (66.7)	55 (73.3)	0.068
<i>I love to meet new people and know what makes them tick</i>				
Disagree	4 (8.3)	2 (7.4)	6 (8)	
Neutral	6 (12.5)	4 (14.8)	10 (13.3)	
Agree	38 (79.2)	21 (77.8)	59 (78.7)	0.955
<i>I need a variety of work colleagues to keep my job interesting</i>				
Disagree	10 (20.8)	12 (44.4)	22 (29.3)	
Neutral	8 (16.7)	3 (11.1)	11 (14.7)	
Agree	30 (62.5)	12 (44.4)	42 (56)	0.098
<i>I like to ask questions and find out what is important for people</i>				
Disagree	3 (6.3)	2 (7.4)	5 (6.7)	
Neutral	4 (8.3)	4 (14.8)	8 (10.7)	
Agree	41 (85.4)	21 (77.8)	62 (82.7)	0.658
<i>I see working with difficult people as simply a challenge to win them over</i>				
Disagree	12 (25)	5 (18.5)	17 (22.7)	
Neutral	12 (25)	13 (48.2)	25 (33.3)	
Agree	24 (50)	9 (33.3)	33 (44)	0.123
<i>I am good at reconciling differences with other people</i>				
Disagree	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)	
Neutral	10 (20.8)	9 (33.3)	19 (25.3)	
Agree	35 (72.9)	17 (63)	52 (69.3)	0.467
<i>I generally build solid relationships with those I work with</i>				
Disagree	1 (2.1)	0	1 (1.3)	
Neutral	6 (12.5)	5 (18.5)	11 (14.7)	0.600

Agree	41 (85.4)	22 (81.5)	63 (84)	
<i>To what extent are pastors aware of their own emotional intelligence?</i>				
To a very low extent	5 (10.4)	0	5 (6.7)	
To a low extent	11 (22.9)	7 (25.9)	18 (24)	
To a moderate extent	29 (60.4)	19 (70.4)	48 (64)	
To a great extent	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)	0.340

Source: Author (2024)

From the analysis on the components of *relationship management*, both male and female pastors generally considered themselves good listeners. The mean score was high at 3.7 (sd=0.5) corresponding to 'agree' based on the scale used. The percentage agreement score was at 69% overall, and it was similar for both male and female (p=0.230). Majority, (70.8%) of males and 63% of females agreed that they were excellent listeners, with very few disagreeing (2.7%). Similarly, on whether or not respondents interrupt other people's conversations, 60.4% of males and 29.6% of females, agreed they do not interrupt whereas, 17.3% disagreed. While male pastors were more likely to avoid interrupting conversations, a substantial proportion of female pastors seemed less adherent to this practice, suggesting differences in communication styles.

Male pastors displayed greater confidence in adapting to and engaging with diverse groups. A large majority, 91.7% of male and 70.4% of female pastors, agreed with their ability to adapt and mix with different people, indicating a higher level of social flexibility. When asked whether they concurred or opposed the claim that people are the most interesting thing in life, most pastors, 77.1% of males and 66.7% of females, found people most interesting, with a minority disagreeing (9.3%). This shows that both genders have a strong interest in people, which is crucial for effective relationship management, with male pastors slightly more inclined towards this perspective.

79.2% of male and 77.8% of female pastors indicated that they enjoyed meeting new people and understanding them. Additionally, majority of the male pastors (62.5%) in comparison to only 44.4% of female pastors indicated a preference for diverse work relationships in order to maintain job interest. When asked whether they like to ask questions and find out what is important for people, majority of respondents, that is, 85.4% of males and 77.8% of females, agreed with their inclination to ask questions and understand, demonstrating a proactive approach to understanding others, with male pastors being slightly more inclined to engage in this way.

Similarly, the research analysis indicated that, compared to their female counterparts, male pastors are more likely to see dealing with challenging people as a challenge to overcome, as evidenced by the score of 50% of male versus 33.3% of female pastors. However, when asked whether they have the skills to reconcile differences with other people, 72.9% of males and 63% of females believed they are good at this approach, a high increase in percentage compared to the response on working with difficult people to move them over. This shows that both male and female pastors consider themselves effective in resolving conflicts, a skill essential for healthy relationship management, with males slightly more confident in this skill. However, results showed internal inconsistency between accepting the challenge to win difficult people over versus knowing one has the skill. This may indicate that pastors are hesitant to work with difficult people even though they have the skills to do so. Lastly, on relationship management, most pastors, 85.4% of males and 81.5% of females, agreed with their ability to build solid relationships with those they work.

Respondents had to answer two questions about emotional intelligence as part of the qualitative open-ended question. The first inquiry was to determine, based on

personal observations and experience, how conscious pastors are of their own emotional intelligence. Respondents were given a scale to record their responses. In evaluating the awareness of their emotional intelligence, the respondents in the study predominantly rated themselves as having a moderate understanding, with 60.4% of males and a higher percentage of females at 70.4% falling into this category. This suggests that a majority of pastors recognize and acknowledge their emotional intelligence but may not see it as highly developed or exceptional. The findings are supported by a study on university students by Kant (2019), who found out that while both male and female students scored high in emotional intelligence, women scored higher than men.

Notably, a quarter of respondents perceived their awareness as low (22.9% of males and 25.9% of females), indicating some level of uncertainty or self-perceived gaps in their emotional intelligence. Only a small fraction of pastors considered their awareness to be great (6.3% of males and 3.7% of females), reflecting a cautious or modest self-assessment of their emotional capabilities. Interestingly, the assessment of very low awareness of emotional intelligence is exclusively noted by male pastors (10.4%), with no female pastors selecting this option. This difference might suggest a variance in how male and female pastors perceive their emotional competencies or their willingness to acknowledge limitations in this area. This finding is supported by a study done by Bru-Luna et al. (2021) which found that women scored higher on emotional intelligence than men when measured through self reports. Table 4.21 presents the results of the question regarding the extent to which pastors are aware of their own emotional intelligence.

**Table 4.21 Awareness of pastors of their own emotional intelligence**

*To what extent are pastors aware of their own emotional intelligence?*

	Male	Female	Total
To a very low extent	5 (10.4)	0	5 (6.7)
To a low extent	11 (22.9)	7 (25.9)	18 (24)
To a moderate extent	29 (60.4)	19 (70.4)	48 (64)
To a great extent	3 (6.3)	1 (3.7)	4 (5.3)

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The qualitative data explored how relationship management skills in emotional intelligence manifest among a sample of pastors, based on their responses to ten core statements about listening, conversational respect, adaptability, interpersonal curiosity, and conflict resolution. Recognizing that effective relationship management is central to pastoral leadership and team cohesion, participants were invited to reflect on whether and how deficits in emotional intelligence contribute to interpersonal conflict. Their candid, open - ended comments, coded by gender, illuminated both the strengths and gaps in how these key relational qualities are experienced and enacted.

Organized around each of the ten statements, the ensuing discussion weaves direct quotations into a thematic narrative. Rather than treating these items in isolation, the report highlights recurring patterns such as the critical role of active listening and self awareness while also noting areas where participants offered little or no commentary, pointing to potential blind spots in their relational practice. By foregrounding both alignment and dissonance between wishful statements and lived experience, this analysis provides a nuanced foundation for understanding and strengthening relationship management within pastoral settings.

Participants consistently emphasized that strong listening skills are foundational to healthy relationships, noting that when we fail to truly hear one another, conflicts easily arise. A female respondent reflected that disrespect often

stems from not paying attention: *“Speaking without listening well, assuming things and disrespecting others causes unnecessary conflicts.”* A male participant similarly highlighted that misunderstanding follows from lack of genuine engagement: *“It results to people reacting and acting without understanding.”*

Several pastors implied that dominating conversations by speaking over others undermines mutual respect. One female noted how insisting on one’s own viewpoint damages care for colleagues: *“Since there are no skills, many will tend to insist on their own way without necessarily caring about the other person.”* A male respondent drew attention to the breakdown in communication that follows poor conversational etiquette: *“One is unable to articulate issues in the right way.”*

Many remarked that adapting to diverse personalities is a key dimension of emotional intelligence driven relationship management. One female asserted, *“Exposure and experience matters,”* while a male participant explained that such adaptability directly reduces friction: *“This enables me to relate and work with people of different personalities with minimal conflicts.”*

Although fewer participants spoke to an intrinsic fascination with others, some comments implied a deep desire to honour and understand people. A female lamented, *“Ability to recognize and honour the grace upon one another is lacking,”* and a male pastor critiqued self centeredness: *“Because most of Pastors are self centred and look on their own interests.”* Empathy was repeatedly linked to improved interpersonal relationships, supporting findings by Salas-Vallina et al. (2022), who argue that empathetic leaders foster trust and collaboration, reducing the likelihood of conflict.

Understanding what makes people tick was repeatedly linked to conflict avoidance, suggesting an underlying curiosity about others’ inner worlds. One female

explained, *“If you can’t tell how someone else is feeling even without them being vocal about it, then the probability of oppressing them or emotionally hurting them is high.”* A male respondent connected this need for insight to the challenge of diverse backgrounds: *“Especially when we don't know how to handle matters to do with conflict due to different personalities and people's background.”*

Only a handful mentioned that working with varied colleagues keeps their roles engaging. One female implied that broader exposure sustains engagement, remarking, *“Exposure and experience matters.”* A male participant described the complex dynamics of pastoral work, hinting that varied interactions both challenge and energize: *“Pastoral work is complex, with a lot of burn out and hence without EI you end up hurting others.”*

While few spoke directly about asking questions, many highlighted the cost of shallow engagement and the need to probe for understanding. A female observed, *“Not knowing self adequately is a great loss in understanding others,”* and a male respondent noted, *“Some arguments are due to lack of understanding or stereotype... or having misplaced argument.”*

Only a handful framed relationship - building as a personal challenge to win others over. One female described mastering her own reactions before engaging others: *“Before I learnt about emotional intelligence, I didn’t know some of my weakness came from lack of self awareness. I now can control my action or reaction to certain situation without breaking down.”* A male pastor spoke of the collisions set by low EI and the drive to overcome relational hurdles: *“With low emotional intelligence chances are you will always collide with others for you lack the judgement on how to deal with difficult people, relating with different people with different personalities and building a healthy working relationship...”*

Conflict resolution emerged as a clear benefit of emotional intelligence training. One of the female respondents highlighted the need for pastors to use emotional intelligence skills to navigate tensions: *“Pastors require EI to help resolve conflicts.”* A male participant even invoked scripture to underscore the stakes: *“Scripturally, lack of knowledge leads to destruction. Many conflicts would have been avoided or the magnitude reduced if emotional intelligence skills were in place.”*

Finally, several pastors linked self awareness and emotional intelligence competencies to the building of trust and strong rapport. One of the female pastors asserted, *“Definitely, knowledge is power... once you are enlightened you most definitely handle situations and people that have been entrusted to you better.”* A male respondent reinforced that awareness empowers service: *“Self awareness enhances someone's confidence which then is deployed to empower and serve others, than the opposite.”*

The Table 4.22 presented a summary of the themes from both the female and male pastors on their views on how lack of emotional intelligence skills increased the incidences of interpersonal conflicts among themselves as pastors.

**Table 4.22 Summary of themes from female and male respondents**

Themes from female respondents	Themes from male respondents
Self awareness	Self awareness
Empathy	Burnout and emotional regulation
Ability to regulate emotions	Empathy, Understanding conflict mitigation
Training and development of EI skills	Training deficiency in EI

	Pride and interpersonal dynamics
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In constructing a narrative, male respondents provided a rich tapestry of reflections on how emotional intelligence, or its absence, affects interpersonal dynamics. One participant poignantly remarked, "*Yes. Blind spots make people selfish and self-centered,*" emphasizing the critical need for self-awareness. Another illustrated the relational implications, noting, "*Yes, self-awareness enhances someone's confidence, which then is deployed to empower and serve others.*"

Burnout and its effects on emotional regulation were another dominant narrative thread. A respondent observed, "*Pastoral work is complex, with a lot of burnout, and hence without EI, you end up hurting others.*" This aligns with broader sentiments about the emotional toll of pastoral work. Empathy also featured prominently, with one participant emphasizing, "*Yes. Emotional intelligence helps know one's weaknesses,*" while another noted, "*Yes, this enables me to relate and work with people of different personalities with minimal conflicts.*" These quotes highlight the practical implications of empathy in fostering harmonious relationships.

The lack of training in emotional intelligence was starkly highlighted. One participant lamented, "*Yes. Emotional intelligence is still a very new subject to pastors,*" reflecting systemic gaps in pastoral development. The gap in emotional intelligence training underscores the need for organizational interventions. Respondents' comments reflect broader systemic shortcomings. Finally, the interplay between pride and conflict highlighted the importance of humility in leadership. Wong and Kelloway (2021) demonstrate that leaders who prioritize humility and self-reflection are better equipped to navigate interpersonal complexities.

Overall, self-awareness was consistently identified as a foundational element in reducing conflicts, aligning with studies like Bradberry (2023), who emphasize its centrality to emotional intelligence. Male respondents' reflections underline the necessity of cultivating this trait through intentional practice and training. Burnout also emerged as a significant factor compounding emotional instability and relational tensions. Research by Newton et al. (2022) corroborates this, demonstrating that leaders operating in high-stress environments without adequate emotional regulation strategies are prone to conflict escalation.

The expected outcome of using a mixed methods approach was to compare or integrate the emerging themes with the results from the quantitative phase of the study. The data from both the quantitative and qualitative study was used together to form results. On servant leadership and conflict management, the quantitative scores under servant leadership indicated that majority of the pastors are aware of servant leadership. For example, under emotional healing, 77% of the pastors indicated that they engage in practices that support the emotional well-being of their colleagues. Under conceptual skills, 66% of the pastors agreed that they had the ability to detect issues that would affect achievement of the goals of the church. Under putting followers first, 67% of the pastors agreed that they were committed to the wellbeing and success of others. Under behaving ethically, 87% of the pastors indicated that they adhered to ethical standards. However, the responses on the qualitative analysis indicated that there was a vast difference between knowledge of servant leadership and the behaviours that pastors exemplify that cause interpersonal conflicts to become difficult to manage. The behaviours listed in the qualitative analysis on the causes of conflict such as selfishness, competition, and pride, were opposite of what servant leadership behaviours are.

The comparison between the quantitative and qualitative results revealed a disconnect between understanding what servant leadership is and actually practicing the associated behaviours. According to Matthew et al. (2020), servant leadership does not exist in a vacuum. Some of the factors that are likely to influence the practice of servant leadership include the organizational culture and leadership attributes. Individuals bring their own personalities, traits and ideas into leadership positions, and differ in their moral development, emotional intelligence and self-leadership (Northouse, 2022). The differences in turn influence how uniquely they live out servant leadership behaviours. Additionally, according to Du Plessis and Nkambule (2020), lack of a proper understanding of servant leadership principles, character, competencies and functions creates a misunderstanding of what servant leadership is among pastors. The next section delves into the results of the regression analysis.

### **Regression Analysis**

The overarching objective of the current research was to assess the connection between the independent variable of servant leadership and the dependent variable of interpersonal conflict management among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches in selected urban towns in Kenya. Specific objectives were set to achieve this goal. Linear regression, a statistical test applied to a set of data in order to quantify the relation between the independent and dependent variables was executed (Kumari & Yadav, 2018). Linear correlation assumes that a change in one variable is accompanied by a proportional change in another variable, hence, modelling the link between two continuous variables (Bazdaric et al., 2021). Linear regression simplifies the relationship and is regarded as the best option for investigations with small

samples (Hope, 2020). The following section presents the simple linear regression results for the variables in this study, aligned with the objectives that guided the study. The first objective was to determine the effect of emotional healing servant leadership behaviour on the conflict management styles of pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches from selected urban counties in Kenya.

### **Emotional Healing and Interpersonal Conflict Management Styles**

The first objective in this study was to determine the effect of emotional healing on interpersonal conflict among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches from selected urban counties in Kenya. The null hypothesis stated that emotional healing had no effect on the five conflict management styles. Regression results showed that emotional healing had a significant effect on the compromising conflict management style ( $\beta=0.24$ , 95% CI: 0.01-0.47,  $p=0.038$ ). This means that every one unit increase in emotional healing score increased the score for compromising by 0.24 units. With a statistically significant p-value of 0.038, which is below the 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis that emotional healing has no effect on compromising was rejected. This finding indicates that higher levels of emotional healing in pastors are associated with a greater tendency to compromise when managing conflicts.

This result is supported by a previous study done in the USA by Fields (2021) who found that emotional healing encouraged the use of compromising conflict management style. In compromising, each party in the conflict sacrifices a portion of his or her solution, and none is left fully satisfied (Ronquillo et al., 2023). Further, McCully (2021) found that empathy and compassion which are key components of emotional healing are associated with higher readiness for reconciliation in conflict.

According to Song (2020), servant leaders lead through awareness and healing, by practicing empathy, listening, forgiveness and compassion.

Emotional healing is one of the strengths of servant leadership (Cook, 2022). An environment of high trust, emotional support, emotional availability and emotional awareness encourages emotional healing, forgiveness and compassion. Compassion includes forgiving others for their mistakes, showing unconditional love, being sensitive to others, and concern for their wellbeing (McCully, 2021). However, there was no sufficient evidence from the data to show that there was significant effect of emotional healing on conflict management overall, and on the other components of conflict management including collaborating, accommodating, competing and avoiding. Simple linear regression results examining the effect of emotional healing on conflict management among pastors are presented in Table 4.23.

**Table 4.23 Simple Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Emotional Healing on Conflict Management among Pastors**

	<b><math>\beta</math> (95% CI)</b>	<b>p-value</b>
Conflict management overall	0.06 (-0.07-0.20)	0.355
Avoiding	-0.03 (-0.33-0.27)	0.851
Accommodating	0.03 (-0.19-0.24)	0.806
Compromising	<b>0.24 (0.01-0.47)</b>	<b>0.038</b>
Competing	0.01 (-0.26-0.29)	0.944
Collaborating	0.11 (-0.05-0.28)	0.179

*Notes:  $\beta$  = model coefficients; CI: Confidence interval*

### **Conceptual Skills and Interpersonal Conflict Management Styles**

The second objective of this study was to determine the influence of the servant leadership behaviour of conceptual skills on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches from selected urban counties in Kenya. Conceptual skills are thinking skills that include visionary thinking, critical thinking and problem solving. Based on the objective, the hypothesis was that conceptual skills have no effect on conflict management styles among pastors in Kenya.

The regression analysis revealed that there was not enough evidence to support a significant impact of conceptual skills on any of the five conflict management styles which were collaborating, accommodating, competing, compromising, and avoiding, as they all had p-values greater than 0.05. This means that the data did not show a meaningful connection between conceptual skills and conflict management. In other words, failing to reject the null hypothesis here implies that the study did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that conceptual skills play a role in how conflicts are managed, so it remains plausible that these skills have no effect.

These results differ with the findings from Fields (2021) who found that conceptual skills were closely related with collaborating, accommodating, competing and compromising. Fields (2021) used stepwise regression, while the current study used simple linear regression. Simple linear regression was used because it focused on modelling the relationship between two variables. Simple linear regression results examining the effect of conceptual skills on conflict management among pastors are presented in Table 4.24.

**Table 4.24 Simple Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Conceptual Skills on Conflict Management among Pastors**

	$\beta$ (95% CI)	p-value
Conflict management overall	0.07 (-0.11-0.24)	0.443
Avoiding	0.22 (-0.15-0.59)	0.235
Accommodating	-0.07 (-0.34-0.20)	0.628
Compromising	0.23 (-0.06-0.52)	0.12
Competing	0.13 (-0.22-0.48)	0.463
Collaborating	-0.08 (-0.29-0.13)	0.448

Notes:  $\beta$  = model coefficients; CI: Confidence interval

### Putting Followers First and Interpersonal Conflict

The third objective in this study was to determine the effect of putting followers first on interpersonal conflict among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches from selected urban counties in Kenya. The hypothesis tested whether leaders who prioritize their followers are better at managing conflicts. Regression results indicated that putting followers first had a positive effect on both collaborating, which had an effect size of 0.18, and accommodating, which had an effect size of 0.22. The statistical significance of these findings is demonstrated by p-values of 0.023 and 0.030, respectively, which are below the conventional threshold of 0.05. This low probability of the results occurring by chance led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, that putting followers first has no effect on conflict management strategies.

Regression results showed that putting followers first had a significant effect on two components of conflict management including collaborating ( $\beta=0.18$ , 95% CI: 0.03-0.33,  $p=0.023$ ) and accommodating ( $\beta=0.22$ , 95% CI: 0.02-0.41,  $p=0.030$ ). This means that for every one unit increase in the score on putting followers first, the score for collaborating increases by 0.24 units. This outcome provided evidence that leaders who focus on their followers and put them first tend to be more effective in managing conflicts through collaboration and accommodation.

This finding about the unit increase on putting followers first positively increasing the score for collaborating was supported by a study conducted by Meuser and Smallfield (2023) which found that servant leaders who put followers first are able to discuss disagreements, frustrations and difficulties directly and work out solutions that benefit them and those they lead. Wong's study was carried out among team members and team leaders working in consumer electronics firms in China. These results on putting followers first and conflict management are also supported by those of a previous study done in Pakistan by Suppra et al. (2023) who found that putting followers' first and other servant leadership attributes made servant leadership a natural fit for conflict management. Suppra et al. (2023) used a cross-sectional survey to collect data from managerial level employees in the textile sector in Pakistan. Suppra et al. (2023) used the partial least squares to test the relationships between the variables and confirmed their hypotheses. There was however no sufficient evidence from the data to show that there was significant effect of putting followers first on conflict management overall, and on the other components of conflict management including competing, compromising and avoiding. Table 4.25 presents the simple linear regression results examining the effect of putting followers first on conflict management.

**Table 4.25 Simple Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Putting Followers First on Conflict Management among Pastors**

	$\beta$ (95% CI)	p-value
Conflict management overall	0.12 (-0.01-0.24)	0.057
Avoiding	-0.04 (-0.31-0.24)	0.787
Accommodating	<b>0.22 (0.02-0.41)</b>	<b>0.03</b>
Compromising	0.07 (-0.15-0.29)	0.528
Competing	0.17 (-0.08-0.43)	0.182
Collaborating	<b>0.18 (0.03-0.33)</b>	<b>0.023</b>

*Notes:  $\beta$  = model coefficients; CI: Confidence interval*

### **Behaving Ethically and Interpersonal Conflict**

The fourth objective in this study was to determine the effect of behaving ethically on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches from selected urban counties in Kenya. The hypothesis stated that behaving ethically would have no effect on conflict management styles among pastors. The regression analysis revealed that ethical behaviour had a significant positive effect on the collaborating style ( $\beta=0.36$ , 95% CI: 0.14-0.57,  $p=0.001$ ). For every one-unit increase in the ethical behaviour score, the collaborating score increased by 0.36 units. The p-value of 0.001 confirmed this relationship was statistically significant. This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis for the collaborating component, meaning that ethical behaviour does indeed influence collaboration during conflicts.

However, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to show that ethical behaviour significantly affects overall conflict management or other specific conflict management styles such as avoiding, accommodating, competing, or compromising. Table 4.26 presents the simple linear regression results examining the effect of behaving ethically on conflict management styles.

**Table 4.26 Simple Linear Regression Results on the Effect of Behaving Ethically on Conflict Management among Pastors**

	$\beta$ (95% CI)	p-value
Conflict management overall	0.08 (-0.11-0.26)	0.4
Avoiding	-0.21 (-0.61-0.19)	0.296
Accommodating	0.12 (-0.17-0.41)	0.423

Compromising	0.15 (-0.17-0.47)	0.351
Competing	-0.07 (0.44-0.31)	0.721
Collaborating	<b>0.36 (0.14-0.57)</b>	<b>0.001</b>

*Notes:  $\beta$  = model coefficients; CI: Confidence interval*

The next section discusses the results of the tests of on the moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence, on the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors.

### **Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Interpersonal Conflict Management Styles among Pastors**

The fifth objective in this study was to determine if the sub-construct of relationship management in emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors from CITAM and PCEA in selected urban counties in Kenya. Servant leadership was defined by the components measured under objectives one to four which included emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first and behaving ethically.

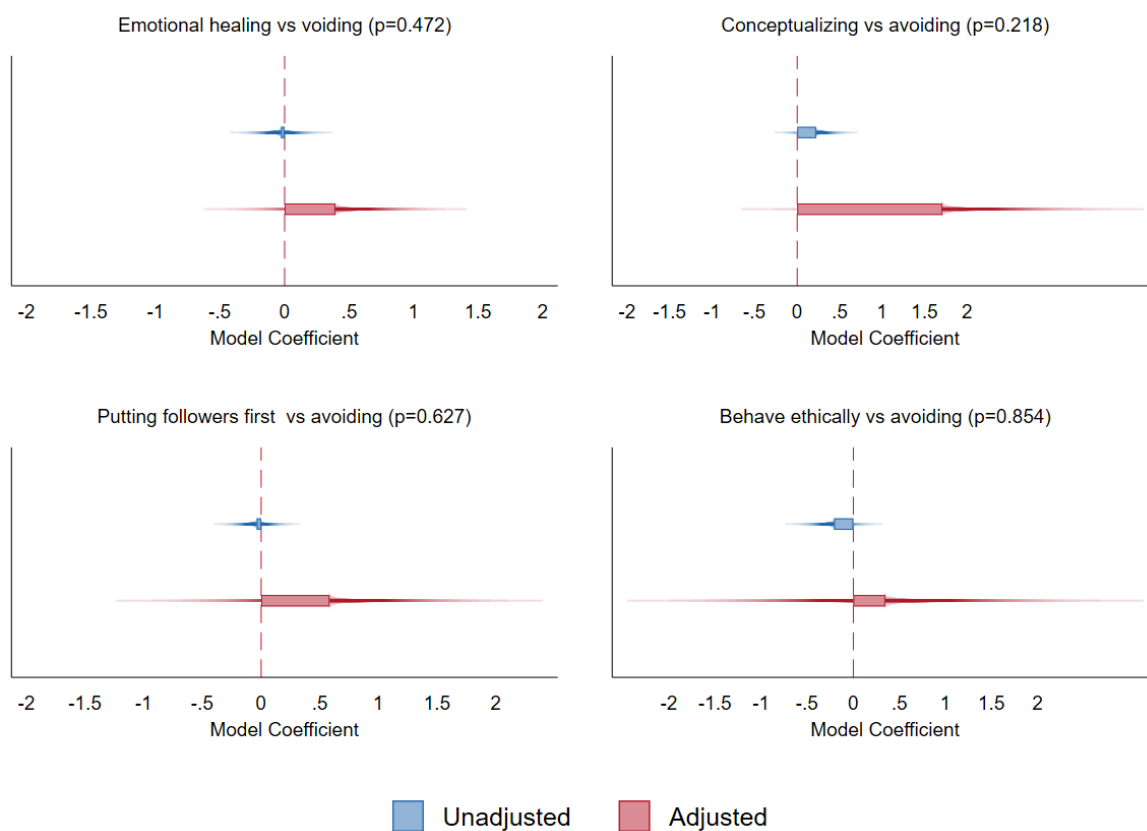
A linear regression model was used to look at the individual effect of servant leadership on conflict management, and then comparing how the effect changes when emotional intelligence is introduced. This information was presented through coefficient plots under each of the four measures of servant leadership against each of the five conflict management measures. Coefficient plots are used in data analysis to visualize the coefficients of a fitted model (Schober et al., 2018).

In STATA v17, coefficient plots are presented using a two colour scheme. Coefficient plots were used to visualize the coefficients of a fitted model. The results are also presented in a table format. The blue legend represents the unadjusted

coefficient from the model without the scores of emotional intelligence. The adjusted coefficient represents the model when emotional intelligence is added, and is represented by the red legend. Both coefficient plots and table format were used to present the findings of the moderating effect of emotional intelligence in the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management styles among pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya. First is the analysis of the moderation effect of relationship management in the relationship between the four servant leadership behaviours and avoiding conflict management style.

Figure 4.10 shows the effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between avoiding and each of the four measures of servant leadership. In both Figure 4.10 and Table 4.27, the results indicated that there was no sufficient evidence to conclude that emotional intelligence had any significant effect on the relationship between all four measures of servant leadership used in this study and avoiding ( $p > 0.05$ ).

**Figure 4.10 Coefficient plots showing the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and avoiding as a measure of conflict management.**



**Table 4.27 Moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and avoiding measure of conflict management**

	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Emotional Healing	-0.03 (-0.33, 0.28)	0.858	0.35 (-0.49, 1.18)	0.413	0.472
Conceptualizing	0.21 (-0.17, 0.59)	0.275	0.18 (-0.21, 0.57)	0.357	0.218
Put followers first	0.01 (-0.3, 0.32)	0.936	0.07 (-0.26, 0.41)	0.675	0.627
Behaving ethically	-0.19 (-0.65, 0.26)	0.392	-0.19 (-0.64, 0.27)	0.417	0.854
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	0.49 (-0.62, 1.6)	0.379	-

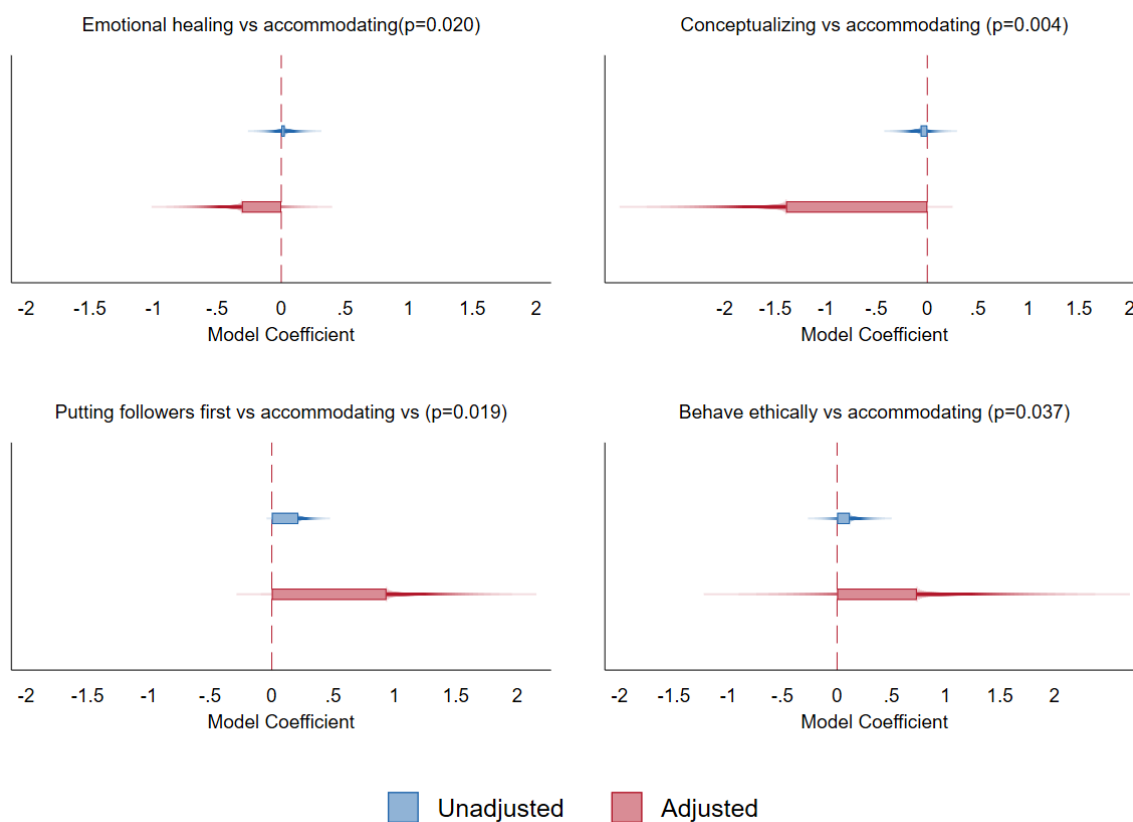
Source: Research Data (2024)

#### **Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Accommodating Measure of Conflict Management**

In Figure 4.11 and Table 4.28, the results show that the coefficients showing the unadjusted effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on emotional healing ( $p=0.020$ ), conceptual skills ( $p=0.004$ ), putting followers first ( $p=0.019$ ) and behaving ethically ( $p=0.037$ ) on collaborating as a measure of conflict management were all significantly different from that adjusted/moderated by adding emotional intelligence to the model. This means that relationship management has a significant effect on the relationship between all the measures of servant leadership and accommodating as a measure of conflict management. Particularly, it decreased the effect of emotional healing and conceptual skills; but increased the effect of putting followers first and behaving ethically.

Figure 4.11 showed the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between the four measures of servant leadership and accommodating measure of conflict management. Table 4.28 presents the linear regression model results.

**Figure 4.11 Coefficient plots showing moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between Servant leadership behaviours and accomodating**



**Table 4.28 Moderating Effect of Relationship Management Servant Leadership Behaviours**

	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Emotional Healing	0.13 (-0.20, 0.23)	0.906	-0.11 (-0.68, 0.46)	0.701	0.02
Conceptualizing	-0.09 (-0.36, 0.18)	0.515	-0.06 (-0.33, 0.20)	0.617	0.004
Put followers first	0.23 (0.09, 0.45)	0.042	0.21 (-0.02, 0.43)	0.078	0.019
Behaving ethically	-0.03 (-0.35, 0.29)	0.837	-0.04 (-0.35, 0.27)	0.801	0.037
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	0.36 (-0.40, 1.13)	0.347	-

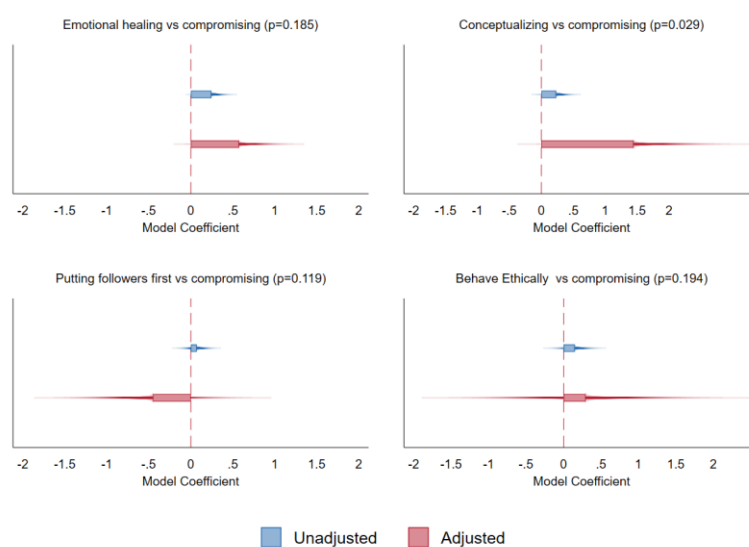
Source: Research Data (2024)

### **Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Compromising**

Figure 4.12 shows the effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between compromising and each of the four measures of servant leadership. In Figure 4.12 and Table 4.29, results showed that the coefficient showing the unadjusted effect of relationship management on conceptual skills and compromising measure of conflict management is significantly different from the adjusted effect when emotional intelligence is added to the model ( $p=0.029$ ). This means that relationship management has a significant effect on the relationship between the conceptual skills measure of servant leadership and compromising measure of conflict management. The analysis presented in Figure 4.12 also indicates that there is no sufficient evidence to conclude that emotional relationship management had significant effect on the relationship between the other three

measures of servant leadership namely; conceptual skills, putting followers first and behaving ethically, and the compromising measure of conflict management ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Figure 4.12 Coefficient Plots on Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Compromising**



**Table 4.29 Moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and compromising measure of conflict management**

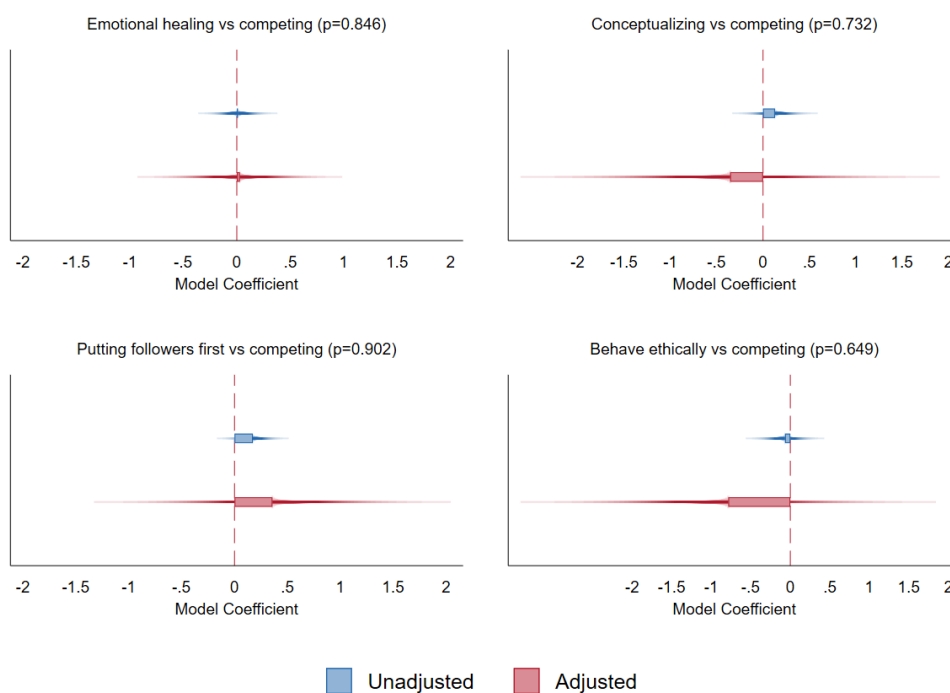
	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Emotional Healing	0.21 (-0.02, 0.45)	0.074	0.61 (-0.03, 1.24)	0.06	0.185
Conceptualizing	0.21 (-0.08, 0.51)	0.154	0.19 (-0.11, 0.48)	0.208	0.029
Put followers first	0 (-0.24, 0.24)	0.98	0.06 (-0.19, 0.32)	0.621	0.119
Behaving ethically	0.13 (-0.22, 0.47)	0.47	0.13 (-0.21, 0.48)	0.44	0.194
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	0.79 (-0.05, 1.62)	0.066	-

Source: Research Data (2024)

### Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Competing

Figure 4.13 is on the moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between each of the four measures of servant leadership and competing. Results in Figure 4.13 and Table 4.30 show that there was no sufficient evidence to conflict that relationship management in emotional intelligence had a significant effect on the relationship between all the four measures of servant leadership used in this study and competing ( $p > 0.05$ ). These results were supported by a study done by Obi et al. (2020) in Nigeria who found out that convent sisters who used servant leadership in problem solving did not use competing behaviours in resolving team conflict.

**Figure 4.13 Coefficient plots showing moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and competing measure of conflict management**



**Table 4.30 Moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and competing measure of conflict management**

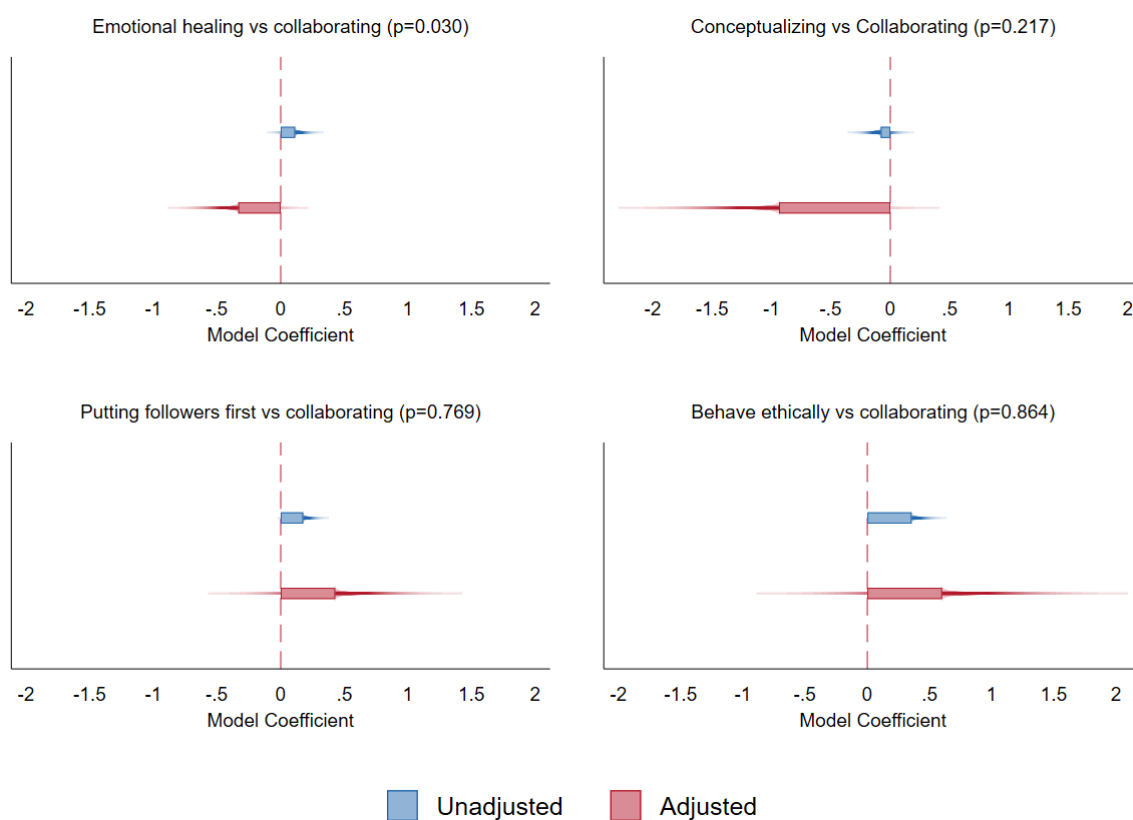
	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Emotional Healing	0.001 (-0.29, 0.28)	0.985	0.17 (-0.6, 0.95)	0.657	0.846
Conceptualizing	0.1 (-0.26, 0.45)	0.592	0.08 (-0.28, 0.45)	0.642	0.732
Put followers first	0.23 (-0.06, 0.51)	0.12	0.25 (-0.06, 0.56)	0.109	0.902
Behaving ethically	-0.2 (-0.62, 0.22)	0.35	-0.19 (-0.62, 0.23)	0.363	0.649
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	0.38 (-0.66, 1.41)	0.47	-

Source: Research Data (2024)

#### **Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership Measures and Collaborating**

Figure 4.14 and Table 4.31 show the moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between the four measures of servant leadership and collaborating. From the results, the coefficient showing the effect of emotional healing on collaborating as a measure of conflict management without relationship management was significantly different from the coefficient observed when the effect was moderated by relationship management ( $p=0.030$ ). This means that relationship management in emotional intelligence had a significant effect on the relationship between emotional healing and collaborating. From this analysis, we did not find sufficient evidence to conclude that relationship management in emotional intelligence had a significant effect on the relationship between conceptual skills, putting followers first and behaving ethically ( $p>0.05$ ).

**Figure 4.14 Coefficient plots showing the moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and collaborating measure**



**Table 4.31 Moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and collaborating measure of conflict management**

	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Emotional Healing	0.08 (-0.08, 0.24)	0.31	-0.19 (-0.62, 0.24)	0.379	0.03
Conceptualizing	-0.08 (-0.28, 0.12)	0.439	-0.06 (-0.26, 0.14)	0.546	0.217
Put followers first	0.09 (-0.07, 0.25)	0.267	0.05 (-0.12, 0.22)	0.571	0.769
Behaving ethically	0.28 (0.04, 0.52)	0.022	0.27 (-0.04, 0.51)	0.024	0.864
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	-0.54 (-1.11, 0.03)	0.063	-

Source: Research Data (2024)

### **Discussion on the Moderating Role of Relationship Management in Emotional Intelligence**

The quantitative results on the moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches from selected urban counties in Kenya indicated that 69% of the respondents were confident in their relationship management skills. In the qualitative analysis on emotional intelligence, all the male and female respondents agreed that lack of emotional intelligence skills led to an increase in the incidences of interpersonal conflict among pastors. Respondents indicated that emotional intelligence helped with self-awareness, self-regulation, understanding and empathy to others, relationship and communication skills, prevented reactionary behaviour to conflicts, and helped with conflict management and resolution. Both male and female respondents indicated that knowledge and training on emotional intelligence would improve conflict management.

The findings are supported by the Lancaster (2020) who found that religious leaders have greater need for emotional intelligence because of the demands of service to each other and meeting congregational needs which often require guiding people, emotional difficulties and character development. Additionally, findings of a study by Francis et al. (2019) among Anglican clergy serving in the Church of Wales also supported these findings, as they found that higher levels of emotional intelligence among clergy enhanced work-related health by lowering the emotional exhaustion of ministry and increasing positive satisfaction from ministry.

### **Overall Moderating Effect of Relationship Management on the Relationship between Servant Leadership and Conflict Management**

The fifth null hypothesis for the study stated that relationship management, which is one of the dimensions of emotional intelligence, does not moderate the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management. In Figure 4.15 and Table 4.32, the p-value generated was greater than 0.05. Therefore, the study failed to reject the null hypothesis and concluded that there was no sufficient evidence from the data collected to indicate that relationship management has a significant effect on the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management ( $p > 0.05$ ). The observed data was not strong enough effect to confidently claim that there was a meaningful relationship. Thus, that there was no evidence to say that the relationship management aspect in emotional intelligence played a significant role in linking servant leadership with conflict management.

In conclusion, there was no effect of relationship management in the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors in PCEA and CITAM churches in urban counties in Kenya. Figure

4.15 and Table 4.32 showed the effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between overall servant leadership and overall conflict management.

**Figure 4.15 Coefficient plots showing the moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management**



**Table 4.32 Moderating effect of relationship management on the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management**

	Unadjusted model		Adjusted model		LR Test
	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	Beta (95% CI)	P-value	
Servant leadership	0.06 (0, 0.13)	0.052	0.19 (-0.12, 0.5)	0.226	0.464
Emotional Intelligence	-	-	0.63 (-0.63, 1.88)	0.322	-

Source: Research Data (2024)

The purpose for the mixed methods study was to determine the effect of servant leadership on interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors in PCEA and CITAM churches in Kenya from selected urban counties in Kenya. The quantitative and qualitative data was collected concurrently, analysed separately and the results converged, in order to confirm, disapprove or expand on understanding of the problem being investigated.

Overall, both quantitative and qualitative findings indicated that pastors who intentionally invest in their own emotional healing are more inclined to engage in genuine compromise, demonstrating increased openness to mutual concession when conflicts arise. While high-level conceptual reasoning alone did not translate into more effective conflict management, an insight confirmed by the absence of any qualitative emphasis on strategic, abstract skills, the servant-leadership behaviours of putting followers first and upholding ethical conduct emerged as powerful catalysts for relationship-centered resolution. Specifically, prioritizing the needs of fellow pastors fostered both collaborative dialogue and accommodating gestures, and a steadfast commitment to integrity and transparency laid the groundwork for authentic, trust-based collaboration. These convergent results underscore that, within the pastoral context, the relational and moral dimensions of servant leadership outweigh purely intellectual competencies in shaping constructive conflict management styles.

Table 4.33 presents a summary of the integrated quantitative and qualitative findings.

**Table 4.33 Integrated Presentation of Quantitative and Qualitative Results and Mixed Methods Inferences**

Key area	Quantitative Results	Qualitative Results	Mixed methods Inferences
Effect of emotional healing on conflict management styles among pastors	Emotional healing had a significant effect on the compromising conflict management style ( $\beta=0.24$ , 95% CI: 0.01-0.47, $p=0.038$ )	Several participants expressly recommended “self inner healing” and “investment in personal inner healing” alongside calls for emotional-intelligence training and moments of vulnerability. These narratives link pastors’ own healing journeys to their capacity to engage constructively rather than withdraw or dominate.	The quantitative effect on compromising is mirrored in pastors’ own testimony that inner healing fosters openness to negotiation and mutual concession. In practice, embedding emotional-healing interventions can strengthen pastors’ willingness to split differences and reach fair resolutions.
Effect of conceptual skills on conflict management styles among pastors	Conceptual skills had no significant impact on any of the five conflict management styles as they all had p-values greater than 0.05 ( $\beta=0.07$ , 95% CI: -0.11-0.24, $p=0.443$ )	Virtually no respondents emphasized abstract or strategic reasoning (“conceptual skills”) as a remedy; instead, they focused on prayer, integrity, dialogue, and practical tools like mediation forums.	The absence of qualitative emphasis on conceptual skills aligns with the null quantitative finding. Pastors perceive relational and emotional capacities as far more salient for managing conflict than high-level conceptual reasoning.
Effect of putting followers first on conflict management styles among pastors	Putting followers first had a significant effect on two components of conflict management including collaborating ( $\beta=0.18$ , 95% CI:	Virtually no respondents emphasized abstract or strategic reasoning (“conceptual skills”) as a remedy; instead, they focused on prayer, integrity,	Pastors’ calls to prioritize others’ needs and to exercise humility directly corroborate the quantitative link to collaboration and accommodation. Cultivating a

	0.03-0.33, $p=0.023$ ) and accommodating ( $\beta=0.22$ , 95% CI: 0.02-0.41, $p=0.030$ )	dialogue, and practical tools like mediation forums.	follower-first ethos appears to unlock both relationship-preserving yielding and genuine co-creation of solutions.
Effect of behaving ethically on conflict management styles among pastors	Ethical behaviour had a significant positive effect on the collaborating style ( $\beta=0.36$ , 95% CI: 0.14-0.57, $p=0.001$ )	Integrity and honesty surfaced in nearly every recommendation: “raising the integrity bar,” “fear of God,” “biblical approach to conflict resolution,” “honesty and vulnerability,” and “fair and equitable treatment.”	The emphasis on ethics in the qualitative data reinforces the quantitative finding that moral conduct is a linchpin for true collaboration. When pastors hold themselves to transparent, principled standards, they create the trust necessary for open, joint problem-solving.

### Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented descriptive and regression analysis results on the three variables namely; servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence. The chapter has also presented results from the thematic analysis. Before the quantitative data was analyzed, it was subjected to reliability tests to determine its suitability. The response rate from the respondents was at 63 per cent, which was found to be within the acceptable range of 50 per cent and above. Among the respondents sampled for the study, 35.1 per cent were female and 64.9 per cent were male. This chapter has also presented the regression results on the constructs of the independent variable and the dependent variable. The results indicated that emotional healing had a significant effect on compromising ( $p=0.038$ ). Putting followers first

also had a significant effect on collaborating ( $p=0.023$ ) and accommodating ( $p=0.030$ ). Behaving ethically had a significant effect on collaborating ( $p=0.001$ ). Regression results indicated that there was no significant relationship between conceptual skills and all the components of conflict management.

Regression results on the effect of emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management were presented by coefficient plots. Findings indicated that emotional intelligence moderated the relationship between servant leadership and both accommodating and collaborating. Further, the results indicated that there was no moderating effect on the relationship between servant leadership and competing, compromising and avoiding. The next chapter discusses the summary of findings, implications, conclusions, recommendations and areas for further research.

## **Chapter 5: Summary of Findings, Recommendations, Areas for Further Research and Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the outcomes of the research, their implications, inferences, and recommendations in leadership practice. It delves into the implications of the findings and provides insights into how they can inform leadership practices. The chapter also analyses how the study contributes to existing theories, methodologies, and leadership practice. Suggestions for further research are provided to guide future inquiries. The chapter wraps up by highlighting the key results of the study and emphasizing their relevance in the context of leadership practice.

### **Summary of Findings**

Assessing the connection between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors from CITAM and PCEA churches in selected urban counties in Kenya was the general objective of the study. Additionally, the study looked into how the relationship between servant leadership behaviours and conflict management styles was influenced by emotional intelligence as a moderator. In the next section, the findings are summarized and presented in accordance with each specific objective of the study.

### **Effect of Emotional Healing on Interpersonal Conflict**

The first objective of the research was to investigate the effect of emotional healing on conflict management styles among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches in selected urban counties in Kenya. The null hypothesis proposed that there

was no effect on the association between emotional healing and any of the five interpersonal conflict management styles. To assess the association, descriptive and regression analyses were performed on the research variables. The null hypothesis that emotional healing has no effect on compromising conflict management style was rejected due to its statistically significant p-value of 0.038, which was less than the 0.05 threshold level. According to the regression results, emotional healing significantly impacted compromising conflict management style, while having no influence on the other four styles namely; collaborating, accommodating, competing and avoiding.

This suggests that pastors equipped with emotional healing are more adept at using the particular conflict management style of compromising when addressing conflict with others. Compromising includes identification and determination to find a middle way that provides an acceptable solution to the parties in conflict, breaking deadlocks, and the use of negotiation and give and take in order for a compromise to be reached. The implication of this finding is that emotional healing component of servant leadership is necessary for conflict management. The research thus disapproved the first null hypothesis which stated that that emotional healing had no effect on the conflict management styles of pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in urban counties in Kenya.

### **Effect of Conceptual Skills on Interpersonal Conflict**

Determining the influence of conceptual skills on the five interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors from CITAM and PCEA churches in selected urban counties in Kenya was the second objective of the study. The null hypothesis proposed that there was no effect of conceptual skills on interpersonal

conflict management styles among the pastors. With p-values greater than 0.05 for each of the five conflict management styles, the regression analysis showed that there was insufficient evidence to suggest a substantial impact of conceptual skills on not enough evidence to support a significant impact of conceptual skills on any of the conflict management styles. This means that the information analyzed did not show a meaningful connection between conceptual skills and conflict management.

The study therefore concluded that, conceptual skills, which indicate the ability to dream big and focus on the big picture of the organization, do not have any relationship with interpersonal conflict management among pastors. Interpersonal relationships do not interfere with the vision and goals of the organization. Therefore, the null hypothesis that conceptual skills have no effect on the interpersonal conflict management skills of pastors was retained, as the study did not find sufficient evidence to reject it.

### **Effect of Putting Followers First on Interpersonal Conflict**

Investigating the effect of putting followers first on the interpersonal conflict management styles among pastors from the two denominations in the selected urban counties in Kenya was the third objective of the study. The null hypothesis posited that putting followers first had no effect on the interpersonal conflict management styles among the pastors. Regression analysis revealed that putting followers first had a significant effect on collaborating and accommodating. The p-value of 0.023 for collaborating and 0.030 for accommodating demonstrated the statistical significance. This suggests that an increase in prioritizing the needs of others leads to a higher likelihood of engaging collaborating and accommodating conflict management styles. The literature review had also indicated that putting followers first reflected a

commitment to the well-being and success of others, which is a characteristic of servant leadership.

However, no sufficient evidence from the data indicated a significant effect between putting followers first and the other three conflict management styles, namely: avoiding, competing and compromising. The null hypothesis was rejected, and hence, putting followers first has an effect on interpersonal conflict management.

### **Effect of Behaving Ethically on Interpersonal Conflict**

Determining the effect of behaving ethically on conflict management styles among pastors from PCEA and CITAM churches in selected urban counties in Kenya was the fourth objective of the study. The null hypothesis proposed that ethical behaviour had no effect on the five conflict management styles among the pastors. According to the regression analysis, ethical behaviour significantly and positively impacted the collaborating conflict management style ( $\beta=0.36$ , 95% CI: 0.14-0.57,  $p=0.001$ ). The collaborating score rose by 0.36 units of every one-unit score increase in ethical behavior. The p-value of 0.001 confirmed this relationship was statistically significant. As a result, the null hypothesis for the collaborating component was rejected, demonstrating that ethical or moral behaviour does influence how individuals collaborate during conflict management. Collaborating is an opportunity to solve problems by working positively with others on a win-win viewpoint.

However, the data did not provide sufficient evidence to show that ethical behaviour significantly affects overall conflict management or other specific conflict management styles such as avoiding, accommodating, competing, or compromising. Therefore, behaving ethically had an influence and impact on the use of collaboration

conflict management style during interpersonal conflicts among CITAM and PCEA pastors in urban counties in Kenya.

**Moderating effect of relationship management in emotional intelligence on the relationship between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management style among pastors in PCEA and CITAM churches in selected urban counties in Kenya**

Determining whether relationship management in emotional intelligence moderated the association between servant leadership and interpersonal conflict management among pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya was the fifth specific objective of the study. According to the regression results, there was insufficient evidence to conclude that relationship management as a moderator had a significant effect on the relationship between the four measures of servant leadership style and four of the conflict management styles, namely: avoiding, competing, compromising and collaborating.

Regression results however indicated that relationship management had a significant relationship between accommodating and all four measures of servant leadership used in this study which were: behaving ethically, conceptual skills, emotional healing, and putting followers first. Particularly, relationship management decreased the effect of emotional healing and conceptualization, but increased the effect of putting followers first and behaving ethically. Relationship management also moderated the connection of servant leadership and collaborating. As a result, the analysis of the findings indicate that emotional intelligence has a favourable impact on enhancing the relationship between servant leadership behaviours and both accommodation and collaborating interpersonal conflict management styles.

However, when analysing the moderating influence of relationship management on the relationship between the four servant leadership behaviours and all five interpersonal conflict management styles, the results did not indicate a significant enough effect to confidently declare a meaningful relationship. The p-values generated were greater than 0.05, at 0.226 and 0.322. As a result, the null hypothesis was accepted, indicating that relationship management had no effect on the relationship between the servant leadership behaviours in this study and the five conflict management styles among pastors in CITAM and PCEA churches in selected urban counties in Kenya.

### **Thematic Analysis**

The sixth objective of the study was to identify themes emerging from the qualitative data. These themes served to confirm, challenge, or enrich the findings from the quantitative data. The pastors consistently traced the root of interpersonal conflict to a complex interplay of personal dispositions, spiritual rationalizations, and relational breakdowns. Many respondents cited pride, power struggles, and self-interest, which were expressed in behaviours such as domineering attitudes, competition to outdo one another, and the misuse of spirituality, as key drivers of discord. Others noted that avoiding issues or displaying a hardness of heart often stemmed from spiritual immaturity and a fear of appearing unspiritual.

Additionally, the pastors pointed to shortcomings in relationship management, particularly the challenge of effective communication during conflict. Communication breakdowns were commonly described through examples such as speaking without truly listening, making assumptions, and showing disrespect. These behaviours

frequently led to emotional reactions and actions taken without full understanding, hindering genuine engagement. Trust was further eroded when individuals interrupted or insisted on their own viewpoints.

When discussing strategies to improve interpersonal conflict management, the pastors advocated a multifaceted approach that combined conflict-resolution techniques with relationship-management competencies. On the conflict-resolution side, they emphasized the need for faith-based training in conflict resolution and emotional intelligence. They stressed that knowledge is power and that emotional intelligence was essential for effectively navigating conflicts. The goal of such training would be to equip pastors with both analytical frameworks and practical tools for addressing disputes.

Furthermore, the pastors highlighted the value of structured forums for open dialogue, peer debriefing, and neutral mediation, reflecting a preference for collaborative problem-solving over unilateral decision-making or silent avoidance. At the same time, they underscored relationship management as essential in preventing conflict. Skills such as active listening, working effectively with diverse personalities, and developing self-awareness were seen as crucial in avoiding miscommunications that could escalate minor misunderstandings into major conflicts.

Together, conflict-management skills and strong relationship management create a complementary dynamic: the former offers practical tools for resolving disputes, while the latter fosters the empathy and mutual respect needed to prevent conflicts from arising in the first place.

### **Implications for Managerial Practice**

The findings of this study have significant implications for leadership and conflict management practices within church organizations. First, the emphasis on dialogue, emotional intelligence, and humility highlights the need for conflict resolution training as part of pastoral development programs. Church leadership can introduce workshops on emotional intelligence, effective communication, and conflict resolution strategies to equip pastors with the skills necessary for managing interpersonal conflicts. Second, the structural solutions proposed by male pastors, such as role clarity and organizational frameworks, suggest that churches should establish well-defined job descriptions and clear lines of accountability. This can minimize ambiguity, prevent role-related tensions, and ensure that pastoral duties are executed without competition. Third, the relational strategies emphasized by female pastors underscore the importance of fostering team cohesion and trust. This can be achieved by organizing bonding activities, peer debrief sessions, and communal spiritual practices that nurture relationships among pastors. By combining structural and relational approaches, church organizations can create a balanced framework for conflict management that accommodates diverse perspectives while fostering unity and collaboration. Both groups emphasized the importance of open communication, dialogue, emotional intelligence, and humility as critical strategies for conflict resolution. Fourthly, dialogue and structured discussions were seen as effective platforms for addressing arising conflicts, grievances and fostering understanding. Finally, both groups also highlighted spiritual approaches, with frequent mentions of the "fear of God," "integrity," and biblical principles as guiding factors in resolving conflicts. Thus, ongoing biblical teachings and training towards spiritual maturity strengthen the individuals to be able to confidently address and manage conflict when it arises, especially among themselves as pastors.

Servant leadership plays a critical role in addressing conflict management. Song (2020) reiterated that the servant leadership approach is key in resolving root causes of leadership problems through one of its qualities of persuasion where power is used for and not to prop up one's position to tower over others. Pastors can confidently engage in conflict management by using servant leadership. Findings from the current study indicated that servant leadership has a positive effect on collaborating and accommodating conflict management styles. Accommodating is a self-sacrificing position that is willing to yield to another's point of view. It is useful for creating good will, keeping peace, addressing issues of low importance and resolving immediate concerns. Collaborating involves working with others in order to find a solution that completely satisfies everyone. It is good for issues that do not require competitiveness and engages creativity to solve interpersonal problems. Collaborating is useful for finding long term solutions, gaining commitment on issues, improving relationships, merging perspectives and integrating solutions. Freeborough (2021) found that higher levels of servant leadership lead to lower levels of interpersonal conflict in the workplace. It is recommended that pastors are taken through training on servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence in order to improve on the management of interpersonal conflict. Regarding the application of servant leadership in the church world, Hwa (2021) recommends that servant leadership training must include the soul of the leader to prepare the individual to not only succeed but also on how to handle success when it comes. The request for regular short and professional pieces of training in these three areas was indicated in the recommendations from respondents as captured in the qualitative data analysis.

In regard to the moderating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between servant leadership and conflict management behaviours, the study's results indicated that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the relationship between emotional healing and collaborating. The study also found that emotional intelligence has a significant effect on the relationship between servant leadership measures of putting followers first and behaving ethically, and accommodating measure of conflict management. Thus, emotional intelligence was found to have a moderating effect in the relationship between servant leadership and both collaborating and accommodating. Babatunde et al. (2023) also found that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the use of collaborating. It is therefore recommended that pastors undergo training on emotional intelligence as it will help them learn skills on accommodating and collaborating as they manage interpersonal conflict.

### **Filling the Research Gaps**

The gaps identified in this study were conceptual, contextual, and methodological. These gaps were related to the main variables of this study which were servant leadership, conflict management and emotional intelligence. The conceptual gaps included those identified in the literature review regarding the relationship between the study concepts. The contextual gaps related to the context in which the study was undertaken. For this study, the identified contextual gap was among pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya. The methodological gaps included the population, the sample size, research design and data analysis.

On the conceptual gaps, various studies were found on servant leadership in faith based institutions (Freeborough, 2021; Keita & Lao, 2019; Omogo, 2019). While

there were several studies on conflict management in institutions such as organizations, schools and churches, the literature review found few studies on the effect of servant leadership on interpersonal conflict management among pastors (Fields, 2021). Several studies looked at other leadership styles in relation to conflict management, but not servant leadership (Matisi, 2021). Further, there were no studies that accounted the moderating role of emotional intelligence between the two variables. This study filled the gap by establishing the effect of the three variables. The results indicated that servant leadership has an effect on collaborating and compromising conflict management styles. The results also showed that emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between servant leadership and compromising, as well as servant leadership and collaborating.

The second research gap was contextual in nature. A number of studies considered conflict management in churches, and focused on leadership wrangles and congregational conflicts (Mwambonje, 2019; Ondieki, 2019). Additionally, studies done in Kenya were previously in the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK). Further, there were studies on other forms of leadership such as shared leadership and emotional intelligence (Nzenge, 2020). The literature review did not find any study about servant leadership and conflict management with emotional intelligence as a moderating variable within Kenya. The current study filled this gap by going beyond ACK to consider a Presbyterian Church and a Pentecostal church, which were PCEA and CITAM respectively.

The study also contributed to existing literature by addressing a gap in gender-specific approaches to conflict management within pastoral leadership, an area that has been underexplored in prior research. While previous studies have examined general causes of conflicts in church organizations, limited attention has been paid to

how gender-based differences influence conflict resolution strategies among pastors. This research provides new insights by demonstrating that male pastors prioritize structural solutions while female pastors emphasize relational strategies. These findings not only bridge the gap between structural and relational approaches but also highlight the significance of integrating emotional intelligence and spirituality in conflict management. Furthermore, the study adds to the understanding of how cultural and organizational contexts influence interpersonal conflict resolution in pastoral leadership.

The third research gap was a methodological gap. A study done within the church institution in relation to conflict had used a qualitative approach (Mwabonje, 2019). Other studies used the case study approach (Matisi, 2021). The current study filled this gap by using mixed methods research design in order to gather both quantitative and qualitative data from the same respondents.

### **Recommendations for further research**

The present study focused on analyzing the relationship between four servant leadership behaviours and five interpersonal conflict management styles. It also considered the influence of the moderating variable, relationship management in emotional intelligence, in the connection between the identified servant leadership behaviours and conflict management styles. From a conceptual standpoint, the study focused on four of the seven sub-variables of servant leadership style, which were: emotional healing, conceptual skills, putting followers first and behaving ethically. More research is needed on the remaining three sub-variables of servant leadership which are; creating values for the community, empowering, and helping followers succeed.

Theoretically, the study's scope was limited to Servant Leadership Theory, Organizational Conflict Management Theory and Emotional Intelligence Theory. Further research on conflict management among pastors in Kenya should be undertaken, utilizing other value-based leadership theories including Ethical Leadership, Transformational Leadership and Authentic Leadership, in relation to conflict management among pastors. Future studies can also investigate the mediating effect of emotional intelligence in the associations between leadership styles and conflict management styles among pastors.

In the qualitative aspect of the study, emotional intelligence emerged as an important consideration in conflict management, with pastors recognizing its role in self awareness, self management, compassion towards each other and resolving conflicts. While these qualitative findings gave valuable contextual information, quantitative data showed that relationship management in emotional intelligence had no significant moderating effect in the relationship between the four servant leadership behaviours and the five conflict management styles. To further understand the relationship between perception and action among pastors, more research would be necessary to clarify the subtle interaction between theoretical constructs and their practical applications. Additionally, future research could look into emotional intelligence in its entirety in relation to conflict management among pastors.

The present research was done among pastors from two denominations, who serve in a full-time role in churches within selected urban counties in Kenya. Future studies can be expanded to include other denominations such as the African Brotherhood Church, Nairobi Baptist Church, Methodist Church of Kenya, Kenya Assemblies of God, Seventh Day Adventists, and Deliverance Churches, among others. Other studies on leadership and conflict management can be conducted at

para-church and faith-based organizations based in Kenya such as Fellowship of Christian Unions, Scripture Union, World Vision, and Compassion International , among others. Future studies may also take into account pastors in the East African countries and organizations with regional presence such as Youth for Christ and Scripture Union.

The majority of research studies on servant leadership style and conflict management styles have been carried out in corporate organizational contexts. Additional research is needed in faith-based or Christian settings such as college institutions and Christian organizations. Other areas of focus could include firms or businesses established by Christians that are founded on Christian faith principles. Furthermore, studies on cultural and denomination disparities in methods of dealing with conflicts may provide a better understanding of the contextual elements that influence the pastor's approach to conflict management.

Studies focusing on gender dynamics in church leadership might help to clarify how male and female pastors' viewpoints influence leadership styles and conflict management preferences. Future research could also look into the function of emotional intelligence and servant leadership training programs in boosting interpersonal connections and reducing conflicts within pastoral teams. By addressing these areas, researchers can contribute to the development of comprehensive conflict resolution frameworks that support the evolving needs of church organizations.

The present study used a convergent mixed methods design. Other mixed methods research designs such as explanatory sequential mixed methods or exploratory sequential mixed methods design would be recommended. The data was collected through the use of an online questionnaire on Google Forms platform to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Other methods of data collection

approaches like observation, interviews and focus groups should be considered. Longitudinal studies can also be conducted, including pre and post participant surveys particularly when an intervention is used. The study focused on pastors in selected urban churches in Kenya. It is suggested that some future studies can be done on the impact of conflict on performance in the same institutions. Past research on conflicts within churches in Kenya has been qualitative in nature. Future studies could consider quantitative and mixed methods approaches.

Future studies that address these research gaps can provide deeper insights into the dynamics of conflict among pastors as well as practical strategies to strengthen and improve leadership and unity within among church leaders.

### **Chapter Summary**

This final chapter of the dissertation has given a summary of the findings and conclusion from the study, and their implications on managerial practice, policy and theory. Suggestions for future areas of research have also been made. Overall, the study has contributed to the body of knowledge on the effect of servant leadership on conflict management, as well as the moderating role of emotional intelligence among pastors.

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## **Appendices**

### **Appendix I: Participant Consent Form**

TITLE OF STUDY:

**Servant Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management  
among Pastors in Selected Urban Churches in Kenya**

As a participant, I confirm that I have read and understood the information about the research. I also confirm that I have had the opportunity to ask any necessary questions and the researcher has responded to my satisfaction. I understand that my participation in the study is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Signed:

## Appendix II: Questionnaire

### Instructions

This questionnaire is intended to collect data on the impact of servant leadership and conflict management and emotional intelligence among pastors. It is part of a PhD dissertation in Organizational Leadership degree course at Pan Africa Christian University, Nairobi. Please take a few minutes to fill in the questionnaire as directed in each section. The questionnaire will require 20-30 minutes to complete. You will not be required to give your name. The information you share will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. You are at liberty to withdraw from the study at any time if there is a valid reason for you to do so. No participants will be paid to take part in the study.

### Section 1: Bio data

Kindly provide the answers to the questions in this section as applicable to you by ticking or placing an X in the boxes provided.

1. Gender:                     Male                     Female
  
2. Age:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 20 – 25	<input type="checkbox"/> 26 – 30
<input type="checkbox"/> 31 – 35	<input type="checkbox"/> 36 – 40
<input type="checkbox"/> 41- 45	<input type="checkbox"/> 46 – 50
<input type="checkbox"/> 51 – 55	<input type="checkbox"/> Above 55
  
3. What is your highest level of education?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Primary level	<input type="checkbox"/> Secondary level
<input type="checkbox"/> Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/> University
  
4. How many years have you served as a pastor in the church?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> 0 – 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/> 5-10 years
<input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years	<input type="checkbox"/> Over 16 years
  
5. What is your current pastoral role?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Head of Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Pastor/Moderator
---	--

Head of Ministry

Evangelist

6. How do you understand the meaning of servant leadership?

Very well

Well

To some extent

I do not understand

## Section 2: Servant leadership practices

Using the scale provided below, indicate by ticking the appropriate box on whether you agree or disagree with the following statements, where

1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree

### SERVANT LEADERSHIP

		1	2	3	4	5
	Emotional healing					
7	Other pastors seek help from me if they have a personal problem					
8	I care about the wellbeing of fellow pastors					
9	I take time to talk to fellow pastors on a personal level					
10	I can recognize when other pastors are feeling down without asking them					
	Conceptual skills					
11	I can tell if something work related is going wrong					
12	I am able to think through complex problems					
13	I have a thorough understanding of the organization and its goals					
14	I can solve work problems with new or creative ideas					
	Putting followers first					
15	I care more about the success of other pastors than my own					
16	I put the interests of other pastors above my own					
17	I sacrifice my own interests to meet the needs of other pastors					
18	I do what I can to make the jobs of other pastors easier					
	Behaving ethically					
19	I hold high ethical standards					
20	I am always honest					
21	I would not compromise ethical principles in order to meet success					
22	I value honesty more than profits					

23. Kindly indicate, to what extent do you disagree or agree, that the use of servant leadership is the most effective in conflict management?

[ ] To a very low extent

[ ] To a low extent

[ ] To a moderate extent

[ ] To a great extent

[ ] To a very great extent

## Section 3: Conflict Management

Using the scale provided below, indicate by ticking in the appropriate box how you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree

	Conflict Management					
	Collaborating					
24	I try to investigate an issue with my peers to find a solution acceptable to us					
25	I try to integrate my ideas with those of my peers to find a solution acceptable to us					
26	I try to work with my peers to find a solution to a problem that satisfies our expectations					
27	I exchange accurate information with my peers to solve a problem together					
28	I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that issues can be resolved in the best possible way					
29	I collaborate with my peers to come up with decisions acceptable to us					
30	I try to work with my peers for a proper understanding of the problem					
	Accommodating					
31	I generally try to satisfy the needs of my peers					
32	I usually accommodate the wishes of my peers					
33	I give in to the wishes of my peers					
34	I usually provide concessions to my peers					
35	I often go along with the suggestions of my peers					
36	I try to satisfy the expectations of my peers					
	Competing					
37	I use my influence to get my ideas accepted					
38	I use my authority to make a decision in my favour					
39	I use my expertise to make a decision in my favour					
40	I am generally firm in pursuing my side of the issue					
41	I sometimes use my power to win a competitive situation					
	Compromising					
42	I try to find a middle course to resolve an impasse					

43	I usually propose a middle ground for breaking deadlocks					
44	I negotiate with my peers so that a compromise can be Reached					
45	I use 'give and take' so that a compromise can be made					
	Avoiding					
46	I attempt to avoid 'being put on the spot' and try to keep my conflict with my peers to myself					
47	I usually avoid open discussions with my peers					
48	I try to stay away from disagreement with my peers					
49	I avoid an encounter with my peers					
50	I try to keep my disagreement with my peers to myself in order to avoid hard feelings					
51	I try to avoid unpleasant exchanges with my peers					

52. In your view, what are some of the challenges that cause interpersonal conflict among pastors to become difficult to manage?

53. Kindly indicate what you would recommend that would help in managing interpersonal conflict among pastors.

54. In your view, does a lack of knowledge about conflict management skills lead to an increase in interpersonal conflict with other pastors? Explain your answer.

#### Section 4: Emotional Intelligence

Using the scale provided below, indicate by ticking in the appropriate box how you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3- Neutral, 4 – Agree, 5 – Strongly agree

	Emotional Intelligence					
	Relationship Management	1	2	3	4	5
55	I am an excellent listener					
56	I never interrupt other people's conversations					
58	I am good at adapting and mixing with a variety of people					

58	People are the most interesting thing in life for me					
59	I love to meet new people and know what makes them tick					
60	I need a variety of work colleagues to keep my job interesting					
61	I like to ask questions and find out what is important for people					
62	I see working with difficult people as simply a challenge to win them over					
63	I am good at reconciling differences with other people					
64	I generally build solid relationships with those I work with					

65. From your observations and experience, to what extent are pastors aware of their own emotional intelligence?

To a very low extent

To a low extent

To a moderate extent

To a great extent

To a very great extent

66. In your view, does a lack of emotional intelligence skills increase the incidences of interpersonal conflict with other pastors? Explain your answer below.

Thank you for your participation.

**Appendix III: Individual Introduction Letter**

Anna Mumbua Musya,  
Pan Africa Christian University  
P. O. Box 56875 – 00200 Nairobi

13<sup>th</sup> February, 2023

Dear Pastor,

RE: RESEARCH ON SERVANT LEADERSHIP, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE  
AND CONFLICT MANAGMENT AMONG PASTORS IN SELECTED URBAN  
CHURCHES IN KENYA

I am a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) student in the Department of Leadership, at Pan Africa Christian University (PAC), Nairobi. To complete my studies, I am required to undertake an academic research study. I am therefore conducting a study on “Servant Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management among Pastors in Selected Urban Churches in Kenya”. You have been identified as a key respondent to the study. Therefore, I humbly request you to participate by responding to the provided questions in the attached questionnaire. The information collected with be used strictly for the purpose of this study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Your support and cooperation is highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

Anna Mumbua Musya,

PhD Candidate

## Appendix IV: Permission Letter from PAC University

	<h1>Certificate of Ethical Clearance</h1>	 <p>Pan Africa Christian University Thika Road Campus   Valley Road Campus P.O. Box 56875-00200   +254 730955000   +254 730955501/2 enquiries@pacuniversity.ac.ke   www.pacuniversity.ac.ke</p> <h2 style="text-align: center;">INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE (ISERC)</h2>	
<p><b>This Certificate is awarded to</b> Anna Mumbua Musya POLD/8510/016</p>			
<p><b>For the research titled</b> Servant Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Among Pastors in Selected Urban Churches in Kenya Ref/PAC/ISERC/37/10/23</p>			
<p><b>_having complied with PAC University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee's guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures for ethical clearance.</b></p>			
<p>This Certificate is issued subject to compliance with the following requirements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Before commencing the study, you are required to obtain a Research License from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) as well as other institutional clearances as and where needed.</li> <li>ii. Only approved documents including research instruments and informed consent forms will be used.</li> <li>iii. All changes including amendments and/or deviations are to be submitted for review and clearance by PAC University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee before use.</li> <li>iv. Any expected or unexpected changes that may increase the risks to study participants or affect the integrity of the study must be reported in writing to PAC University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within two days.</li> <li>v. Any request for renewal or approval must be submitted to PAC University Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee at least four weeks prior to the expiry of this Certificate and must be accompanied by a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.</li> </ol>			
<b>Date of issue</b>	03/10/2023	<b>Expiry date</b>	03/10/2024
<p><b>DR. JANE KINUTHIA</b>    <b>Secretary PAC_ISERC</b></p>			


### Appendix V: NACOSTI Permission to Collect Data

Republic of Kenya  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: 393337

Date of Issue: 16/October/2023

### RESEARCH LICENSE




This is to Certify that Ms. Anna Mumbua Musya of Pan Africa Christian University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Kajiado, Kiambu, Kisumu, Machakos, Mombasa, Nairobi, Nakuru, Uasin-Gishu on the topic: Servant Leadership, Emotional Intelligence and Conflict Management Among Pastors in Selected Urban Churches in Kenya for the period ending : 16/October/2024.

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Applicant Identification Number: 393337

Director General  
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

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