

The Role of Home Cells in Church Growth: A Case of Zion Temple Global Ministries in Busia County, Kenya

Thomas Chikati Wamondo¹, Loreen Maseno², Sussy Gumo³
Corresponding Email: tomchikati27@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examined how the home cells of Zion Temple Global Ministries (ZTGM) have contributed to church growth and the roles they play in relation to discipleship, gender relations in leadership, counseling, and mentorship. A convergent mixed-methods design was used, combining quantitative data from 178 respondents with qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions. The results showed that home cells are core to discipleship, with 97.75 percent of the respondents indicating that they supplement Sunday worship and 89 percent indicating that they experience a significant spiritual growth. The most effective discipleship activities were Bible study (37.64) and worship (32.58). It was also observed that gender-inclusive leadership received strong support (94.38%). Women were more represented in home cell leadership due to greater participation, whereas men were underrepresented in both participation and leadership (18%). Moreover, 68% of respondents had undergone counseling; 80.17% were satisfied discussing personal problems, and 90% were comfortable discussing them, indicating strong relational trust. However, counseling is quite informal and centralized, and home cell leaders were not well-equipped. The study concludes that home cells are important to the growth and development of church members, and that standardized curricula, leadership training, and structured counseling systems need to be improved to be more effective.

Keywords: Home Cells, Discipleship, Church Growth, Christian Counseling, Zion Temple Global Ministries

Introduction

Contemporary Christian congregations are still experimenting with innovative, context-specific approaches to facilitate spiritual development, increase member involvement, and sustain growth. The house church or home cell model is one of the models that have become important methods



of ministry, especially in Pentecostal and charismatic churches. Home cells operate as decentralized fellowship, discipleship, and pastoral care units, enabling churches to reach beyond traditional congregational contexts. Adubofuor and Badu (2019) assert that the home cell system is an efficient initiative for achieving the Great Commission through close spiritual relationships, evangelism, and grassroots community development.

Home cells are a critical component of church expansion and the development of its members. According to Comiskey (2023), small groups are the best way to deliver relational discipleship and leadership multiplication, as these are critical to ensuring the sustainability of church growth. In like manner, Putra and Marbun (2025) emphasize that cell groups are strategic devices for evangelism and for urban church growth and development, enabling churches to reach different people more efficiently. Agyinasare (2025) highlights in the African context that relationships among leaders and members of home cells are key contributors to their performance, and that strong relationships between leaders and members foster unity, involvement, and spiritual maturity. Moreover, Agyinasare (2025) shows, in the quantitative analysis, that effective leadership structures in home cells are directly related to measurable outcomes of church growth.

Home cells are important for supporting the family's spirituality, providing psychosocial support, and fostering evangelism and the development of leaders. Ginting et al. (2022) note that small-group fellowships reinforce faith practices within families through mutual and accountable spiritual experiences. Furthermore, according to Reddy (2022), the changing communication techniques of cell churches, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era, have increased connectivity, counseling, and mentorship, which, in turn, make home cells more relevant in present-day ministry.

Although home cell systems have attracted an accumulating body of literature, studies on the issue are limited. Particular systems in specific church settings, such as Zion Temple Global Ministries (ZTGM), a leading Pentecostal church, have implemented the home cell model as a primary approach to growth and member involvement. Very little has been done to systematically study the contribution of these home cells to discipleship, leadership processes, especially in a gender context, as well as to counseling and mentorship in the church.

This research thus aimed to fill this gap by examining how home cells have contributed to the development of Zion Temple Global Ministries in Busia County, Kenya. In particular, the study set out to:



- (i) Examine the influence of home cells on discipleship in ZTGM
- (ii) Assess how gender relations affect the leadership of home cells in ZTGM
- (iii) Discuss the role of home cells in counseling and mentorship.

The research contributes to the scholarship and practice of the ministry by identifying the effectiveness of home cell systems in the Kenyan Pentecostal context.

Methodology

The study employed a convergent mixed-methods research design that combined quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the contribution of home cells to church growth at Zion Temple Global Ministries (ZTGM), located in Busia County, Kenya. A convergent design requires the simultaneous gathering and evaluation of both qualitative and quantitative data (Creswell and Clark, 2018). The quantitative element adopted a descriptive survey design, which, as noted by Kumar (2014), methodically outlines a phenomenon, situation, or population, whereas, as highlighted by Palys (1997), it is more accurate in representing the traits of a particular group. The design enabled the researcher to examine the impact of home cells on discipleship, gender relations in leadership and counseling, and mentorship practices. Structured questionnaires were used to collect quantitative information on home cell members, including participation, attendance, and leadership distribution.

The qualitative element adopted a phenomenological perspective, which focuses on people's experiences and the meanings they give to particular phenomena (Moustakas, 1994). The method proved effective for exploring the experience of members participating in home cells, as well as the role their participation plays in their spiritual development and social interaction. The data collection method involved face-to-face interviews with church leaders and counselors, as well as focus group discussions with home cell pastors. This strategy was consistent with the Functionalism theory because it allowed for the examination of the role of home cells in the church's cohesion, integration, and stability.

The research was done in Zion Temple Global Ministries, a Pentecostal-Evangelical church in Busia County, Kenya, which practices one church in many locations. The church is located in Busia town and serves the surrounding communities like Mauko, Burumba, Mayenje, Bulanda, Amerikwai, Marachi slums, and Sofia village in Uganda. ZTGM engages in evangelization and hosts prayer summits, though more attention is given to the active involvement of the Holy Spirit



in fostering discipleship and personal change. The church is a good place to undertake the study because home cell ministries are a core part of this transformation process.

The study population comprised 2,200 members of ZTGM Busia, the home cell members, 56 home cell pastors, 10 trained counselors, 4 main church pastors, and 1 bishop. The functional specialization of the church system, as elaborated by the Functionalism theory (Durkheim, 1912), was also reflected in the population, as various groups played different roles that helped the institution function.

Sampling was conducted using both stratified random and purposive sampling to ensure representativeness and depth. The population was stratified into four strata of home cell members, home cell pastors, church pastors and counselors, and the bishop through a stratified random sample. After this, respondents were sampled from each stratum to ensure the sample was representative of the population as a whole (Kumar, 2014; Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Identity sampling was used to select the key informants, namely the bishop, two major pastors, five trained counselors, and 25 home cell pastors, for a total of 33 respondents, because they were aware of and engaged in home cell ministry. Members of the home cell were selected through random sampling. Kerlinger (2000) and Gay (1987) suggested that a descriptive study would be fine, using a 10 percent sample of the available population, yielding a sample of 203 home cell members distributed equally amongst the branches. Participants were selected at random by balloting during the church services until the necessary sample size was reached.

Principal and secondary sources of data were used in the study. Primary data were collected through direct interactions with respondents engaged in home cell activities, whereas secondary data were collected from available literature and church reports. Several approaches were used in data collection to ensure reliability and comprehensiveness (Bryman, 2001). To obtain quantitative data on discipleship, counseling, mentorship, and gender in leadership, structured questionnaires were administered to home cell members. The questionnaires were divided into sections containing demographic data and study variables, yielding a response rate of 86%. The bishop, pastors, and trained counselors were interviewed in depth to gain firsthand insights into leadership structures, counseling practices, and mentorship processes. Home cell pastors were also involved in focus group discussions, where they could share different views and common experiences, and the researcher could observe how things work in reality through participant observation, leadership practices, and participation dynamics in home cell meetings. Another analysis involved reviewing



church documents, such as the constitution and policies, to gain insight into leadership structures and the operation of home cells.

To be reliable, the research was piloted at the Kemodo home cell, which was not included in the main study. Questions were standardized and made uniform by revising instruments to remove ambiguity. Data collection methods were also triangulated, thereby improving reliability. Content validity was achieved through expert review of the instruments, and face validity was ensured by ensuring that questions were clear, and cross-verification of data from different sources was carried out to enhance data source validity.

Data analysis was conducted quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative questionnaires were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 31) and reported in frequency tables and charts. Qualitative interview, focus group, and observation data were coded and categorized into themes, which were analyzed using a thematic approach, with the major themes of discipleship, gender and leadership, counseling, and mentorship. The results were presented in tables, charts, stories, and direct quotes to improve clarity and readability.

Ethical considerations were adhered to during the study. The Maseno University Ethics Review Committee, NACOSTI, and ZTGM leadership were consulted and approved. Informed consent was obtained, and participants were informed of the research objective. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through the lack of identifying information and coding of responses. The respondents were free to participate as long as they wished and withdraw at will without any repercussions. Interview and focus group information were stored in encrypted form with participants' consent. The data would be eliminated at the end of the research.

Literature Review

Home Cells Churches of Pentecost

Home cell churches, especially in Pentecostal culture, including the Church of Pentecost, have been gaining recognition as an effective model of promoting church growth, discipleship, and community involvement. The home cell system is based on the biblical belief in house fellowship, which emphasizes small groups for worship, teaching, and mutual support. Manaloto (2019) holds that the New Testament church was essentially organized as house-based meetings to provide theological support for modern cell-based ministries. This model enables more intimate relationships among people and spiritual development, which might be difficult in a larger congregation setting.



Adubofuor and Badu (2019) also found that home cells play a critical role in achieving the Great Commission by providing convenient platforms for evangelism, discipleship, and the assimilation of converts. Equally, Markin (2019) stresses that the Church of Pentecost's high rate of growth and internationalization can be partially explained by its small-group structures, which make members more engaged and develop their leadership skills at the grassroots level.

According to Wandefu (2018), cell groups are a flexible, scalable model that allows churches to grow without being limited by physical infrastructure. This fact is supported by Comiskey (2023), who underscores that home cell groups stimulate multiplication through an orientation towards relational evangelism and the reproduction of leadership, thereby fostering equal growth and self-sufficiency. Kenin (2025) notes that, depending on the Ghanaian Pentecostal setting, the use of cell-based strategies in church-planting models enhances outreach effectiveness and the success of new congregations.

Home cells also have leadership, a key factor that determines whether they succeed. Reu (2019) emphasizes the need to use the servant-leadership model exemplified by Jesus Christ to foster more vibrant, growing cell communities. All these are achieved through effective leadership that builds trust, fosters accountability, and nurtures members' spiritual maturity, all of which are critical to the growth and well-being of home cells. Moreover, leadership in the Church of Pentecost is usually democratic, allowing laypeople to participate, thereby democratizing ministry and enabling people to actively engage in the life of the church (Adubofuor & Badu, 2019). Home cells are more than centers of evangelism and discipleship; they are also complementary to developing spiritual practices and to addressing the difficulties of church attendance. These organizations provide enabling conditions that allow members to participate more meaningfully in spiritual activities and receive pastoral care.

The cooperative literature indicates that home cell churches, especially in the Church of Pentecost, play a major role in fostering the holistic growth of the church. They combine theological authenticity, good leadership, and strategic evangelism; hence, they are an essential element of modern Pentecostal ministry.

Findings of the Study

Understanding the Role of Home Cells in the Church

The study examined which discipleship activities within home cells were perceived as most beneficial by members. Table 1 presents the findings.



Table 1: Most Helpful Discipleship Activity

Activity	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Bible study	67	37.64%
Worship session	58	32.58%
Prayer	41	23.03%
Testimonies	12	6.74%
Total	178	100%

The results indicate that Bible study was ranked as the most helpful activity (37.64%), followed by worship sessions (32.58%), prayer (23.03%), and testimonies (6.74%). From a functionalist perspective (Durkheim, 1912), these activities serve distinct but complementary roles in reinforcing shared beliefs and strengthening group cohesion. Bible study reinforces doctrinal understanding, worship fosters emotional connection and collective identity, prayer enhances spiritual communion, and testimonies reinforce shared experiences.

Interview data further revealed that Bible study is particularly effective in the small-group setting, which allows for personalized teaching and interaction (ZT07, 20/12/2025). Structured learning through planned study sessions was also highlighted as a key factor enhancing discipleship (ZT02, 27/11/2025). These findings underscore the importance of structured, interactive learning in fostering spiritual growth.

Home Cells Complement Sunday Worship

It was also found out that home cells supplement Sunday worship services. The results showed high levels of agreement among respondents: 65.73% strongly agreed, and 32.02% agreed, for a total of 97.75% who affirmed that home cells enhance Sunday worship. Only 2.24 percent opposed it or strongly opposed it. Such findings indicate that home cells are the continuation of Sunday cell services, in which the application of teachings, further Bible study, accountability, and bond-building are encouraged. This aligns with the functionalist view, which holds that religious practices are interrelated, with both formal and informal structures interacting to foster spiritual growth (Durkheim, 1912). The interview responses also revealed that the home cells supplement evangelism by enhancing the church's presence in local communities through neighborly relationships (ZT05, 18/12/2025).

Influence of Home Cells on Spiritual Growth

The research also rated the level to which involvement in home cells affects spiritual development. The findings indicated that 51 percent of respondents reported a very strong influence and 38



percent reported a high impact, resulting in 89 percent reporting high spiritual growth. A lower percentage (8%) identified moderate or slight influence, and only 3% reported no influence. These conclusions reveal that home cells provide an effective setting for spiritual growth in fellowship, Bible study, prayer, and accountability. According to functionalism, this is a manifestation of internalizing shared beliefs and values which promote collective identity (Durkheim, 1912). The interview evidence also revealed that the home cells engage in both internal and external evangelism, inviting others to join and undergo spiritual change (ZT04, 29/11/2025).

Home Cells Improve Spiritual Life

The research also determined that home cells significantly enhance members' spiritual lives. The results indicated that 67.98 percent agreed and 29.78 percent strongly agreed, resulting in 97.76 percent of respondents affirming that home cells had a beneficial effect on their spiritual life. The disagreement was expressed by only 2.24%. Such results indicate that home cells are highly critical towards enhancing faith, mentorship, and spiritual development. The responses during the interviews confirmed that structured teaching and close interaction in home cells could improve discipleship and make spiritual formation more accessible (ZT06, 19/12/2025; ZT03, 28/11/2025).

Members' Endorsement of Home Cell Participation

The research question concerned members' recommendations for participation in home cells. The findings revealed that 57.87% strongly recommended it and 32.58% recommended it, resulting in 90.45% of participants endorsing it. The lowest percentage, 1.69%, indicated that they would not recommend participation. This level of endorsement is a strong indication of high satisfaction and perceived benefit from home cell participation. It also shows that members serve as growth agents by attracting others to join the ministry, thereby strengthening ministry growth.

Home Cell Leader Preparedness and Effectiveness

The researchers initially assessed perceptions of whether home cell leaders were ready and effective in their work, irrespective of gender. The results show strong support from respondents, with 56.18 strongly agreeing and 40.45 agreeing that the respondent leaders were very prepared and effective, for an overall percentage of 96.63. This indicates that leadership capacity is highly regarded in ZTGM home cells. Good leadership was linked to the ability to channel discussions, strategize activities, provide counseling, and create conducive environments for spiritual development. A low percentage of respondents (3.37%) reported dissatisfaction, indicating



potential gaps in leadership effectiveness. They can be related to the training inconsistencies, personal leadership issues, or unmet expectations. Even though these discontents are small, they might influence members' involvement and spiritual activities. These results are consistent with other researchers who have found that leadership is effective in improving communication, cooperation, and church development (Ngarama et al., 2024; Mwanzwii and Kising'u, 2022). The findings emphasize the need for ongoing leadership training and empowerment to maintain confidence and engagement in the home cells.

Leadership as Inclusive of Both Men and Women

The research also examined members' perceptions of gender inclusivity in leadership. There was significant support for gender-inclusive leadership: 60.67% strongly agreed, and 33.71% agreed that both men and women can occupy leadership roles. This translates to 94.38% of respondents who believe in inclusive leadership. These findings indicate that a majority of members perceive leadership as grounded in calling, competence, and spiritual maturity rather than in gender. Despite this high support level, a minority (5.62) still disagreed, indicating residual cultural and theological effects that view leadership as a male-dominated attribute. The observational evidence indicated that although women are the predominant leaders in home cells owing to high participation, senior leadership posts remain male-dominated. For example, there are only 2 supervisors out of 12, and 4 out of 40 women pastors. This difference indicates a policy-practice gap. The results of the qualitative study also showed that home cells were commonly viewed as female-dominated spaces, which could deter men. Other respondents noted that cultural norms also affect men's resistance to serving under women's leadership, with cases of men withdrawing from home cells led by women. Such results are indicative of Durkheim's (1912) functionalist views, which hold that systems take on new forms to achieve stability; in this case, the presence of women in leadership positions due to men's sparse participation. In general, the process of choosing leaders in the home cells seems to be driven by merit, i.e., the focus of spiritual maturity, commitment, and availability, and not just gender.

Leadership Wrangles and Gender

The researchers investigated the role of gender in the occurrence of leadership conflicts in home cells. Results indicate a polarized opinion of the respondents. A narrow majority (52.8%) believed leadership conflict is gender-based, while 47.2% disagreed. This close association indicates that gender is a factor in some conflicts, but not the determining factor. The individuals who saw



conflicts as gender based blamed them on cultural prejudices, gender stereotypes, and opposition to women's leadership.

On the other hand, others who disagreed said that incompatibility between people, organizations, or leadership styles is the cause of conflicts, not gender. This split indicates how complex the issue of church leadership is. Qualitative data backed this ambivalent opinion. Other participants noted differences in leadership styles: women are more likely to be patient and relational leaders, whereas some men are more directive. It was also noted that emotional intelligence and leadership competence are not gender-specific and can be developed through mentoring and training. These results are consistent with the broader literature, which suggests that gender biases can create leadership conflicts and that gender inclusivity may reduce such conflicts in the long term (Diehl and Dzubinski, 2024; Alex and Onyango, 2024).

Influence of Gender on Leadership

The study further investigated whether gender affects leadership effectiveness and styles within home cells. The findings indicate that 72.47% of respondents believe gender influences leadership, while 27.53% disagreed. This suggests that although leadership is officially viewed as gender-neutral, perceptions of gender differences remain significant among members.

Respondents who acknowledged gender influence often linked it to cultural expectations and existing leadership structures, where men dominate higher leadership positions while women lead at the grassroots level. Others associated gender with differences in leadership style, such as emotional expression, relational engagement, and communication patterns. For example, some participants observed that women are more approachable and relational, which benefits home cell leadership, while others noted concerns about emotional sensitivity.

Conversely, those who rejected gender influence emphasized that leadership effectiveness depends on individual qualities, such as integrity, spiritual maturity, and competence, rather than on gender. These findings reflect ongoing tensions between traditional gender norms and emerging perspectives on leadership equality. Scholarly literature supports this complexity, noting that while gender may shape perceptions of leadership and opportunities, it does not determine leadership capability (Dwiri & Okatan, 2021; Shen & Joseph, 2021; Peterson, 2015).

The research also examined gender and its impact on effective leadership styles in home cells. The results show that 72.47 percent of respondents believed that gender plays a role in leadership, while 27.53 percent opposed the idea. This indicates that, despite the official gender-



neutrality of leadership, perceptions of gender differences remain high among members. The few respondents who admitted that gender influence was usually associated with cultural demands and available leadership systems in which women occupy lower leadership roles, and men are at the top. Other respondents related gender to differences in leadership style, including emotional expression, engagement with others, and communication. Indicatively, some participants noted that women are more relational and approachable, which is advantageous for home cell leadership, whereas others mentioned issues of emotional sensitivity. On the contrary, opponents of gender influence stressed that leadership performance is based on personal attributes, including integrity, spiritual maturity, and competence, and not gender. The results of these studies reflect the current frictions between conventional gender norms and emerging views on leadership equality. This complexity is supported by academic literature, which indicates that gender can affect perceptions and opportunities for leadership, but not leadership capability (Dwiri and Okan, 2021; Shen and Joseph, 2021; Peterson, 2015).

Role of Home Cells in Counseling and Mentorship

Receipt of Counseling

The research found that counseling was offered within home cells. The results show that 68 percent of respondents had undergone counseling, while 32 percent had not. It indicates that counseling services have been widely implemented in home cells and have significantly contributed to members' emotional and spiritual well-being. The percentage of respondents who have undergone counseling is very high, indicating the support systems provided by home cells during personal hardships. According to the functionalist approach, religion is a coping mechanism that promotes social cohesion and psychological stability. The 32% who did not receive counseling may include those who have not had any major problems, those who are unaware of available services, and those who do not feel comfortable seeking assistance. This underscores the need to enhance the accessibility of counseling services and awareness in all home cells.

Counselling Rating

Most respondents who had undergone counseling ($n = 121$) were satisfied with the services. In particular, 44.63% indicated satisfaction, and 35.54% very satisfied, for a total of 80.17% satisfaction. This shows that counseling in home cells is usually effective in meeting members' needs. 19.83 percent of the respondents complained of dissatisfaction, citing areas where the company could do better. Possible causes of dissatisfaction include poor counseling skills, poor



follow-up, and discrepancies in service provision. These results imply that more training and standardized counseling procedures are necessary to ensure consistent quality across all home cells.

Comfort in Sharing with Counselors

The study examined members' comfort levels in sharing personal issues with counselors. Findings indicate that approximately 90% of respondents felt comfortable sharing their problems, with 96 strongly agreeing and 64 agreeing. This high level of comfort reflects strong trust and positive relationships between members and counselors.

However, a minority (10%) expressed discomfort, possibly due to concerns about confidentiality, personality differences, or lack of counseling skills among leaders. These findings emphasize the importance of building trust, maintaining confidentiality, and enhancing counselors' interpersonal skills to ensure that all members feel safe and supported.

Confidentiality and Professionalism

Professionalism and confidentiality are important constituents of effective counseling. The results indicate that 74.16% of the respondents consider that these principles are followed either frequently (43.82%) or consistently (30.34%). This shows a high degree of trust in the counselors' ethical behavior in the home cells. 25.84 percent of the respondents stated that there are inconsistencies, with 18.54 percent citing that confidentiality is always enforced half the time, and 7.30 percent saying that it is not enforced at all. These answers raise questions about ethical competency and imply that better training, greater responsibility, and standardization of counseling practices should be implemented. It is necessary to maintain strict confidentiality to uphold trust and encourage participants to become more open.

Significance of Mentorship and Counseling

The study has also evaluated the perceived significance of mentorship and counseling. The results show that 46.07 percent of the respondents perceived mentorship as very important, and 38.20 percent as important, resulting in 84.27 percent positive responses. This indicates that mentorship is an essential element in spiritual maturity, leadership, and integration in the home cell's social life. The lower percentage (15.73) ranked mentorship as averagely or marginally important, suggesting a range of personal experiences and engagement levels. On the whole, the results verify



that mentorship is associated with numerous personal changes, greater confidence, and leadership in the church.

Common Counseling Issues Addressed

The research has established that marital problems are the most common cases of counseling in the home cells, with a majority of 90 percent of the cases being reported. They are conflicts, communication difficulties, infidelity, and family-related issues. Personal, moral, and spiritual concerns are also addressed. The prevalence of marriage problems reflects broader tendencies in African Pentecostal settings, where the church is the primary agent in addressing family-related problems. The home cells are ready and familiar places where members turn to get counseling, reconciliation, and emotional support. However, problems arise when only one partner is involved in counseling, which limits the effectiveness of the interventions. Also, the gender issue affects help-seeking behavior, whereby women tend to seek counseling as compared to men.

Capacity Gaps and Strategies for Improvement

The research found several gaps in counseling and mentorship within home cells. Among the home cell leaders, there is poor training, a lack of standardized materials, centralized counseling arrangements, and little involvement of men. The respondents highlighted the importance of structured training programs, easy-to-access counseling materials, and leaders who should be supported through continuous capacity building. Another significant issue raised by the participants was the need to decentralize counseling services without losing control, increase leadership presence through frequent visits, and enhance the organization of home cells by keeping group sizes small. Also, it is necessary to provide explicit instructions, improve oversight, and establish referral networks for complex cases. Although counseling and mentorship are important in home cell ministry in ZTGM, training, standardization, and deliberate planning can enhance their effectiveness.

In conclusion, the results indicate that home cells are active in counseling and mentorship within ZTGM. Most members (68) have undergone counseling, and 80.17% reported satisfaction with the services. The fact that the degree of sharing (90) and confidence in confidentiality (74.16) are high indicates high relational trust within home cells. Mentorship has long been recognized as important, and 84.27% of respondents agreed. There are still loopholes regarding training, consistency, and availability of counseling services. Marital problems dominate the counseling sessions, and so the importance of family and relationship counseling special training is evident.



The research finds that although home cells are successful in helping members meet their spiritual and emotional needs, capacity, practice standardization, and leadership training will help improve the quality and impact of counseling and mentorship services.

Summary

The results show that home cells are critical in facilitating discipleship in ZTGM. The demographic profile showed that participants were mostly middle-aged (44.38% aged 36–45) and young adults (34.83% aged 26-35), with women accounting for 82% of respondents. The stability and engagement of the membership are implied by high levels of tertiary education (79.77%) and by length of membership (61.24% in church over six years; 62.92% in home cells over three years). The participants showed a good appreciation of the home cells as being small, geographically structured organs that promote evangelism, fellowship, and spiritual development. The Bible study was the most appreciated discipleship practice (37.64%), then came worship (32.58%) and prayer (23.03%). A strong majority (97.75%) also concurred that home cells are an addition to Sunday worship, 89 percent also said there was a lot of spiritual growth, and 97.76 percent said home cells enhance spiritual life. Also, 90.45% said they could recommend participation in home cells, indicating high satisfaction and perception. Qualitative data also showed that home cells are used as a leadership development, evangelism, and community outreach tool. Issues such as the lack of standardized curricula, discrepancies in teaching resources, and differences in leadership quality were cited.

The research found strong support for gender-inclusive leadership, with 94.38% of respondents affirming that leadership positions are not exclusive to men. Home cell leadership is dominated by women, partly because they are more involved and available. The leadership dynamics are not simple: 72.47% of respondents have recognized that leadership styles and interactions depend on gender, while 27.53% have regarded leadership as gender-neutral. There was a split in perceptions of whether leadership conflicts were gender-based: 52.8% of respondents perceived them as gender-based, and 47.2% perceived them as non-gender-based. The results indicate the conflict between the progressive church policy and the lack of cultural progress. Although women are actively involved in grassroots leadership, they are underrepresented in the upper ranks (2 out of 12 overseers; 4 out of 40 pastors), indicating a structural imbalance. The findings imply that both resistance and adaptation can be identified in gender relations in ZTGM.



To ensure continuity in the ministry, women have been able to fill gaps as leaders, but cultural demands still affect participation and acceptance, especially among men.

The results indicate that home cells play a very strong role in counseling and mentorship. Most respondents (68) had undergone counseling, and 80.17% were satisfied. Good scores on sharing (90) and on confidence with confidentiality (74.16) indicate high relational trust within home cells. Also, 84.27% of the respondents found mentorship to be important or highly important in their lives. The most typical counseling problem was found to be marital issues, i.e., 90 percent of the cases, then came communication issues, forgiveness, and personal conflicts. It was observed that there were gender variations, as women preferred counseling more than men. Despite these strengths, the study has identified major limitations, including centralized counseling models, the lack of formal training for home cell leaders, the absence of standardized materials, and unstable mentorship systems. Although the relational and informal approach has proved successful, these loopholes compromise the integrity of counseling and mentorship in home cells.

Conclusions

The study indicates that home cells play a central role in discipleship in ZTGM, serving as the primary platforms for spiritual formation through Bible study, prayer, worship, and fellowship. Their ability is confirmed by high levels of reported spiritual growth (89%) and strong endorsement of participation (90.45%). Home cells are integrative institutions that strengthen the belief in common things and also enhance cohesion in the church. But there is no structural consistency in the current model. This is because the discipleship experiences differ due to the lack of standardized curricula and teaching materials, and more systematic approaches are required to make them more effective.

In addition, gender relations play a major role in defining leadership in home cells. Although the church embraces gender inclusive leadership, realities on the ground portray gender imbalance, whereby women dominate the grassroots leadership, and men are in the topmost leadership positions. The perception and cultural norms affect leadership participation and acceptance. The results indicate that policy, culture, and practice interact in a complex relationship. Even though the system is flexible and can adapt to maintain functionality, the persistence of gender inequalities necessitates voluntary measures to facilitate equal participation and address cultural barriers.



Finally, home cells play a crucial role in delivering counseling and mentorship services to members, thereby supporting their emotional, spiritual, and relational well-being. High satisfaction rates, trust, and the perceived significance prove the effectiveness of such services. Performance, however, is impaired by structural constraints such as centralized counseling, insufficient training, and standardized structures. The fact that most of the problems are related to marriage also supports the necessity of special training in family and relationship counseling. Counseling and mentorship functions will lack consistency and effectiveness without systematic capacity-building.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations based on the findings. First, the ZTGM leadership needs systematic, ongoing training for home cell leaders, emphasizing discipleship, counseling, mentorship, and leadership skills. This will increase uniformity and efficiency within every home cell. Second, the church can consider developing standardized curricula and guidelines for home cell activities, such as discipleship and counseling. These documents will provide uniformity while allowing flexibility in context. Third, intentional actions are to be taken to foster gender balance in leadership. This involves facilitating men's active involvement, tackling cultural barriers, and promoting inclusive leadership styles. Fourth, the counseling and mentorship systems must be institutionalized by training home cell leaders in basic counseling skills and by clearly referring complex cases to offices. Enhanced trust and effectiveness will be achieved by strengthening confidentiality and professional standards. Lastly, another restructuring the church must consider is creating small groups from large home cells to enhance participation, interaction, and pastoral care. Constant support for home cell leaders must also be a priority to maintain motivation and performance.

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