

# Effect of Respecting Others on Spiritual Formation of Church Members in Duguna District Association of WKHC in Ethiopia.

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**Abstract**-Spiritual formation is a pressing concern for contemporary churches worldwide. Unfortunately, there is a crisis of spirituality crisis and a lack of mutual respect among church members in Duguna Kale Heywet in Wolaita, Ethiopia. Respecting others is a crucial aspect that can significantly contribute to the spiritual growth of church members. This study aims to investigate the effect of respecting others on the spiritual formation of church members and to provide valuable insights for readers in the Duguna district of WKHC in Ethiopia. This study employed an experimental design to examine the phenomena of Duguna district KHC members. Out of a target of 62 individuals, the study selected 41 respondents using a stratified random sampling method. Data was collected using both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires administered to key leaders of Duguna KHC. The empirical results ( $R=0.162$ ,  $P<.000$ ) indicate that there is a positive correlation between respecting others and spiritual formation at a 1% significance level. The F-value of 10.274 and the P-value of 0.001 indicate that the regression model was statistically significant at a 5 percent significance level. This implies that respecting others has a significant effect on the spiritual formation of church members in the Duguna district of WKHC in Ethiopia. To sum up, this study provides evidence that respecting others plays a crucial role in the spiritual formation of church members. Future studies can test other aspects of respecting others on the effect of the spiritual formation of church members.

**Key Terms:** Respecting others, Spiritual formation, Ethical leadership, Church members.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Respecting others is a practice of all genuine Christians that involves valuing others' opinions and thoughts. From a biblical perspective, respecting others begins within families by honoring parents. It is even one of the ten commandments (NIV, Deuteronomy 5:16; Exodus 20: 12). In the context of leadership, Northouse (2019) emphasizes that leaders must understand the

interests, values, and purposes of their followers to assist them in navigation life's challenges. Hai et al. (2022) succinctly define respect as "to give it to get it." (p.1). Essentially, respecting others means acknowledging others' ideas and considering them as fellow human beings (Northouse, 2019). Conversely, failing to respect a person's dignity is morally impermissible (Kersten, 2019). Respecting others is a moral ethic that human beings are expected to behave and uphold (Pattiwael, 2019). Its spiritual significance extends to influencing others positively. Thus, fostering respect can contribute significantly to the spiritual formation of church members.

## II. CONCEPT OF RESPECTING OTHERS

Respecting others is a fundamental concept that plays a crucial role in our interaction with our fellow human beings. "Respect has been understood variously, for example, in terms of people's attitudes, values, and actions directed toward others that convey appreciation" (Rudolph, et al., 2021, p.1). Respecting others includes having compassion and taking care of needy people inside the church and outside the church. The meaning of respect is well understood and it is broadly applicable in different sectors and situations (Rothers & Cohrs, 2022). Contextually, the aspect of respect is important to all human beings to upgrade relationships and communication in both political and religious contexts. The principle of respect for people works for all people and it contributes to the field of industrial psychology (Coetzee, et.al., 2019). Respect for people is a moral value that all people need in all contexts. In this regard, the current study objective, respecting others will contribute to the process of spiritual formation of church members in three districts of WKHC.

## III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

A spiritual life crisis is very high in contemporary evangelical churches due to a major cultural transformation, a widespread lack of faith, an increase in moral relativism, and a rejection of absolute truth (Adeleke, 2019; Crete et al., 2020). In Africa, there is

“spiritual emptiness, political and economic drawbacks, tribal conflicts, religious upheavals and oppositions that lead to violence, self-destruction, and inhumanity, economic crises” (Hutchful, 1995, as cited in Wilhelm, 1998, p.1). Most African leaders have moral deficiencies that include pride or self-glorification, greediness, lack of unity, and lack of holiness (Kretzschmar, 2020). In the context of Wolaita, the number of KHC members is amazingly increasing, however, there is a lack of spiritual life growth. There is also a self-imposed leadership style and superficial Christianity among church members. Additionally, some of the major problems are the lack of biblically sound teachings and the spread of prosperity gospel in KHC local churches (Tamirat, 2019). Regaining the perspective of practical Christianity and respecting each other is the remedy for the crisis of spirituality in Duguna KHC Wotango, (2009).

#### IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

##### Respecting Others and Spiritual Formation

Respect has been explored from various theoretical and empirical perspectives, particularly within the context of leadership. Rudolph, et al. (2021), highlight its significance as an essential psychological and interpersonal phenomenon. Moreover, global-level studies consistently indicate that respecting others plays a pivotal role in fostering human relations, improving communication, and enhancing work performance. For instance, a study conducted in Japan examined the impact of civility, respect, and engagement in the workplace of Japanese hospitals (Sawada, et al., 2021). Employing a serial cross-sectional design, data were collected from different participants, including nurses (ages 17 to 22), medical doctors (ages 9 to 13), and other staff (ages 6 to 10) in each survey. The analysis of variance was used to evaluate changes in dependent variables. The study revealed that programs promoting civility, respect, and engagement in the workplace significantly enhanced workers’ relationships and communication, leading to improvements in the work environments and overall performance. The study findings highlight the broader implications of respect and engagement in fostering positive human relations and effective communications. This empirical research suggests that respecting others can profoundly impact healthy relationships and communication among church members.

In the context of Africa respecting others has great value that enhances spirituality in Africa (Knoetze, 2019). The study conducted at the North-West University of South Africa explored respect for people and how it is applied in the African context (Coetzee, et al., 2019). Research done in Northwest Ethiopia by Abate, et al. (2021), assessed compassionate and respectful care to patient clients at public health centers. People need not only physical health but also spiritual health as well. In this regard, therefore, the above study reminds us and suggests that respecting others will make us spiritually healthy. According to Ferreira (2021), the concept of spiritual formation is an individual experience of Christians who strive to grow and become Christ-likeness in their internal life. The literature review from global, regional, and local perspectives shows that respecting others has

great value and affects the spiritual formation of church members positively in three districts of WKHC.

#### V. METHODOLOGY

This study employed an experimental design to investigate the phenomena of Duguna district KHC members. Out of a target of 62 individuals, the study selected 41 respondents using a stratified random sampling method. According to Shaheen, et al. (2019), a small sample size in the study will help to maintain the credibility of the result. Data was collected using both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires administered to key leaders of Duguna KHC. The study conducted a correlation analysis between respecting others and the spiritual formation of church members to examine the relationships between the variables.

#### VI. RESULTS

The results of the study presented in Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4 include both correlation and regression analysis of the study. The empirical results ( $R=0.162, P<.,000$ ) in Table 1 below indicate that there is a positive correlation between respecting others and spiritual formation, and the relationship is significant at a 1% significance level. This result shows that the spiritual formation of church members increases when respecting others increases. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Sewada, et al. (2021) that indicated respecting others enhances individual relationships and communication to improve the work environment as well as work performance.

Table 1 below presents the results of the correlation analysis between respecting others and spiritual formation

Table 1: Correlation Analysis for Respecting Others and Spiritual Formation

|                     |                     | Respecting others | Spiritual formation |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| Respecting others   | Pearson Correlation | 1                 | .162**              |
|                     | Sig. (2-tailed)     |                   | .001                |
|                     | N                   | 385               | 385                 |
| Spiritual formation | Pearson Correlation | .162**            | 1                   |
|                     | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .001              |                     |
|                     | N                   | 385               | 385                 |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: (Field Data)

The empirical result in Table 2 below shows that the model was statistically significant at a 5 percent significance level, a p-value of 0.001 is less than a 5% significance level. This implies respecting others has a significant effect on the spiritual formation of church members in Duguna district of WKHC in Ethiopia.

Table 2: ANOVA table of respecting others.

| Model                                       | Sum of Squares | df      | Mean Square | Sig.  |                   |
|---|----------------|---------|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| 1   | Regression     | 13.835  | 1           | 3.835 | .001 <sup>b</sup> |
|   | Residual       | 515.708 | 383         | 1.346 |                   |
|   | Total          | 529.543 | 384         |       |                   |
| a. Dependent Variable: Spiritual Formation  |                |         |             |       |                   |
| b. Predictor: (Constant), Respecting others |                |         |             |       |                   |

Source (Field data)

Table 3: Regression coefficients of respecting others

| Model                                      |                   | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|--|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|  |                   | B                           | Std. Error |                           |       |      |
| 1  | (Constant)        | 2.059                       | .221       |                           | 9.304 | .000 |
|  | Respecting others | .194                        | .061       | .162                      | 3.205 | .001 |
| a. Dependent Variable: Spiritual formation |                   |                             |            |                           |       |      |

Source (Field data).

The results depicted in Table 3 above indicate the linear regression results. It indicates the coefficient of respecting others was significant at a 5 percent significance level as Sig<0.05. This implies we have enough evidence to accept the alternative hypothesis that respecting others has a significant effect on spiritual formation in WKHC in Ethiopia. The standardized coefficient indicates that a 1% increase in respecting others brings a 16.2% increase in the spiritual formation of church members.

*Model summary*

Table 4: Model summary of respecting others

| Model  | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| 1  | .162 <sup>a</sup> | .026     | .024              | 1.160                      |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Respecting others |                   |          |                   |                            |

The coefficient of determination indicates that 2.6 percent of variation in spiritual formation was explained by respecting others as indicated in Table 4 above. The results of this study were supported by Hai, et al. (2022) that respecting others significantly fosters employees' creativity and mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and members' creativity.

VII. CONCLUSION

Respecting others involves showing special regard for people due to their good behavior, deeds, and positive qualities. It is about admiring someone for their achievements and treating them well. When individuals are respected for their qualities and accomplishments, it motivates them to strive for further growth and success. Church members' respect can be demonstrated by acknowledging and appreciating well-done actions, showing consideration, and treating others kindly. Actions to show respect include expressing special regard, forming a positive opinion, demonstrating good consideration, and encouraging through congratulations. An expected outcome of respecting others contributes to development, growth, and increasing opportunities for everyone involved. This study found evidence that respecting others was a fundamental aspect of healthy relationships and the spiritual formation of church members. The results of this study confirm the previous study by Hai, et al. (2022) that respecting others has an effect on fostering unity among church members and can bring a significant change in the lives of church members.

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