

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

**EXAMINING THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THE PERSONALITIES OF
PASTORS AND THE SIZE OF CHURCHES THEY PASTOR**

by

Jean R. Morgan, Jr.

Presented to

The Faculty of the Department of Organizational Psychology

Vanguard University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Science of Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Approved by:

Dr. Andrew Stenhouse, Professor, Graduate Program in Organizational Psychology, Thesis

Advisor

Dr. Ludmila Praslova, Professor, Graduate Program in Organizational Psychology, Program

Director

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

Abstract

Pastors, also referred to as lead pastors in some churches, are the primary focus of this research. The purpose of this study was to determine whether pastors' personality traits have an impact on the attendance in their churches; more specifically, what personality factors add or detract from the size of a church an individual pastor may effectively lead. An online survey made available via *Pivot*, a blog by Karl Vaters in ChristianityToday.com, was utilized to allow for a more extensive response number and efficiency in response time. Respondents were asked to answer 30 questions related to personality, nine questions on work engagement, and three questions related to satisfaction in their role as pastor. An analysis was completed using Pearson's Correlation, Multiple Linear Regression, and Discriminant Analysis on a sample size of $n=748$. The analysis determined that personality traits do not appear to be a significant factor in the church's attendance size the pastor effectively leads. The feeling of effectiveness, however, was a significant finding ($r=.464$). Increasing the feeling of effectiveness may promote more church growth. A pastor's sense of effectiveness does appear to play a significant role in a pastor's sense of satisfaction with the attendance numbers of the congregation they lead. Pastors, with a strong sense of being effective in their role, while satisfied with the size of church they pastor, they at the same time desire to see the church grow.

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

Acknowledgments

I am grateful for Reverend Karl Vaters, pastor, and contributor to Christianity Today blog for small church pastors. Karl is pastor of Cornerstone Christian Fellowship in Fountain Valley, California. He contributes to *Pivot* (<https://christianitytoday.com/karl-vaters/>) and is the founder of NewSmallChurch.com, a blog that encourages, connects, and equips innovative small church pastors. In our conversation, he raised the question of how pastors' personalities might influence the size of church one may pastor. Thank you for the inspiration for this research study.

A special thank you to my friend and mentor, retired lecturer Randy Hamlin, a former professor in the Business Department at California State University, Fullerton, CA. His help in understanding and explaining the findings was of great value for understanding the survey results. And a sincere appreciation for my research advisor, Dr. Andy Stenhouse, for his insight and guidance throughout the process.

I am grateful for my family and their support in this endeavor. My daughters, Angeline L. DeVries and Dr. Jeanette L. Morgan, have provided much love and encouragement. Thank you, Angie, for the extra help in editing this paper from a fresh perspective. Your fresh insights have provided more clarity for the reader.

Most importantly, a very special thank you to my wife, Dr. Sandra Morgan, Director of the Global Center for Women and Justice at Vanguard University, Costa Mesa, CA. I cannot express enough how much your love and support have meant to me as you encouraged me to pursue and complete a 2nd Masters' Degree. I love you!

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

Table of Contents

List of Tables	iii
Chapter I: Project Overview	1
Chapter II: Review of the Literature	5
Big-Five Personality Traits Considerations	5
Relationship of Personality Traits on Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness	7
Connection Between Personality Traits and Work Engagement	9
Leadership Style and Its Influence on Leadership Effectiveness.....	12
Conclusion	16
Chapter III: Methods	17
Research Question and Hypotheses	17
Participants.....	18
Procedure	19
Instruments.....	19
Methodologies.....	20
Chapter IV: Results	21
Chapter V: Discussion, Limitations and Recommendations	31
Limitations	34
Recommendations	35
Conclusion	36
References	37

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

Appendices 40

 Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter 40

 Appendix B: Pastors' Personality, Satisfaction, Church Size Survey 41

 Appendix C: Pivot blog at ChristianityToday.com/Karl-Vaters Invite..... 51

PERSONALITIES OF PASTORS AND CHURCH SIZE

List of Tables

Table I. Levels of Satisfaction 24

Table II. Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables..... 25

Table III. Pearson’s Correlation Among Subscales (Two-Tailed Testing)..... 26

Table IV. Classification Results 29

Chapter 1

Project Overview

A small church pastor, who is also the researcher for this project, wrote this paper. The following verses from the Bible affirm that pastors choose this profession based on a sense of *calling* – not for status, and that God has a key role in the development of churches. The Bible says, “It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11, NIV). Jesus also said, “I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18, NIV). Jesus further promised that “When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13, NIV). Jesus’ working through the Holy Spirit is a vital dimension in church growth. Jesus’ *building* of the Church is related to people coming into a relationship with Him; however, the question could be raised as to whether this promise also relates to church size – the number in attendance in any one church, or not. In other words, do certain personality factors determine church attendance limitations? Are there personality factors that add or detract from a church's size and leadership effectiveness by an individual senior pastor?

Senior pastors, also referred to as lead pastors in many churches, are the primary focus of this research. In this paper, senior pastors will be identified as *pastors*. *Church size* for this study refers to individual congregations and their weekly attendance numbers, not membership. Membership may not provide an accurate picture of a church's size in terms of actual attendees. For the flow of thought in this paper, *congregation* will primarily be referred to by the term *church*, and *attendance*, by the term *size*.

Big Five Personality Traits

The Big Five personality model, also known as the five-factor model (FFM) and the OCEAN model, includes five personality traits: *Openness to Experience*, *Conscientiousness*, *Extraversion*, *Agreeableness*, and *Neuroticism*. Barrick & Mount (1991) investigated the Big Five personality traits' relationship to job performance criteria. They found that the personality dimension of Conscientiousness was a consistent predictor in job performance.

Conscientiousness involves being reliable and diligent, which may directly impact the pastor's effectiveness in in the size church one may lead.

Akerman (2017) stated that Openness to Experience is a trait that will likely lead to a leadership position, while Extraversion is a strong predictor of leadership. Those with high Conscientiousness should use their strengths to move the organization to high achievement, while those with high Extraversion should focus on making effective decisions while considering others. Individuals with high Agreeableness as a trait may miss out on opportunities because they tend to put others first but can use their Agreeableness as a strength by turning to their support network to positively engage in their community. A trait high in Neuroticism may benefit an individual by maintaining and strengthening self-confidence to build resources in challenging times.

Statement of Problem

The studies identified in the literature review focused on leadership behaviors, characteristics, servant leadership, and effectiveness concerning church growth as connected with the relationship of personality traits and work engagement. Although Krekeler (2010), Carter (2009), and Corbett (2006) used the Big Five Inventory (also presented as the NEO Five-Factor Inventory), their emphasis was not on the relationship of personality traits and church

size. While a strong correlation was made between servant leadership and the traits of Conscientiousness and Agreeableness and a correlation between Leadership Effectiveness and Extraversion, there does not appear to be a study focusing specifically on the correlation of personality traits of pastors and the size of church they pastor. Is there a specific personality trait or a specific combination of personality traits that significantly influence a church's size a pastor can effectively lead? Which of these traits, or a combination thereof, are most prevalent in churches of smaller versus larger attendance? The focus of this study correlates church attendance with the personality traits of pastors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship of the Big Five personality traits of pastors and church attendance utilizing the revised Big Five Inventory-2-Short Form (BFI-2-S, Soto & John, 2017). This questionnaire assesses the Big Five's hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power.

This study was accomplished by statistically exploring the revised Big Five Inventory-2 five traits (*Open-Mindedness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Negative-Emotionality*) and church size in a large sample of churches. Seven hundred forty-eight ($n=748$) pastors of varied church sizes were surveyed via an online survey offered through the Pivot blog of Reverend Karl Vaters at ChristianityToday.com/Karl-Vaters.

Rationale

There has been considerable research focusing on leadership behaviors, effectiveness, and style with personality traits. From a theological point of view, Jesus *gifts* the Church with pastors, yet too often, these pastors feel pressure to break through growth barriers. Determining whether personality traits play a factor in how pastors can effectively lead churches of specific

size may reduce pressure upon some pastors by reducing the pressure to perform beyond their comfort zone as determined by their personality traits.

Significance of the Study

Pastors are often frustrated with the inability to grow their churches beyond their current church size. Recognizing that certain personality traits may be a factor in the church's size may allow the pastors to remove some of the stress of attempting to grow a church beyond their personality traits' comfort zone, and instead, find value in their effectiveness and thus, satisfaction, with the congregation they do lead, regardless of attendance numbers.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Several areas of existing literature and research were reviewed relevant to the study of the influence the Big Five Personality Traits may have on a pastors' size of a congregation they may effectively lead. The Big Five Personality Traits will be discussed at length, followed by previous research, which has already examined the relationship of how personality traits can impact leadership behavior and effectiveness. Once understanding the connection between personality traits and leadership is explained, the connection between personality traits and work engagement is described. Leadership style is then examined, and its influence on leadership effectiveness is determined. Lastly, conclusions are drawn by integrating previous studies and presenting the context for this study.

Big-Five Personality Traits Considerations

Barrick & Mount (1991) studied the relationship of the Big Five personality dimensions (Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Emotional Stability) with three job performance criteria (job proficiency, training proficiency, and personnel data) among five occupational groups (professionals, police, managers, sales, and skilled/semi-skilled). Barrick & Mount found that Conscientiousness was a valid predictor for all the occupational groups studied because it taps into the crucial traits of the job's successful accomplishment. Extraversion was a valid predictor for managers and sales because both require significant interaction with others. It was also a positive predictor for training proficiency since a high energy level can be associated with training. Openness to Experience was a valid predictor for training proficiency, but not job proficiency or personnel data. The finding can be related to individuals typically having more positive attitudes toward learning. The correlation of

emotional stability in their study demonstrated that highly neurotic people tend not to function well independently. A significant finding did show that a negative coefficient among professionals who exhibit worry, nervousness, and being high-strung tended to be better performers in their jobs. Agreeableness was determined not to be a significant predictor of job performance. Contrasting Agreeableness with Extraversion, being amenable had less impact than being assertive, at least for the occupations included in the study.

Akerman (2017) suggests that the Big Five can help individuals understand their unique personalities and where to focus their energy and attention. Akerman points out that the five factors are not specifically traits, but that traits and characteristics fit into the five factors. Ackerman's view of each factor will be explained, followed by his view on how these factors might affect job performance. Openness to Experience demonstrates an individual's willingness to think outside the box. They have a willingness to be vulnerable and try new things. A person who is low in Openness to Experience tends to prefer routine. Conscientious individuals can plan, organize, and delay personal gratification. An individual low in Conscientiousness tends to procrastinate more. Individuals high in Extraversion draw energy from interacting with people. Contrastively, the low in Extraversion individual tends to be introspective. The Agreeableness individual focuses on getting along with others, while the low Agreeableness individual tends not to be genuinely trusted nor possibly even liked.

Neuroticism relates primarily to how confident and how comfortable individuals are with themselves. Individuals who rate low in Neuroticism are more likely to be confident and adventurous. Akerman (2017) suggests that Openness to Experience is the least likely to change over time and the most likely factor for continued growth. Conscientiousness leads to individuals using their strengths to the best of their ability. While enjoying the interaction with others, the

individual with a high Extraversion factor tends to pay attention to the decision-making process in addition to considering others. Agreeableness is seen in the individual's tendency to put others before themselves and, consequently, miss out on opportunities; however, they can leverage their strengths with their positive engagement. The factor of Neuroticism relates to the challenges of life. Akerman (2017) did emphasize that a high score in Neuroticism is not a sentence to miserableness.

Relationship of Personality Traits on Leadership Behavior and Effectiveness

Burton (2010) recognized that overall church attendance is declining, even though mega-churches' growth gives the opposite impression. Burton studied the correlation between leadership behaviors and church growth rate. Pastors from two denominations, the United Brethren in Christ, and the Missionary Church, were surveyed. Of the 376 eligible pastors, 76 participated. Using the Leadership Practices Inventory-Observer (LPI), Kendall's Correlation Coefficient was conducted to determine the relationship of leadership as measured by the LPI and church growth. The use of regression analysis demonstrated that none of the five LPI leadership behaviors (model the way, inspire a shared vision, challenge the process, enable others to act, and encourage the heart) correlated significantly to church growth. Burton's suggestion for future research was to focus on denominations with larger churches and study the behaviors of pastors of growing churches in contrast with pastors' behaviors of declining churches.

Ingram (2015) described churches in North America as either plateauing or declining, while at the same time pointed out that some churches were moving from no growth to growth. Ingram identified the pastors of these churches as *turnaround pastors*. The purpose of Ingram's study was to determine if specific characteristics can be identified that make for an influential

turnaround pastor. Nine areas of pastoral characteristics were collected: history, DiSC profile, Clifton's Strengthsfinder, mentoring and coaching, vision, interpersonal relational skills, bridging the gap, and leadership. Twenty-one turnaround pastors and seven non-turnaround pastors, thirty church leaders of turnaround pastors, and nine non-turnaround pastors were compared. The research concluded that roughly twenty identifiable characteristics are easily determined by using the various leadership assessments. While this study was limited to three states, Arizona, California, and Nevada; it was expected that the findings would contribute to the general knowledge of the characteristics of turnaround pastors. Additionally, the pastors' sample size was smaller than desired, with only 21 pastors participating, and limited to evangelical pastors and churches.

Krekeler (2010) suggested that leadership behavior and an individual's personality could impact an organization's success or failure. His study examined the relationship between the Big Five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, and Neuroticism) and Servant Leadership behavior. The self-rater versions of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (SLQ) and the Big Five Inventory (BFI) were used with 33 United Methodist pastors to evaluate servant leadership behavior with personality type. The findings showed a strong correlation between servant leadership and the BFI's traits of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness. The researcher suggested that organizations promoting servant leadership should also consider personality traits. One significant limitation of this study was the sample size ($n=33$). While the findings were significant between independent and dependent variables, a larger sample size would have provided further evidence. A second limitation was that the focus was on just one specific group of the population, United Methodist pastors; the limitation was that these pastors may exhibit a similar value system. The results,

based on values, may differ from other organizations. A third limitation was the use of the self-report SLQ, which did not allow for comparing members' perceptions regarding the leader's behavior.

Francis, et al. (2004) focused on a significant church theme known as a collaborative ministry frame of thinking. Theological and practical arguments supported the case for collaborative ministry. The theological view focused on the concept that the church is the body of Christ and, therefore, should work together. The practical side recognized the pastor's aging population in the United Kingdom, which related to pastors being less inclined to serve full-time in the ministry, which may relate to the decline in church membership and attendance. A sample size of 991 male pastors of the United Kingdom Evangelical Alliance completed the short form Revised Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (REPO) and a collaborative ministry scale. The REPO focuses on three personality types: Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism. Of the three, the findings showed that effective collaborative ministry was significantly related to the pastor's personality trait. The study recognized a positive correlation with the Extraversion personality trait and a negative correlation with the Neuroticism personality trait.

Connection Between Personality Traits and Work Engagement

Liao, et al. (2012) studied the combined effects of employee personality traits and social exchange relationships with the participants' peers to predict work engagement. The findings showed that for employees with higher Extraversion, the Team-Member Exchange (TMX), and engagement relations were more robust. This finding was also true for employees with lower Neuroticism. Another finding showed the TMX-engagement was positive for employees with lower Conscientiousness but negative for those with higher Conscientiousness. While employees

with higher Conscientiousness are more motivated and better performers in the workplace, high-quality TMX seemed to improve engagement for those lower of Conscientiousness.

The Liao, et al. (2012) study supported the idea that social exchange relationships in the workplace are essential for work engagement. More importantly, work engagement's beneficial effects proved dependent on individual personality traits (Extraversion, Neuroticism, and Conscientiousness). The study showed that employees with higher Extraversion, lower Neuroticism, or lower Conscientiousness appeared more engaged in their work due to experiencing higher team-member exchange. The opposite was found with employees who were lower in Extraversion and higher in Neuroticism and Conscientiousness. The findings demonstrated that both social exchange relationships and personality traits play an important role in work engagement. The findings also highlight the importance of considering both the employee's personality traits and their social exchange processes before designing a strategy to enhance work engagement.

Woods & Sofat (2013) explored why and how personality traits are related to work engagement to better understand why some employees were more likely to be more engaged at work. Woods & Sofat pointed out that those who scored high on Extraversion were more sociable, assertive, and cheerful. Agreeable people were more concerned with social harmony, and therefore were more cooperative and trusting. Conscientious people were hard-working, responsible, self-disciplined, and highly persistent. Neuroticism was used to represent a person's ability to regulate emotion and therefore found that people with lower levels of Neuroticism were more calm, stable, and self-confident. Those who have high Openness to Experience were generally more curious, imaginative, and ready to try new things. Barrick & Mount (1991) demonstrated that personality traits were related to job satisfaction. Woods & Sofat sought to

demonstrate that personality traits were directly related to work engagement. This study recognized that personality traits were directly related to work engagement and therefore focused on the psychological meaningfulness of work.

Woods & Sofat (2013), pointed out that meaningfulness was a related but distinct psychological state from engagement. Meaningfulness related to the positive feeling of work being worthwhile. It related to the perception of one's work. In contrast, engagement was how one feels when at work. Their findings showed that the feeling of meaningfulness could be a predictor of work engagement. Personality traits of Extraversion and Conscientiousness were positively related to psychological meaningfulness, whereas Neuroticism was generally negatively related. The researchers suggested that organizations use personality tests to understand each employee better to provide more efficient coaching based on personality traits. The findings of this study can be used to design intervention programs to increase employee work engagement.

Shukla, et al. (2014), recognizing that work engagement is a combination of attitude and behavior, and that personality referred to how people influence others through their actions, explored the relationship between employees' personality and work engagement. Their study assumed the personality traits were stable and, therefore, expected to impact the way people responded to different situations. They concluded that three factors (Conscientiousness, Openness to Experience, and Agreeableness) had a significant relationship with employee engagement. Their findings showed that Extraversion and Neuroticism ultimately demonstrated a weak relationship with employee engagement. Extraversion showed a positive but low relationship with employee engagement, and Neuroticism showed a negative relationship with

employee engagement. The authors concluded that assessing the personality traits at the time of recruitment can positively impact employee engagement.

Leadership Style and Its Influence on Leadership Effectiveness

Leadership Effectiveness. Corbett (2006) focused on ongoing research to identify what makes leaders effective and how this can impact pastoral leadership effectiveness. Corbett describes leadership effectiveness as genuinely caring for people, being responsible for organizational development, being accountable, and staying true to a clear vision for the church. This study aimed to determine if the variables of personality traits, leadership styles, and spirituality impacted pastoral leadership effectiveness. The NEO Five-Factor Inventory (NEO FFI) and the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were used to study pastoral leadership effectiveness. Ninety-three pastors from both Protestant and Catholic backgrounds participated in the study. Sixty-seven of them were also rated by members of their congregations. Most pastors on the Pastor Leadership Survey rated above the mean and were, therefore, considered effective. On the NEO FFI, pastors who rated high on Conscientiousness were considered effective. Another characteristic considered effective were the pastors that were viewed as transformational. The findings suggest that high Conscientiousness and transformational leadership style contributed to leadership effectiveness. A significant limitation of the study was the sample size. A small sample size can limit statistical power and increase the possibility of a Type 2 error. Another limitation is that the pastors selected their follower-raters, potentially introducing bias. Different levels of understanding of the survey questions could also factor in the findings of the research. A suggestion in future studies is to increase the variety of churches and church size.

Hagiya (2011) recognized that some church leaders seem to have the natural ability to grow churches and programs, while others did not. While overall mainline churches are in decline, some United Methodist Church pastors bring church growth in membership and attendance and develop effective ministries in their communities. Leaders of other denominations can benefit from understanding why these pastors have success in church growth. The goal was to identify qualities and characteristics that might be teachable to other pastors. Hagiya (2011), aimed to identify the traits, characteristics, and qualities of highly effective United Methodist Church pastors, as demonstrated in their increased membership and programs in churches they served. The results helped denominational leaders identify and recruit potential ministers with characteristics and traits predictive of church growth. The education could be adjusted to provide more specific training in these areas. Furthermore, there is a potential to help ineffective leaders become effective. The method of research was descriptive. The study focused on high effective versus low effective leaders.

Highly effective pastors saw church growth and impact, whereas less effective pastors had seen either no growth or even experienced decline. The use of both quantitative tools and qualitative research was used. The findings showed a definite difference between high effectiveness and low effectiveness quantitatively and qualitatively on the United Methodist Church pastor's emotional intelligence quotients. In reviewing the transformational leadership style, the quantitative results were inconclusive. However, the qualitative results demonstrated that highly effective pastors have a healthy transformational leadership style. An essential consideration and limitation in this study was that, although the United Methodist Church is the second-largest denomination in the United States, the study is confined to United Methodist Church pastors. The study was also conducted in Southern California and Hawaii, thus limiting

the scope of the study. Additionally, a third limitation is that each group was homogenous, that is, lacking diversity in their community.

Carter (2009) examined whether individual pastoral leadership styles distinguished between effective and ineffective pastors. Effective pastors are those who develop leaders within their churches, in addition to their regular pastoral responsibilities. Variables, such as leadership style, personality, preaching ability, and interpersonal skills, making it difficult to narrow down what contributed to pastoral effectiveness. This study focused on pastors' transformational/transactional leadership style and personality and behavior with their leadership effectiveness. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), NEO-Five Factor Inventory (FFI), and Spiritual Transcendence Scale (STS) tools were used to measure the leadership style, personality, and behavior of 93 pastors. Significant correlations were seen between transformational leadership style and pastoral effectiveness. The dimension of individual consideration of the MLQ transformational leadership scale provided the only significant predictability of pastoral leadership effectiveness. Personality and spirituality contributed to pastoral effectiveness. The FFI showed that Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness demonstrated a positive correlation to leadership effectiveness. The limitations identified in this study were primarily due to the sample size. A higher sample size might have yielded different results. The researcher suggested that studies comparing urban versus suburban locations might also affect leadership effectiveness.

Leadership Style. Lee (2009) focused on analyzing the leadership styles and managerial competencies of Korean pastors. Two hundred seventy-three ($n=273$) pastors of the general assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Korea were analyzed. The Styles of Leadership Survey (SLS), the Pastoral Management Competencies Questionnaire (PMCQ), were the primary

research tools. This study's key results found that Korea's pastors' dominant leadership style was bureaucratic, and the primary managerial competency factor was staffing. The research also showed no correlation between leadership styles, managerial styles, and select demographic variables; additionally, the research showed no correlation between Korean pastors' leadership style and managerial competencies. The findings of this research were primarily focused on Korean churches due to specific cultural norms. Additionally, it is difficult to generalize the leadership style studied with pastors in Korea and compare this with other countries. Another limitation is the understanding of how other churches and pastors in Korea might compare since the data were limited to Presbyterian pastors and churches.

Rumley (2011) raised the question of whether the leadership style of corporate America could be the same as that of the church? Another question raised was whether a pastor should lead from an authoritarian approach versus collaborating with church members that reflect shared values? Furthermore, the question was raised regarding whether strong leadership means more empowerment and less control in collaborating with its members? This research showed the statistical relevance of the pastor's leadership style and the church's effectiveness. Each pastor participated in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), providing a rating on transactional, transformational, and laissez-faire leadership traits. Regression analysis helped determine the correlation between the variables. The researcher found a strong linear relationship with transformational and transactional leadership. However, there was no statistically significant correlation with the laissez-faire leadership identified. The scope of the research needed to extend to more denominations.

Leadership Patterns. Shepherd (2010) studied whether specific leadership patterns help churches grow. This study focused on Leadership Patterns in growing churches within the

denomination of Churches of Christ and then recommended a change model. The study recommended a model to provide leadership and ministry patterns to help Churches of Christ fulfill their mission based on studying the historical and contemporary ministry patterns involving church members. Using the grounded theory analysis, which reviewed leadership and ministry patterns within growing churches, this study's goal was to develop a ministry model for contemporary society using qualitative methods. The research was conducted by sending out one thousand surveys to church members and through leaders' interviews. Churches of Christ, experiencing growth, were found to use a progressive ministry methodology while remaining balanced in biblical theology. In expanding churches, the leadership style is *people-based shepherding*, which essentially means getting people within the churches involved in relational evangelism and small group ministry. The scope of this research concentrated on the Churches of Christ within North America. Its goal was to identify leadership patterns that facilitated growth in churches. The study did not focus on leadership in general nor the mission of the church.

Conclusions

While recognizing the biblical claim that, "It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11, NIV), and that Jesus also declared, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18, NIV), there is pressure, internally and externally, to increase attendance in the congregation one is leading. Being comfortable with one's calling and unique personality traits, versus church size, may bring less stress on pastors, thus providing more satisfaction in their role as pastor. Therefore, the question to be researched is: *To what extent is personality correlated with a pastor's satisfaction with the size of church one may effectively lead?*

Chapter 3

Methods

Research Question and Hypotheses

This research was intended to help pastors obtain a greater understanding of how personality traits may play a factor in their satisfaction with their congregation's attendance numbers. The predominant purpose of this study was to determine if a significant relationship existed between the Big Five personality domains of pastors (independent variable) and the size of church they can effectively lead (dependent variable) as identified by Soto & John (2017). Therefore, this study's research question was: *To what extent is personality correlated with a pastor's satisfaction with the size of church one may effectively lead?*

The hypotheses for this study were predictive extensions of the research questions:

H1₀ Extraversion of the pastor does not correlate with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H1_a Extraversion of the pastor correlates with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H2₀ Agreeableness of the pastor does not correlate with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H2_a Agreeableness of the pastor correlates with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H3₀ Conscientiousness of the pastor does not correlate with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H3_a Conscientiousness of the pastor correlates with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H4₀ Negative Emotionality of the pastor does not correlate with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H4_a Negative Emotionality of the pastor correlates with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H5₀ Open-Mindedness of the pastor does not correlate with the size of church and their satisfaction.

H5_a Open-Mindedness of the pastor correlates with the size of church and their satisfaction.

Participants

Participants in this study were pastors of various sizes of churches ($n = 748$). The sample included 625 males and 120 females. Three did not self-identify. Initially, 785 pastors responded, however, 37 did not complete the survey questions critical for proper survey analysis.

Demographic data indicated their ages ranged from 74-93 years herein labeled the Builder generation ($n = 5$), 55-73 labeled the Boomer generation ($n = 319$), 37-54 labeled the Gen-X generation ($n = 339$), and 18-36 herein labeled the Millennial generation with recognition of the possibility of some Gen Z (18-24) participants ($n = 83$). Two participants did not self-identify their age. Demographic data also indicated the number of participants that came from Urban ($n = 124$), Suburban ($n = 296$), and Rural ($n = 328$) churches. Thirty percent self-identified as Bi-Vocational ($n = 225$).

When asked about ethnicity, 84.5% self-identified as Caucasian/White ($n = 632$), 4.8% identified as Black or African American ($n = 36$), 2.8% identified as Hispanic or Latino ($n = 21$), 0.4% identified as Native American or Native Indian ($n = 3$), 2.7% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander ($n = 20$), 0.7% identified as African ($n = 5$), 0.7% identified as Other ($n = 5$), and 0.5% did not self-identify ($n = 4$). Instead of self-identifying, 2.9% of pastors identified the ethnicity of the congregations ($n = 22$). When asked about education, 0.2% identified as having little or no schooling ($n = 2$), 0.1% as graduating 8th grade ($n = 1$), 9.9% as having a high school diploma or GED ($n = 74$), 7.9% as completing an Associate degree ($n = 59$), 26.7% as completing a Bachelor's degree ($n = 199$), 40.6% as completing a Master's degree ($n = 306$), 6.0% as having completed a Professional degree ($n = 44$), and 8.6% as having completed a Doctorate degree ($n = 63$).

Procedure

Approval for this study was obtained from Vanguard University's Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A). The lead researcher invited all pastors to participate in an online survey (see Appendix B). The online survey was sent out to pastors through the Pivot blog at ChristianityToday.com/Karl-Vaters (see the invite in Appendix C).

This study utilized the Big Five Inventory-2-Short Form (BFI-2-S) designed by Soto & Johns (2017), three questions developed by the researcher to gain a sense of the participant's satisfaction level in their role as pastor, and the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale-9 (UWES-9) designed by Schaufeli, et al. (2006). This study's primary design examined the *correlation* between the independent variables (BFI-2-S, the five personality domains) of pastors and the dependent variable (size of church). The UWES-9 was also to assess the level of engagement. Participants were asked to state the frequency to which they experienced listed feelings regarding their work on a seven-point scale ranging from never to always. Higher scores indicated a higher level of engagement.

Instruments

BFI-2-S. The purpose of the Big Five Inventory-2 is to better measure the personality dimensions of the original Big Five Domains of the Big Five Inventory (BFI) developed by John, et al. (1991) using a five-point scale from strongly disagree to agree strongly. The BFI-2-Short Form (BFI-2-S) efficiently measures the Big Five domains and 15 key facet scales with 30 questions, while the BFI-2 uses 60 questions. Soto & John (2017) determined that the short form (BFI-2-S) retains much of the full measure's reliability and validity. Reliability analysis for the Big Five domains revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of .72 for Extraversion, .74 for Agreeableness, .765 for Conscientiousness, .79 for Negative-Emotionality, and .69 for Open-Mindedness.

UWES-9. The Utrecht Work Engagement Scale aims to measure work engagement, ultimately identifying the relationship between engagement and burnout. The original UWES initially had 24 questions but was reduced to 17 questions after determining that seven were unsound questions. The UWES-9 (consisting of 9 questions) was developed with a reduced Burnout factor and an expanded Engagement factor, demonstrating that work engagement can be a positive antipode of burnout. The UWES-9 utilizes a seven-point scale ranging from never to always. According to Schaufeli, et al. (2006), the short form of the UWES-9 retains much of the original's reliability, stability, and validity. Reliability analysis revealed a Cronbach's Alpha of .895.

Methodologies.

An online survey for pastors was made available through a blog by Karl Vaters at ChristianityToday.com called *Pivot*. Respondents were asked to complete 30 questions related to personality, nine questions on work engagement, and three questions related to satisfaction, effectiveness, and pressure in their role as pastors. Pearson's Correlation model, Multiple Linear Regression, and Discriminant Analysis were used to analyze the data.

Chapter 4

Results

This statistical analysis examined the relationship between the number in attendance of the senior/lead pastor's congregation and his/her Big-Five Personality Traits (using survey form BFI-2-S). Three statistical methodologies were used to examine the data. The first method, Pearson's Correlation Model, was used to determine the correlation between church size and the Big Five Personality Trait. Engagement measured by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES-9) was correlated with the Five Big Personality Traits in addition to three questions relating to satisfaction with the church's size, feeling of effectiveness as a pastor, and the feeling of pressure to grow one's church. The second method utilized Multiple Linear Regression was used to predict attendance with as little variation in attendance as possible. The effectiveness of regression was used to predict church attendance; the closer the prediction was to the actual church attendance, the better the model was. To understand the sense of satisfaction with attendance numbers of a congregation, a third method, Discriminant Analysis, was used to determine if the pastor would be classified as being head of an appropriately sized church based on the pastor's response to the BFI-2-S.

Method 1. The first method explored the correlation between church size and the BFI-2-S thirty personality questions, BFI_1 – BFI_30 (with questions 1, 3, 7, 8, 10, 14, 17, 19, 20, 21, 24, 26, 27, 28, and 30 reverse coded; from this point forward designated as B1 – B30), and a direct correlation between church size and the sum of the Big Five Personality Traits designated: E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, C = Conscientious, N-E = Negative Emotionality, and O-M = Open-Mindedness.

A second way to represent church attendance was to redefine the actual attendance numbers into discrete church size categories based on the sample population for Discriminant Analysis. While the sample size was $n=748$, and the range was from 0 to 2600 in attendance numbers, only $n=18$ of the sample population had 500 or more in attendance. Of the remaining, $n=680$ had 200 or less in attendance. Only $n=50$ were in the 200 to 500 range in attendance. Division of the groups was determined by placing the lowest 20% in the small group size, the next 20% in the small to medium group, the following 20% in the medium group, the next 20% in the medium to large group, and the top 20% designated as the large church. Of the $n=748$ churches represented, $n=148$ were classified as Small, $n=151$ as Small-Medium, $n=149$ as Medium, $n=147$ as Medium-Large, and $n=153$ as Large.

ATTENDANCE	RANGE	N	VARIABLE VALUE
Small	Attendance ≤ 35	148	ATTEND 2 = 1
Small-Medium	$36 < \text{Attendance} \leq 55$	151	ATTEND 2 = 2
Medium	$56 < \text{Attendance} \leq 80$	149	ATTEND 2 = 3
Medium-Large	$81 < \text{Attendance} \leq 130$	147	ATTEND 2 = 4
Large	$131 < \text{Attendance} \leq 2600$	153	ATTEND 2 = 5

The main reason for creating categories is that they are necessary for the application of discriminate analysis of the data. Based on the pastor's response to the BFI-2-S survey, this analysis provided the ability to determine whether the data accurately predicted the probability of the size of church the pastor will most likely lead, and thus, satisfaction level.

It may seem that valuable information is lost by converting a continuous variable into a discrete variable. While observing the data, it was noted that the pastors used increments of five

when they estimated their church attendance numbers. The common attendances were 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, and 100, with few numbers in between; therefore, further justification was made for dividing the congregations into distinct groups. No rounding of numbers was used. Each pastor was placed into one of five groups based on the pastor's actual estimated attendance.

The correlations between the thirty personality questions and church size were calculated. Only statistically significant correlations at either the 5% or 1% level of significance are shown below in Table I. All other correlations were not statistically different from zero and, therefore, not reported. These statistically significant correlations demonstrated the questions that were related to church attendance.

Table I
Levels of Significance

PERSONALITY TRAIT		ATTENDANCE	ATTEND2
EXTRAVERSION	B1	.078*	.159**
	B6	.084*	-
	B11	.124**	.175**
	B16	.101**	-
	B26	.098**	-
AGREEABLENESS	B2	-.080*	-.089*
	B7	-.137**	-
	B22	-.075*	-
CONSCIENTIONSNESS	B3	.067*	.085*
	B8	.103	.108**
	B18	-	.104**
NEGATIVE-EMOTIONALITY	B4	-.091*	-.102**
	B9	-.068*	-
	B24	-	-

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

Note: There were no significant correlations in the Open-Minded personality trait.

The direct correlation between Church Attendance and the sum of the Big Five

Personality Traits denoted E, A, C, N-E, and O-M are defined as:

[EXTRAVERSION] E	= B1 + B6 + B11 + B16 + B21 + B26
[AGREEABLENESS] A	= B2 + B7 + B12 + B17 + B22 + B27
[CONSCIENTIOUSNESS] C	= B3 + B8 + B13 + B18 + B23 + B28
[NEGATIVE-EMOTIONALITY] N-E	= B4 + B9 + B14 + B19 + B24 + B29
[OPEN-MINDEDNESS] O-M	= B5 + B10 + B15 + B20 + B25 + B30

Descriptive statistics, including the mean, standard deviation, scale range, and N for all measures, are shown in Table II:

Table II

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

	Mean	Std Dev	Range	N	Scale
EXTRAVERSION	21.15	4.224	21	748	1 - 25
AGREEABLENESS	24.12	3.68	20	748	1 - 25
CONSCIENTIOUSNESS	22.38	4.30	24	748	1 - 25
NEGATIVE-EMOTIONALITY	13.86	4.35	23	748	1 - 25
OPEN-MINDEDNESS	22.30	4.18	24	748	1 - 25
SATISFIED	2.40	1.09	4	748	1 - 5
EFFECTIVE	3.41	1.05	4	748	1 - 5
PRESSURED	3.36	1.20	4	748	1 - 5
UWES	4.37	0.83	4.56	748	1 - 6

Table III

Pearson's Correlations Among Subscales (Two-Tailed Testing)

	E	A	C	N-E	O-M	Satisfy	Effect	Pressure	UWES
E	1								
A	.048	1							
C	.205**	.196**	1						
N-E	-.231**	-.344**	-.311**	1					
O-M	.130**	.140**	.43	-.059	1				
S	.028	.045	-.02	-.136**	.026	1			
Ef	.278**	.186**	.223**	-.34**	.114**	.331**	1		
P	-.025	-.038	-.085*	.163**	.069	-.279**	-.17**	1	
UWES	.418**	.169**	.278**	-.342**	.225**	.148**	.464**	-.049	1

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

SATISFY = Satisfaction with church size

EFFECT = Effectiveness in the role of pastor

PRESSURE = Pressured to grow the church

UWES = Utrecht Work Engagement Scale

The correlation of effectiveness in the role of pastor and work engagement was the most significant with a correlation of $r=.464$. Significant with this finding of being effective was the sense of being satisfied with the attendance numbers of the church a pastor effectively leads. The correlation ($r=.331$) between satisfied and effectiveness demonstrated this. The negative correlation ($r=-.279$) demonstrated that pastors with a sense of satisfaction with church size do not feel pressured to grow their church. It is interesting to note the correlation ($r=.418$) between

Extraversion and work engagement (UWES). The findings suggest the probability that pastors who are more extraverted were more likely to be more engaged in their work.

Method 2. The second statistical methodology utilized was Multiple Linear Regression. The straightforward way to relate these Big Five Personality Traits to church attendance would be to directly calculate the Church Attendance from the pastor's responses to his survey questions. A general model for Church Attendance (CA) would be:

$$\text{CA} = \text{Constant}_0 + \text{Constant}_1 \times \text{E} + \text{Constant}_2 \times \text{A} + \text{Constant}_3 \times \text{C} + \text{Constant}_4 \times \text{N-E} + \text{Constant}_5 \times \text{O-M} \text{ or } \text{CA} = \text{C}_0 + \text{C}_1\text{E} + \text{C}_2\text{A} + \text{C}_3\text{C} + \text{C}_4(\text{N_E}) + \text{C}_5(\text{O-M}).$$

Several models were developed using both the individual questions, BF1-BF30, and the sums of the E, A, C, N-E, and O-M personality traits. Some regression models developed are listed below:

A possible regression model using questions Satisfied (S), Effective (Ef), Pressured (P), E, A, C, N-E, O-M, to predict church size category (ATTEND2) is as follows:

$$\text{ATTEND2} = 1.61 + .231\text{S} + .048\text{E} + .137 \text{Ef} + \text{-.029(O-M)}$$

with an R = 0.293 or R² = .086 (8.6% variation explained)

Four variables were found to be statistically different from zero. They were Satisfied, Extraversion, Effective, and Open-Minded.

The purpose of using a regression model is to predict the attendance with as little variation in the data as possible. As the reader can see, not much variation is explained by the model or any other model that can be generated since any relationship between church size and the questions is weak at best.

Based on this conclusion, I do not advocate using regression as a viable technique for representing ATTENDANCE group as a useful prediction of attendance. The model used for predicting ATTENDANCE was as follows:

$$\text{ATTENDANCE} = 77.4 + 27.8 \text{ Effective} - 29.96 \text{ BF7} + 15.8 \text{ B8}$$

with an R = .227 or R² = .051 (5.1% variation explained)

Again, attempting to predict attendance by the responses to questions did not yield a good estimate of attendance. Therefore, Regression is not an optimum method for determining church size from the responses to questions. Consequently, the model's development is not fruitful for using personality traits as predictor with church size since the unexplained variation is large, and the correlations are weak.

Method 3. One other statistical methodology used was Discriminant Analysis. This method is used to determine whether one can classify the pastor into the current sized church based on his/her responses to the Big Five Personality Traits.

The discriminant analysis technique places the pastor into a church size based on his/her responses to the questionnaire. A good outcome would be that the analysis places him/her into the correct size church or a church of similar size. For example, it would be acceptable if the pastor's church size is Large, and the discriminant analysis places him/her into the Medium-Large category.

One of the top discriminant analyses is displayed in Table IV, defined as Classification Results. In order to get the maximum possible classification, all variables were utilized; the thirty Big Five Personality questions BF1-BF30, the nine Utrecht Work Engagement questions UWE1 – UWE 9, all five sums of Big Five Personality variables, E, A, C, N-E, and O-M and the

three feeling variables, Satisfied, Pressured, and Effective questionnaires were all loaded into the Discriminant Analysis program. The following classification results were obtained:

Table IV
Classification Results

	ATTEND2	Predicted Group Membership					Total
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	5.00	
Original Count	1.00	66	21	24	17	20	148
	2.00	25	60	22	22	22	151
	3.00	29	25	39	29	27	149
	4.00	24	17	24	62	20	147
	5.00	20	17	16	20	80	153
Percent	1.00	44.6	14.2	16.2	11.5	13.5	100.0
	2.00	16.6	39.7	14.6	14.6	14.6	100.0
	3.00	19.5	16.8	26.2	19.5	18.1	100.0
	4.00	16.3	11.6	16.3	42.2	13.6	100.0
	5.00	13.1	11.1	10.5	13.1	52.3	100.0

Note: 41% of original grouped cases were correctly classified.

The correct classifications are shown in bold, on the diagonal, in the Classification Results Table. For example, the number 80 says that 80 members of the largest congregation (5) were correctly classified as Group 5 (Large Church).

The reader can note that 41% of the pastors were correctly classified. To best assess the procedure, added to this 41% were those classified into the next size above or below the correct classification. To calculate this new total, first the total of those classified in the Predicted Group

4.0 in row five, which was 20, was documented. Next the total for the size above was added, $80 + 20 = 100$, adjusting this number to be classified correctly, or next to correctly. Continuing we have: $24 + 62 + 20 = 106$; $25 + 39 + 29 = 93$; $25 + 60 + 22 = 107$; and $66 + 21 = 87$. Adding these 5 totals, we get $100 + 106 + 93 + 107 + 87 = 493$ or $493/748 = 66\%$ classified correctly or almost correctly, suggesting that most pastors are leading the right size of church for them.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Limitations, and Recommendations

The question explored in this study was to determine *as to what extent personality correlates with a pastor's satisfaction with the size of church one may effectively lead?* More specifically, what are the personality factors that add or detract from the size of church an individual pastor will effectively lead?

The hypotheses focused on five personality traits: Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Negative-Emotionality, and Open-Mindedness. Each of the five personality traits *do not correlate with the size of church and the pastors' satisfaction*. The findings accept the null hypothesis for all traits except Open-Mindedness. Although there was a weak correlation for Open-Mindedness, too weak to ensure a significant relationship, the findings were strong enough to reject the hypothesis. Of the five personality traits, the four statistically related to church attendance were Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, and Negative-Emotionality (see Table I). The correlation was almost zero between Open-Mindedness and church attendance.

While pastors could potentially be frustrated with attendance numbers, research performed in this study demonstrated that the pastors were significantly engaged with their people. Their feeling of effectiveness as a pastor was most statistically significant. The correlation with the subscales of work engagement (UWES-9) and the feeling of effectiveness had the highest rating of $r=.464$ among the subscales (see Table III). Significant with this finding of being effective was the sense of being satisfied with the attendance numbers of the church a pastor effectively leads. The correlation ($r=.331$) between satisfied and effectiveness demonstrated the more a pastor feels effective, the higher the satisfaction they have with the

attendance numbers of their church. The negative correlation ($r=-.279$) demonstrated that pastors with a sense of satisfaction with church size do not feel pressured to grow their church. It is interesting to note the correlation ($r=.418$) between Extraversion and work engagement (UWES), suggesting the probability that pastors who are more extraverted were more likely to be more engaged in their work

The use of discriminant analysis showed that at most 66% ($n=493$ of 748) of the pastors could be predicted to be placed in the appropriately sized church, or the next level of attendance associated, based on the pastor's responses to the BFI-2-S survey. A significant finding is that two-thirds of the pastors appear to be serving in the appropriate size church for them. Taking into consideration the sense of effectiveness and satisfaction in their role of pastor, the findings support that pastors are generally satisfied with the size of church they lead.

Leadership Influencers

Ackerman (2017) suggested that traits and characteristics fit into five factors known as the Big Five. Approaching his discussion from a business context, he stated that the trait of Openness to Experience will likely lead to a leadership position and that Extraversion is a strong predictor of leadership. However, Akerman goes on to state that the Openness to Experience trait is the least likely to change and may be a factor for continued growth. The research findings of this study showed Open-Mindedness (the BFI-2-S replacement for Openness to Experience) was not statistically significantly related to church attendance. Akerman (2017) stated that those with high Agreeableness might miss out on opportunities because of the tendency to put others first. In the present research, using Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables (Table II), Agreeableness had the highest mean (24.12) among the five personality traits with a standard deviation of 3.68

in a range of 20 (\bar{x} =24.12; SD 3.68; range 20). The tendency to put others first may account for the sense of loyalty one has toward his/her church.

Burton (2010) recognized that church attendance is declining. In his research, the focus was on leadership behaviors using the Leadership Practices Inventory (LPI). The findings of Burton's research did not find any significant correlation to church growth. Similarly, this present study did not find a significant correlation between church size and the Big Five personality traits. Interestingly, however, Francis, et al. (2004), found that collaborative ministry was significantly related to the pastor's personality traits, thus aligning with the findings of this study that demonstrates that work engagement was statistically significant.

Leadership Effectiveness.

Corbett (2006) found that most pastors were considered effective, based on genuine caring, organizational development, and sense of clear vision. Carter (2009) found that personality and spirituality contributed to pastoral effectiveness; Conscientiousness, Extraversion, and Agreeableness demonstrated a positive correlation to effectiveness. Furthermore, Hagiya (2011), whose study focused on highly effective versus low effective leaders, found that highly effective leaders saw church growth. In contrast, the low effective leaders saw no growth or even experienced a decline in attendance. The descriptive statistics in this study for the feeling of effectiveness, on a five-point scale, the mean was 3.41, with a standard deviation of 1.05 (\bar{x} =3.41; SD 1.05). Increasing that feeling could promote more church growth. It is important to note that correlation does not imply causation.

Meaningfulness

Woods & Sofat (2013) pointed out that meaningfulness is a related but distinct psychological state from engagement. They stated that meaningfulness is related to the positive

feeling of work being worthwhile. They suggested that organizations can use personality tests for a better understanding of each employee for better coaching.

This study proposes that *meaningfulness* is a noteworthy concept regarding the statistically significant scores under work engagement, as evidenced in Table IV. As stated at the beginning of this study, "It was he [Jesus] who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). Pastors who have a real sense of calling to ministry may not see church attendance increase significantly; however, it is proposed that if they have a sense of purpose, also now recognized as *meaningfulness*, a sense of satisfaction that they are effective will correlate with work engagement ($r=.464$, see Table III – Pearson's Correlations with Subscales). An important takeaway from Shepherd (2010) is that growing churches' leadership style is people-based shepherding, which entails getting people with the churches involved in relational evangelism and small group ministry. An important takeaway from Shepherd (2010) is that growing churches' leadership style is *people-based shepherding*, which entails getting people in the churches involved in relational evangelism and small group ministry.

God knows each individual's personality traits, and He is the One who calls them to ministry. Personality traits do not appear to be a significant factor in the size of church one pastors. Those who serve in the role of pastor do not approach the role as a *job*. It is their work – their *calling* – resulting in a sense of effectiveness and satisfaction with the size of church they lead.

Limitations

The number of churches that had 500 or more in attendance were only $n=18$. The primary questionnaire responders ($n=748$) pastored churches of 200 or fewer ($n=680$). A possible

outcome may have supported the general hypothesis that pastors' personality traits influence the size of the church they pastor if more pastors of churches with higher attendance rates had participated as well.

A question that was not asked in the demographics section related to tenure: how long one has been in the pastor position? In their first year of filling the pastor's role, an individual might be in their *honeymoon* period, thus possibly skewing their response. A potential limitation that may be worth acknowledging is how one defines urban, suburban, and rural. This limitation is recognized because the researcher encountered two respondents in a trial run that identified their location differently, even though they were within the same city; one identified their location as urban. The other identified their location as suburban.

Recommendations

This study was important because pastors' personalities may significantly influence their satisfaction with church size. The pressure to *grow* their church can be uncomfortable. Being faithful and obedient appears to be less emphasized versus continually breaking growth barriers. According to this research, the pastor's personality traits did not correlate with the size church they pastor. An interesting follow-up study would be to determine if there is a relationship between the pastor's personality traits and their congregants' personality traits.

Regarding this study's findings, it may be valuable to study congregants' personality traits and how it relates to attendance. Do individual personalities gravitate toward large churches versus smaller churches? Does the congregants' personality make-up, aligned with the pastor's, influence the church's size? For example, does an extravert feel best in a large church context, while an introvert finds their comfort zone in a smaller church? Another recommendation is to study how long one has been in their position as the pastor and their level

of satisfaction with church size. A further recommendation is to research the role of *calling* and its correlation to satisfaction and engagement as a pastor. Finally, based on the current findings, further study on measuring and exploring meaningfulness with a pastor's sense of calling could provide valuable encouragement to pastors.

A Further Consideration

The year is 2020, and COVID-19 has had a major impact on churches. The survey was primarily completed prior to the impact of COVID-19 in March. Therefore, it would be interesting to send out the survey again in this period of the rise of COVID-19 upon our nation, and then compare the results.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to determine *as to what extent personality correlates with a pastor's satisfaction with the size of church one may effectively lead*. While recognizing that Jesus is the One who calls individuals to be pastors, one can wonder what effect personality has on the size of a church one pastors. This research study showed that personality traits do not play a large role in the size of a church one may lead. However, a pastor's sense of effectiveness does appear to play a significant role in a pastor's sense of satisfaction with the attendance numbers of congregation they lead. Pastors, with a strong sense of being effective in their role, while satisfied with the size of church they pastor, at the same time desire to see the church grow.

References

- Akerman, C. (2017). Big Five personality traits: The OCEAN model explained. *Positive Psychology Program*. Retrieved from: <https://positivepsychologyprogram.com/big-five-personality-theory/>
- Barrick, M.R. and Mount, M.K. (1991). The Big Five dimensions and job performance: a meta-analysis. *Personnel Psychology*, 44(1), 1-26.
- Burton, W.H. (2010). Examining the relationship between leadership behaviors of pastors and church growth. Northcentral University, AZ. *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. (UMI 3400381)
- Carter, J.C. (2009). Transformational leadership and pastoral leader effectiveness. *Pastoral Psychology*, 58:261-271.
- Corbett, J.C. (2006). *The personal and spiritual characteristics of effective pastoral leaders*. (Doctoral Dissertation) Loyola College in Maryland.
- Francis, L.J., Jones, S.H., Robbins, M. (2004). Clergy personality and collaborative ministry: The way ahead for stable extraverts? *Pastoral Psychology*: New York.
- Hagiya, G.J. (2011). *Significant traits, characteristics, and qualities of high effective United Methodist Church clergy*. (Doctoral Dissertation) Pepperdine University.
- Ingram, W.J. (2015). *Defining characteristics of turnaround leaders of evangelical churches in the western region of the United States*. (Doctoral Dissertation) Biola University.
- Krekeler, L.A. (2010). The Relationship between servant leadership behavior and individual personality style in New York Annual Conference United Methodist Pastors, *Theses*, 54. Retrieved from: <https://scholarship.shu.edu/theses/54>

- Lee, K.H. (2009). *The relationship between leadership styles and managerial competencies of Korean pastors*. (Doctoral Dissertation) The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Liao, F., Yang, L., Wang, M., Drown, D., and Shi, J. (2013). Team-member exchange and work engagement: Does personality make a difference? *Journal of Business Psychology*, 28:3-77. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10869-012-9266-5>.
- Rumley, D.D. (2011). *Perceptions of the pastors' transformational leadership style and its relationship to the eight markers of Natural Church Development*. (Doctoral Dissertation) Indiana Wesleyan University.
- Shepherd, R.E. (2010). *Leadership patterns in growing Churches of Christ*. ProQuest Dissertations Publishing.
- Soto, C.J and John, O.P. (2017). The next Big Five inventory (BFI-2): Developing and assessing a hierarchical model with 15 facets to enhance bandwidth, fidelity, and predictive power. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(1), 117-143. <https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000096>.
- Spivey, E.J. (2014). Exploring the role of emotional intelligence in the effectiveness of lead church planters. Pepperdine University, *ProQuest Dissertations Publishing*. (UMI 1562962)
- Sunita, S., Parul, A., Bhavana, A., and Vikas, S. (2014). Relationship between employee engagement and big five personality factors: A study of online B2C 2-commerce company. *The Journal of Indian Management & Strategy*, 19(3), 26-34. <https://doi.org/10.5958/0973-9343.2014.01233.2>

Woods, S.A. and Sofat, J.A. (2013). Personality and engagement at work: The mediating role of psychological meaningfulness. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 43(11), 2203-2210.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/jasp.12171>.

Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

From: Diana Avans, Ph.D. Chair of Institutional Review Board
Address: 55 Fair Dr. Costa Mesa, CA 92626
Email: davans@vanguard.edu

Date: September 17, 2019

To: Jean Morgan

RE: "Examining the correlation between personalities of pastors and the size of their church"

Dear Jean,

The above referenced human-subjects research project has been approved by the Vanguard University Institutional Review Board. This approval is limited to the activities described in the approved Protocol Narrative. In accordance with this approval, the specific conditions for the conduct of this research are listed below, and informed consent from subjects must be obtained as indicated. All changes (e.g. a change in procedure, number of subjects, personnel, study locations, new recruitment materials, study instruments, etc.) to the approved protocol or consent form first be reviewed and approved by the IRB before they are implemented. **Please email the IRB when you have completed your study.**

Sincerely,
Diana Avans

Diana Avans, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

Expedited Review: 09/17/2019

Approval Issued: 09/17/2019
Expiration Date: 09/18/2020
IRB ID# 2019FA0001

Appendix B

Pastors' Personality, Satisfaction, Church Size Survey

Measuring Pastors' Personality Traits and Church Size with Level of Satisfaction

* Required

Informed Consent

DESCRIPTION:

You are invited to participate in a research study on how personality affects a pastor's satisfaction with church size.

You will be asked to complete a survey by answering questions related to personality traits and your satisfaction in your role as Pastor.

The survey consists of 42 items. Please answer the questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

Your participation time will take approximately 15 minutes.

You must be a Pastor to participate in this study.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this survey, please contact Jean Morgan, Master of Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology student, at jean.morgan@vanguard.edu.

RISKS AND BENEFITS

The only foreseeable risks to this study include potential slight emotional discomfort from answering questions that may have personal impact.

The benefits which may be reasonably expected from this study include an increased understanding of God's wisdom in how He designed you in His call for you to serve in the role of Pastor.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND SUBJECT'S RIGHTS:

If you have read this form and have decided to participate in this study, please understand your participation is voluntary and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time without penalty of loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all written data resulting from this study.

If you have questions about your rights as a study participant or are dissatisfied at any time

with any aspect of this study, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at InstitutionalReviewBoard@vanguard.edu.

By continuing to participate in this survey you are agreeing to the information outlined above; you are indicating that you understand that your participation is voluntary and that you may withdraw from the survey at any time without negative consequences. If you do NOT consent, thank you for your consideration; please exit the survey and leave the remaining questions unanswered/blank.

I Agree *

I understand all the above information and agree to complete this survey.

Survey Section One

Below are a number of characteristics that may or may not apply to you. Using the scale, please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the number that corresponds with each statement. Use the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree a little 3=Neutral; no opinion 4=Agree a little 5=Agree Strongly

I am someone who...

1. Tends to be quiet.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

2. Is compassionate, has a soft heart.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

3. Tends to be disorganized.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

4. Worries a lot.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

5. Is fascinated by art, music, or literature.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
6. Is dominant, acts as a leader.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
7. Is sometimes rude to others.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
8. Has difficulty getting started on tasks.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
9. Tends to feel depressed, blue.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
10. Has little interest in abstract ideas.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
11. Is full of energy.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
12. Assumes the best about people.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
13. Is reliable, can always be counted on.						
	1	2	3	4	5	

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
14. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
15. Is original, comes up with new ideas.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
16. Is outgoing, sociable.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
17. Can be cold and uncaring.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
18. Keeps things neat and tidy.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
19. Is relaxed, handles stress well.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
20. Has few artistic interests.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
21. Prefers to have others take charge.						
	1	2	3	4	5	

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
22. Is respectful, treats others with respect.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
23. Is persistent, works until the task is finished.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
24. Feels secure, comfortable with self.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
25. Is complex, a deep thinker.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
26. Is less active than other people.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
27. Tends to find fault with others.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
28. Can be somewhat careless.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
29. Is temperamental, gets emotional easily.						
	1	2	3	4	5	

Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly
30. Has little creativity.						
	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

Survey Section Two

Below you find three statements relating to your current role as Pastor. Using the scale, please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the number that corresponds with each statement. Use the following scale:

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree a little 3=Neutral; no opinion 4=Agree a little 5=Agree Strongly

1. I am generally satisfied with the size of my church.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

2. I feel effective in my role as pastor.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

3. I feel pressured to grow my church.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Agree Strongly

Survey Section Three

The following 9 statements are about how you feel at work. Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this

9. I get carried away when I am working.

Never 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 Always

Demographic Information

Gender

Male

Female

Age

18 to 36

37 to 54

55 to 73

74 to 93

On average, what is your total weekly church attendance (including children, youth, etc.) *

Your answer

Church Location

Urban

Suburban

Rural

Ethnicity

Caucasian or White

- Hispanic or Latino
- Black American or African American
- Native American or Native Indian
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Other:

Education

- Some or No Schooling
- 8th Grade Completed
- High School - No Diploma
- High School - Diploma or GED
- Associate Degree
- Bachelor's Degree
- Master's Degree
- Professional Degree
- Doctorate Degree

Bi-Vocational

- No
- Yes

Thank You
Sources:

Big Five Inventory-2-Short Form. Soto, Christopher J. & John, Oliver P. (2017). Short and

extra-short forms of the Big Five Inventory-2: The BFI-2-S and BFI-2-XS, *Journal of Research in Personality* Elsevier Inc. Doi: 10.1016/j.jrp.2017.02.004

Utrecht Work Engagement Scale – 9. Schaufeli, Wilmar B., Bakker, Arnold B., & Salanova, Marisa (2006). The measurement of Work Engagement with a Short Questionnaire: a Cross-National Study. *Educational and Psychology Measurement*, Vol 66(4), 701-716. SAGE Publications. doi:10.1177/0013164405282471.

Submit

Appendix C

Pivot blog at ChristianityToday.com/Karl-Vaters Invite

How Much Does The Personality Of The Pastor Influence Church Growth Or Size?

Can you take this short survey to help us understand more about small churches and their leaders?

Most churches in the world are small. As many as 90 percent are under 200, 80 percent under 100.

Is this because the pastors of those churches haven't mastered church growth? Or could there be other factors at play here?

These are valid questions, but they have surprisingly few solid answers because very little research has been done about them.

Sure, you can find a lot of good material about how to break through numerical barriers, but what about the vast majority of churches that not only stay small, but it seems like that's how they and their leaders serve at their best?

More Small Church Metrics Are Needed

Several times over the last few years I've written about the limits of using metrics to understand the health and strength of small churches and the people who lead them. Here are links to a couple of those articles:

- [*Measuring What Matters: The Challenge of Church Metrics*](#)
- [*Effective Small Church Metrics: Why Average Results Aren't Typical Results*](#)

In addition to those I also sent up a flag asking for help, with [*Wanted: An Effective System for Small Church Metrics*](#).

Now someone is stepping up to answer that call.

Are There Small Church Pastor Personality Traits?

A small church pastor named Jean Morgan is writing a Master's thesis based on researching this idea: Are there certain personality types that are more effective for pastors in a small church environment than in a big church setting? And, if so, what are they and how can we understand them better so we can serve the church in the best possible way?

In other words, is it possible that church size has less to do with the pastors' skill set than it has to do with how God built us? And is there a way to discover that?

The Survey

Jean is using a short, simple survey that measures personality based on the following criteria, using the acronym OCEAN:

- **O**pen Mindedness
- **C**onscientiousness
- **E**xtraversion
- **A**greeableness
- **N**egative Emotion

This is where you come in. We need your help.

No matter what size of church you pastor, we need as many lead/pastors as possible to complete the survey. (Yes, we need pastors of big churches to do this, too.)

It will only take 10 minutes or less (I did it in 5 minutes without rushing). And if you get interrupted in the middle you can come back to it.

Just [click this link to take the OCEAN survey](#), answer the simple questions, then please pass it along to other lead/pastors. The more participants we get, the better our information will be.

You won't receive an individualized result, but the overall results will be tabulated over the next few months as they come in. I'll publish the results when they're ready, so we can all share the information.

Defining The Reality Of Small Churches And Their Leaders

One of my favorite leadership quotes is from Max De Pree. "[The first responsibility of a leader is to define reality.](#)" That is what this survey is designed to help us do – better define the reality of small church ministry and leadership so we can lead them better.

This survey is just a sliver of the information we need, but it's an important start.

Thank you for your help.