

**ASSESSMENT OF THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW LAY-MEN  
PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN KANYANTOROGO  
ARCHDEACONRY KINKIIZI DIOCESE**

**LEVI TWINAMASIKO**

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**UGANDA CHRISTIAN  
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## DECLARATION

I, Twinamasiko Levi declare that the work presented in this report is original and my own research work to the best of my knowledge and it has never been submitted for any academic award in any institution of higher learning.

Signature.....

TWINAMASIKO LEVI  
STUDENT

Date.....31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2025

## APPROVAL

I approve that this research report has been done under my supervision and is now ready for submission and examination

Signature: .....



REV. BRIAN MUHEREZA  
UNIVERSITY SUPERVISOR

Date.....

31/7/2025.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION .....	i
APPROVAL .....	ii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
1.1 Background .....	1
1.2 Problem Statement .....	1
1.3 Objectives of Study .....	2
1.3.1 Main objective of the study .....	2
1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the study;.....	2
1.4 Research questions;.....	2
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	2
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	4
2.1 Introduction .....	4
2.2 Factors contributing to low men participation in Church activities.....	4
2.3 The ways that can be employed by church to bring back lay-men to participate fully in church activities .....	7
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	11
3.1 Introduction .....	11
3.2 Research Design .....	11
3.3 Area of study.....	11
3.4 The study population .....	11
3.5 Sampling Procedures.....	11
3.6 Sample Size .....	12
3.7 The nature of the Data Involved: .....	12

3.7.1 Primary Data .....	12
3.7.2 Secondary Data .....	13
3.8 Research Instruments .....	13
3.8.1 Interviews .....	13
3.8.2 Questionnaires .....	13
3.9 Data Collection Procedure .....	13
3.10 Data Presentation and Analysis .....	14
3.11 Limitations of the study .....	14
3.12 Ethical Considerations .....	15
CHAPTER FOUR.....	16
FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW LAY-MEN PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN KANYANTOROGO ARCHDEACONRY KINKIIZI DIOCESE .....	16
4.1 Introduction .....	16
4.2 Demographic Characteristics .....	16
4.3 Factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.....	17
CHAPTER FIVE .....	27
THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION .....	27
5.0 Introduction .....	27
5.1 Theological Reflection on factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities .....	27
5.2 Theological Perspective on suggestions for improving male participation in Church Activities .....	33
5.3 Conclusion .....	38
5.4 Recommendations.....	39
BIBLIOGRAPHY .....	42

APPENDICES ..... 49

Appendix I: Research Questionnaire for Respondent (Christian men and women)..... 49

Appendix II: Interview Guide for Church leaders..... 51

APPENDIX III: REC CERTIFICATE .....55

APPENDIX IV: TURNITIN REPORT.....57

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Sample size distribution of respondents .....	12
Table 2: Showing the Demographic information Keep the table you had in the ...	16

## CHAPTER ONE

### 1.1 Background

Participation in church activities is crucial for fostering spiritual growth, community building, and the overall mission of the church. Churches, particularly in Africa, have historically been central to the social and spiritual fabric of communities and studies suggest that the church plays a crucial role in not only the spiritual guidance of individuals but also in shaping societal norms and values so many communities, the participation of laymen in church activities such as leadership roles, financial giving, community outreach, and spiritual mentor-ship is vital for the church's functionality and its outreach efforts (Anderson *et al.*, 2004). In many Christian communities, laymen, also contribute significantly to various aspects of church life, including leadership, evangelism, and community service. However, in some areas, there has been a decline of laymen participation which has raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of church operations, the weakening of community bonds, and the overall spiritual life of the church (Gifford, 2004). Therefore the researcher will aim at assessing the factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo archdeaconry Kinkiizi diocese.

### 1.2 Problem Statement

For the last 15years laymen were predominantly in the leadership of the church and church activities. They did so with their wives and children, however a decade ago it has not been like this; there is a noticeable decline of male participation in church activities. Women are the majority in participating in church activities like church fellowships, Sunday services, bible study sessions, Church choir among others compared to men.

According to the report submitted by the Diocesan men's ministry coordinator to mission board on 18<sup>th</sup> April.2023, there is low turn up of men in the congregation and low men involvement in Church programs. The report shows that 80% of the congregation in church is women and youths and children, which is an indicator that

men constitute only 20%. The report also indicates that 90% church choirs are women and the report shows that statistics were showing that most managerial positions are held by women. It is on this ground that the researcher is interested in assessing the factors that have contributed to low lay-men participation in church activities and its implications for the church's future.

### **1.3 Objectives of Study**

#### **1.3.1 Main objective of the study**

The main objective of this research study was to assess the factors contributing to low laymen participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry, Kinkiizi Diocese.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the study;**

The research sought to;

- i. Assess factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.
- ii. Suggest ways how the church can bring men back to participate in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.

#### **1.4 Research questions;**

- i. What are the contributing factors to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry of Kinkiizi Diocese?
- ii. In What ways can the church bring back lay-men to participate fully in church activities?

#### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This research is of critical significance for a variety of stakeholders and contributes meaningfully to both academic and practical domains:

**Theological and Academic Contribution:** The study will provide an in-depth understanding of the factors contributing to low laymen participation in church

activities within Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry. By offering evidence-based insights, it enriches theological discourse and academic literature on the role of laity in African church contexts. This is particularly valuable for researchers, theologians, and institutions seeking to address participation disparities within religious communities.

**Church Leadership Development:** Insights from this research will empower church leaders with actionable strategies to address the identified barriers. By fostering greater male engagement, church leaders can enhance the inclusivity, sustainability, and vibrancy of their congregations and community initiatives.

**Policy and Strategic Interventions for the Diocese:** The findings can guide diocesan authorities in formulating policies and interventions that address low participation among laymen. This can include targeted programs, leadership development, and tailored outreach efforts aimed at reinvigorating male involvement.

**Sustainability of Church Activities:** Enhanced participation of laymen will contribute to the sustainability of church operations, leadership succession, and community projects. This is particularly significant for the long-term growth and impact of the church in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry and the broader Kinkiizi Diocese.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter dealt with assessment of related review of literature. During the course of the study the researcher found more about what other scholars have talked about the subject in question. The information in the chapter was got from text books, researcher papers, magazines, journals and internet websites. It was elaborated and studied both theoretically and empirically.

### 2.2 Factors contributing to low men participation in Church activities

The decline in male participation in church activities has been attributed to changing cultural dynamics, particularly the evolving perception of masculinity and gender roles. In many societies, men often associate religious involvement with a lack of masculinity, as church activities are perceived to be more aligned with women's nurturing and caregiving roles (Cornwall, 2020). This has led to a perception that religion is more feminized, which discourages men from actively engaging in church-related activities (Woodhead, 2018). Additionally, the secularization of societies in Western countries has diminished the influence of religious institutions, reducing church attendance across genders but disproportionately affecting male participation (Bruce, 2019).

Economic factors also play a significant role in global trends of low male participation in church activities. Men often prioritize work and financial responsibilities over religious engagement due to societal expectations to serve as breadwinners (Pew Research Center, 2021). A study by (Stark 2020) reveals that men who work long hours or hold multiple jobs are less likely to attend church or participate in church activities compared to their female counterparts, who may have more flexibility. This economic burden limits the time and energy men can dedicate to religious participation.

According to Kinnaman and Lyons (2020), this trend is attributed to the rise of individualism, skepticism about organized religion, and the growing appeal of alternative spiritualities. Younger generations, particularly males, are increasingly

disengaged from traditional religious institutions. Men, in particular, are more likely to identify as Nones (those with no religious affiliation), contributing to lower male representation in church settings. This phenomenon is exacerbated by technological advancements that create alternative spaces for socialization and personal development, leaving traditional church activities with less appeal to men (Smith & Denton, 2019).

According to Moyo (2018), traditional gender norms in Africa often place men in dominant societal roles, which can conflict with the humility and submission often emphasized in church teachings. African men may avoid participating in church activities to maintain their image as strong and self-reliant. Moreover, some African societies perceive church leadership roles as positions of power, leading to a lack of interest in non-leadership activities that men may consider secondary or insignificant (Chitando, 2020).

Research by Odongo (2019) shows that men in Africa are more likely to engage in informal or casual labor to support their families, leaving little time for church participation. Urbanization has also disrupted traditional community-based religious practices, as men migrate to cities for work, becoming disconnected from their local churches (Nduku, 2018).

Theological teachings in some African churches have unintentionally alienated men by portraying religious devotion as primarily emotional, which aligns more with societal stereotypes about women (Mwaura, 2020). Men may feel that their logical and pragmatic approach to life is not valued in church settings, leading to reduced participation. This disconnect between theological messaging and male identity has been a critical factor in declining male involvement in church activities across the continent (Kasambala, 2019).

A study by Obare (2021) reveals that men in the region associate church involvement with a loss of social status, as these activities are considered to be more suitable for women and children. In East Africa, societal expectations and cultural norms often discourage men from participating in activities perceived as domestic or communal,

such as church events. This socio-cultural stigma prevents many men from engaging in church-related activities.

As Nyanumba (2020) highlights, men in these regions often focus on survival and income-generating activities, leaving little time for spiritual growth or church participation. East African countries, including Uganda, have experienced significant political and economic instability, which has shifted men's priorities away from religious engagement. The church is often viewed as an institution that primarily addresses spiritual needs, which men might deprioritize in favor of economic pursuits.

According to Kiiza (2019), East African churches' leadership positions are often occupied by a select group of individuals, creating a sense of alienation among the broader male population, this lack of inclusivity in leadership roles discourages men from participating in other church activities, as they feel undervalued and excluded from meaningful decision-making processes.

Uganda's patriarchal society heavily influences men's perceptions of church activities. Men often consider these activities to be aligned with women's responsibilities, such as caregiving and community support, which are undervalued in male-dominated spaces (Musana, 2020). This societal outlook discourages Ugandan men from engaging in church functions, as they seek to maintain their traditional image of masculinity.

As Mukasa (2021) observes, men prioritize income-generating activities to fulfill their societal role as providers, leaving little time for religious involvement. Economic hardships in Uganda have a significant impact on male participation in church activities. Additionally, church contributions, such as tithes and offerings, may be perceived as financial burdens, further deterring men from regular attendance and participation.

Nakibuuka *et al* (2022) notes that substance abuse not only leads to moral disengagement but also creates a cycle of shame and isolation, preventing men from seeking spiritual growth through the church. Alcoholism and substance abuse are prevalent issues among men in Uganda, contributing to their low participation in

church activities. This behavior further alienates men from active church involvement.

### **2.3 The ways that can be employed by church to bring back lay-men to participate fully in church activities**

Davie (2021) asserts that churches have adopted inclusive governance systems to ensure laymen feel valued and represented. He continues and argues that when laymen are given leadership roles in committees, councils, and other decision-making bodies, their participation in church activities increases as they feel integral to the church's operations. For instance, the Anglican Communion has emphasized the active inclusion of laypeople in synods to enhance their sense of belonging and responsibility. Such initiatives create opportunities for laymen to influence church affairs directly, which motivate them to engage fully.

According to Smith and Snell (2020), Churches worldwide emphasize discipleship programs to equip laymen with biblical knowledge and practical skills for ministry. When churches focus on mentoring and discipling men, they cultivate confidence and commitment, encouraging active involvement in worship, teaching, and community service. For example, global movements like Alpha and Promise Keepers have successfully revitalized men's participation by creating spaces where they are spiritually nurtured and challenged to serve.

Research by Miller (2022) highlights that modern worship practices resonate more with men, particularly younger generations, as they provide a dynamic and engaging environment. Innovative worship approaches, including contemporary music, technology, and culturally relevant sermons, have been used globally to attract laymen. Churches in the West, such as Hillsong and Elevation Church, have successfully utilized multimedia presentations, interactive sermons, and modern music to re-engage disinterested laymen, proving that relevant worship experiences can renew commitment.

According to Gathogo (2021), across Africa, the integration of church activities with social outreach programs has been a powerful tool for re-engaging laymen. Men are more likely to participate when church initiatives address pressing societal issues like poverty, education, and healthcare. For instance, churches in Kenya and Nigeria have established community development projects that encourage laymen to take active roles in leadership, which strengthens their commitment to church activities.

According to Orobator (2018), African churches often create exclusive fellowship groups tailored for men, fostering a sense of brotherhood and accountability. He also notes that male fellowship programs provide safe spaces where men can share their struggles and grow spiritually. Initiatives such as the Men's Ministry in the Nigerian Anglican Church have significantly increased male involvement by addressing their unique needs and promoting unity among men through activities like retreats and sports events.

Research by Chitando (2020) points that cultural norms in Africa often discourage men from actively engaging in church activities. Churches have countered this by redefining masculinity in a Christian context, emphasizing that service to God aligns with strength and leadership. The same scholar highlights how churches in Zimbabwe and South Africa have used contextual theology to challenge patriarchal norms and encourage men to view participation in church activities as an extension of their roles as providers and protectors in their families.

According to Tumushabe (2021), in the East African region, training programs for lay leaders have been implemented to empower laymen with the skills necessary for active church participation. Churches in Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania have introduced theological training and workshops to equip laymen for ministry. This initiative increases confidence and competence, ensuring they feel better prepared to contribute meaningfully to church activities.

Nabunya (2022) argues that programs addressing marriage, parenting, and financial management resonate with men, making them more likely to attend and participate in church activities. Churches in East Africa have emphasized family-oriented

programs to engage men by targeting their roles as heads of families. For example, the Church of Uganda has held annual men's conferences focusing on these themes, which have significantly increased male attendance and participation.

Kisembo *et al* (2020) explains that sports create informal entry points for laymen to reconnect with church activities, fostering relationships and spiritual growth in the process. In Rwanda, Uganda, and Kenya, initiatives such as church-sponsored soccer tournaments have proven effective in drawing men to the church. Sports ministries have been widely adopted by churches in the region to attract laymen, particularly younger men.

According to Okware *et al* (2021), providing vocational training and financial support through church-based savings groups motivates men to participate actively in church activities. In Uganda, churches have implemented livelihood support programs to re-engage laymen. The Church of Uganda, for instance, has partnered with organizations like World Vision to equip men with skills and resources, reinforcing their commitment to the church.

Kyeyune (2022) highlights that using local languages, proverbs, and cultural expressions in sermons and outreach activities bridge the gap between the church and its community. Such practices ensure that laymen feel understood and appreciated, fostering a stronger sense of belonging. Ugandan churches have adopted culturally relevant evangelistic approaches to attract laymen.

Okoth (2021) explains that mentorship programs and accountability groups encourage men to take responsibility for their spiritual lives and church involvement. Churches in Uganda have also emphasized accountability as a way to re-engage laymen. Churches such as Watoto in Kampala have successfully used small groups and mentoring initiatives to ensure consistent engagement among laymen.

In Summary, Scholars have extensively examined the factors contributing to low male participation in church activities, highlighting cultural, economic, and theological influences. Studies indicate that evolving gender roles and the perception of religion

as feminized discourage men from active involvement. Additionally, individualism, secularization, and alternative spiritualities have contributed to declining male engagement, particularly among younger generations (Kinnaman & Lyons, 2020; Smith & Denton, 2019).

Despite these efforts, a literature gap remains in exploring how digital engagement and online faith-based communities can influence male participation, particularly in the African context where technological adoption is growing. Additionally in this study, there is a limited research on the role of intergenerational mentorship and how young men's perceptions of faith differ from older generations. Addressing these gaps would provide deeper insights into effective strategies for increasing male involvement in church activities especially in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry, Kinkiizi Diocese.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter covered research design, study area, population and research instruments, research procedure, quality data presentations and analysis, limitations and delimitations and ethical consideration.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This type of research was a qualitative research. Qualitative research is the one that discusses and expresses ideas. The researcher chose this type of research because it gives a description of the situation as it exists at hand by entering deep into people's minds and discoveries incorporeal variables such as beliefs, attitudes and mindset.

### **3.3 Area of study**

This study took place in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry in the Diocese of Kinkiizi in western Uganda. Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry was selected because it has both rural and urban parishes and therefore the results represented both rural and urban in finding out why very few men went to church in Kinkiizi Diocese. The area was both rural and semi-urban area characterized by a blend of residential and agricultural activities, reflecting the diverse livelihoods of its residents. It served as a pivotal hub for essential services, education, commerce, and community life.

### **3.4 The study population**

The study population comprised of Church leaders (Clergy, lay readers), Christian Men and Christian women.

### **3.5 Sampling Procedures**

This study employed a probability sampling design; a design of sampling in which each respondent from the target population is accorded equal chance of being included in the final sample hence ascertaining objectivity in sample selection. This was used applied in selecting the Christian men and women and church leaders.

### 3.6 Sample Size

As regards the sample size, the researcher collected data from a sample of 100 respondents from 3 selected parishes within Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry was taken. From each of these parishes, the selected samples were interviewed.

In this study, 30 Christian men were selected from all parishes, 30 youths (15 males and 15 females) who are church attenders, 30 Christian women and 10 leaders. This gave a total of 100 respondents who participated in the study. In this study, a Christian means any person who is baptized in the Anglican faith.

**Table 3.1: Sample size distribution of respondents**

Categories	of	Parishes			Total
		Parish 1	Parish 2	Parish 3	
Christian men		10	10	10	30
Youths		10	10	10	30
Christian women		10	10	10	30
Church leaders		03	03	04	10
Total		<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100</b>

### 3.7 The nature of the Data Involved:

The researcher used both secondary and primary because the researcher depended on primary data especially from respondents and secondary data; what other scholars have written about the same issue.

#### 3.7.1 Primary Data

The researcher obtained information from the of Clergy, lay readers, churchwardens, Fathers union leaders, Christian Men Fellowship leaders, Mothers and Christian Women Fellowship Leaders and some few selected Christians basing on set questions as well as general information from them. This information was largely obtained by research instrument especially Questionnaires and interviews.

### **3.7.2 Secondary Data**

The researcher obtained secondary data to supplement the primary data. This was obtained from Church records concerning men's fellowships and attendance records, from the minutes of the men's departments (such as Fathers' Union) and Library sources.

## **3.8 Research Instruments**

The instruments for data collection were questionnaires and interviews.

### **3.8.1 Interviews**

Interviews are planned questions administered to individuals to elicit responses. Since the area is doing well in literacy skills, this method is so much appropriate in collecting the data.

The researcher utilized an interview guide to have sessions of one-to-one physical engagements with the key informants who are the Church leaders in this case. This instrument was chosen because it gave the researcher an opportunity to discover the detailed information there by helping him to find out the people's feelings about this topic.

### **3.8.2 Questionnaires**

Questionnaires are series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically, useful information about a given topic. This was reserved only for those who were literate. A set of well formulated questions was arranged with the intention of discovering justification of topic in the area. It was directed towards finding out the contributing factors to low lay-men participation in church activities and specifically, this was used in collecting data from Christian men and women because the questionnaire collects huge and quality data in a short period of time.

## **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher, upon completing the research proposal, obtained an introductory letter from the Bishop Tucker School of Divinity and Theology (BTSdT) to introduce

him to the respondents in the area of study. The researcher administered the data collection instruments himself to the respondents, and after which questionnaires were collected from respondents for analysis.

After data collection process, the researcher carried out analysis and prepared the report of the dissertation for presentation and submission.

### **3.10 Data Presentation and Analysis**

After receiving all the raw data from field including answers from the questionnaire respondents, interview respondents, from the library, and from the observations made a database was created and edited. Then the raw data sources were corrected and clarified, after which data files were created. The ideal types or theoretical categories were created that provided a structure for analysis. Then the data was manual coded into code categories for easy analysis. The researcher analyzed the data that was collected using the qualitative methods. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically basing on the variables identified in the research objectives.

### **3.11 Limitations of the study**

Research on asses sing the contributing factors to low lay-men participation in church activities was a valuable and important area of study, but it also had some limitations:

There was lack of comprehensive data: Comprehensive and up-to-date data on church activities attendance and the gender breakdown was challenging to obtain. Some churches did not keep detailed records of attendees, making it difficult to get an accurate representation of lay-male participation in church activities. Also some respondents were reluctant to provide responses to the questionnaire and the interview. There were financial hardships involved during research especially in transport, production of the work such as printing, correcting and binding the paper as well as giving a bit of incentive to some of the respondents.

Despite these limitations, researching on the contributing factors to low lay-men participation in church activities was essential to gain insights into potential disparities, challenges, and opportunities for promoting inclusivity and understanding within religious communities. Researcher employed rigorous methodologies and was mindful of potential biases to maximize the credibility and applicability of the findings.

### **3.12 Ethical Considerations**

All those who participated in this research were treated with maximum respect and freedom. This was for the sake of moral justification of the research as regards minimal abuse, safety and the general well-being of the respondents. Confidentiality was also highly accorded to the respondents, in that the researcher kept the acquired information within the confines agreed upon by the respondents.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LOW LAY-MEN PARTICIPATION IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES IN KANYANTOROGO ARCHDEACONRY KINKIIZI DIOCESE

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter is a detailed analysis and discussion of the research findings. They are presented using descriptive statistical methods which include tables and figures.

#### 4.2 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics of the respondents included gender, age group of the respondents, position in church, whether the respondent knows any case of drug and substance among the youth.

*Table 2: Showing the Demographic information Keep the table you had in the proposal and avoid congesting it*

Aspect	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	54	54
Female	46	46
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age group of the respondents</b>		
Youths (18-35)	30	30
Adult (36-60)	55	55
Elderly (60 & above)	15	15
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: Primary data, 2025*

This information indicated that out of 100 respondents participated in the study, 54(54%) respondents were males, and 46 (46%) respondents were females. This indicated that both genders participated in the study and were ready to give the factors for the low men participation in Church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry. This continued and implied that more males were involved in responding to the questionnaire compared to females.

The findings in Table 4.1 further indicated that the biggest percentage of respondents 55 (55%) were in the age group of adults (36-60), 30(30%) of the respondents were in the age of youths (18-35) and then 15(15%) respondents were found to be in the age group of elderly (60 years & above). This implied that all the categories were involved in responding to the questionnaire and so participated in the study.

Finally on the demographic characteristics of respondents, the table 4.1 indicates that the greatest percentage of the participants 97 (97%) were the laity in church and 03(03%) of the respondents were in the position of clergy in the church for the three parishes.

### **4.3 Factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese**

In this study, the first and the main objective of this study was aimed at establishing the factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.

As a way of fulfilling this objective of study, the researcher held interview sessions with the respondents where different questions according to the pre-set interview guide were posed to the respondents and qualitative data was obtained. Responses were collected, sorted, interpreted and discussion according to the following section.

During an interview one of the Christian Men, he said:

*“My young men are becoming more interested in worldly activities than church activities. They prefer spending time on social media, playing football, or engaging in business activities rather than attending Church prayers, Bible*

*study sessions, or youth fellowship meetings. Even when they attend Sunday service, they come late and leave early without participating in other church programs.”*

This response indicates a generational shift in priorities among young men, where secular activities take precedence over spiritual engagement. The respondent’s use of “my young men” suggests a paternal concern and recognition of responsibility for mentoring younger men. This aligns with Koenig’s (2012) observation that modern secular influences often compete with religious participation, particularly among younger demographics. The fragmented participation pattern (late arrival, early departure) suggests superficial engagement rather than meaningful spiritual involvement, supporting Putnam’s (2000) argument about declining social capital in religious institutions.

In an interview with another Christian Man as regards to the factors for the low laymen participation in Church activities, it was said that:

*“Most church activities are scheduled during working hours or when we are busy with our farming activities. The church has Bible study on Wednesday evenings when we are still in the gardens and prayer meetings on Saturday mornings when we go to the market. Women can easily attend because they can adjust their schedules, but for us men who are the breadwinners, work comes first.”*

This response highlights the conflict between economic responsibilities and religious participation among men. The emphasis on being “breadwinners” reflects traditional gender roles where men bear primary financial responsibility for households. This finding supports Cornwall’s (1989) research indicating that men’s lower church attendance is often linked to competing work demands and role expectations. The scheduling conflict represents a structural barrier that disproportionately affects men, consistent with Miller and Stark’s (2002) findings on gender differences in religious participation patterns.

The researcher also had interviews with the Christian women as far as this objective of study is concerned and one of them said,

*“In our church, you will find that during prayer meetings, Bible study, and even Sunday services, we women are the majority. Men only come in large numbers during special occasions like Easter, Christmas, or when there are church fundraising events. I think men view church as a place for women and children, not realizing that they too need spiritual nourishment and should be examples to their families.”*

This observation confirms the gender disparity in regular church participation while highlighting occasional male participation during significant religious holidays or financial obligations. The perception that “church is a place for women and children” reflects deeply embedded cultural stereotypes about masculinity and spirituality. This supports Francis’s (1997) research demonstrating that cultural constructions of masculinity often conflict with religious participation, as spiritual activities may be perceived as feminine. The reference to men’s role as family spiritual leaders indicates awareness of the disconnect between expected and actual male religious leadership.

Another Christian woman had to say,

*“Our husbands always say they are too tired after work to attend evening prayers or they have other important meetings to attend. But when it comes to social drinking or community gatherings, they find time and energy. I think they don’t see the importance of church activities beyond Sunday worship, and some are even embarrassed to be seen as too religious by their peers.”*

This response reveals the selective nature of male participation and the influence of peer pressure on religious engagement. The comparison between attendances at social versus religious activities suggests that energy and time are available but are prioritized differently. The concern about being “too religious” indicates masculine identity conflicts with spiritual expression, supporting Beaman’s (2017) findings on how hyper masculinity can inhibit religious participation. The peer pressure element

aligns with social identity theory, where men may avoid religious activities to maintain their social standing within male peer groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

The researcher also had an interview session with the youths in the Church in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry. During an interview, one of the youths mentioned,

*“Most church activities are boring and don’t relate to our daily challenges as young people. The programs are designed for older people, and when we try to suggest modern ways of worship like contemporary music or youth-led services, the church leaders resist change. We feel like outsiders in our own church, so we prefer to spend time with friends who understand us better.”*

This response highlights the intergenerational disconnect within church programming and leadership. The perception of activities as “boring” and irrelevant suggests a failure to contextualize religious content for younger audiences. The resistance to contemporary worship styles indicates institutional inflexibility that alienates youth participation. This finding supports Rainer and Rainer’s (2008) research on millennial church dropout rates, attributed to perceived irrelevance and lack of authentic engagement opportunities. The preference for peer groups over church community reflects the need for belonging and understanding among young people.

Another youth said, *“Technology and social media have changed how we connect and learn. We get inspired by online preachers and Christian content creators who speak our language and address issues we face like unemployment, relationships, and career choices. Our local church still uses traditional methods that don’t capture our attention, and most of the male youth leaders have left for urban areas seeking better opportunities.”*

This response illustrates how digital transformation has altered religious consumption patterns among youth. The preference for online religious content over traditional church activities represents a shift in spiritual engagement mediums. The migration of male youth leaders to urban areas creates a leadership vacuum that affects peer mentorship and role modeling within the church. This supports Hoover and Echchaibi’s (2014) research on digital religion and how technology reshapes religious

participation. The specific mention of relevant life issues (unemployment, relationships, careers) underscores the need for contextual ministry approaches.

In an interview with the Church leaders from this Archdeaconry, both the clergy and lay readers they said:

*“We have tried to organize men’s fellowship meetings, sports activities, and even income-generating projects to attract more men, but the response is still poor. The few men who participate are mostly the elderly or those who hold church positions. The younger men seem to have lost interest in church leadership roles, preferring to engage in politics or business ventures where they see immediate returns.”*

This response reveals institutional attempts to address male participation through targeted programming, yet acknowledges limited success. The observation that participants are “mostly elderly or those who hold church positions” suggests that formal roles or age-related factors influence commitment levels. The preference for politics and business over church leadership indicates that men seek platforms with visible, immediate impact and social recognition. This aligns with Schnabel’s (2016) findings that men’s religious participation increases when they perceive direct benefits or leadership opportunities that enhance their social status.

Another Church leader who was a clergy in one of the parishes of the Archdeaconry said that,

*“Cultural changes and modernization have affected how people, especially men, view church participation. Many men now see church activities as optional rather than essential for their spiritual and social development. The influence of prosperity gospel messages has also made some men believe that if they are financially successful, they don’t need regular church attendance. Additionally, alcohol consumption and weekend social activities compete directly with church programs.”*

This response identifies multiple systemic factors contributing to declining male participation: cultural shifts, changing religious attitudes, theological influences, and

lifestyle competition. The perception of church activities as “optional” reflects secularization trends where religious participation becomes individualized rather than communally obligatory. The prosperity gospel influence creates a transactional view of spirituality that may reduce regular participation when financial success is achieved. This supports Bruce’s (2002) secularization thesis and Heelas and Woodhead’s (2005) findings on the subjective turn in contemporary spirituality. The competition from alcohol and social activities represents lifestyle choices that directly conflict with traditional church scheduling and values.

In conclusion, the low participation of lay-men in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry appears to be influenced by a complex interplay of economic pressures, cultural conflicts, church programming approaches, and social dynamics. Addressing this challenge would require a multifaceted approach that acknowledges both practical barriers like work responsibilities and scheduling, as well as deeper issues related to masculine identity, cultural expectations, and spiritual nurturing approaches tailored to men’s needs.

### **Ways how the church can bring men back to participate in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.**

In this study, the second objective of this study was aimed at suggesting ways how the church can bring men back to participate in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese. As a way of fulfilling this objective of study, the researcher had to set several questions related to this objective of study. Respondents from the Diocese of Kinkiizi (Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry) gave their responses through the interviews. These were presented, interpreted and discussed as follows:

During the interview with a Christian man on the matter of this objective, he said that,

*“My youths are losing direction because there are no strong male role models in the church anymore. The church needs to create men’s fellowship groups where we can discuss real issues affecting us as fathers and husbands, not just*

*singing and praying. We need programs that address our economic challenges and help us become better leaders in our homes.”*

This response implies that men perceive a leadership vacuum in church activities and desire more practical, issue-based engagement rather than traditional worship formats. The respondent’s reference to “my youths” suggests a paternal concern for mentorship and role modeling, indicating that men want to see tangible value in church participation that extends to family leadership (Chatfield, 2018). This aligns with research by Leone et al. (2010) who found that men’s church participation increases when they perceive direct benefits to their roles as family providers and protectors. The emphasis on economic challenges reflects the intersection of spiritual and material needs, supporting findings by Schnoor (2006) that men’s religious engagement is often tied to practical life outcomes.

Further, another Christian man stated,

*“The church should organize men’s breakfast meetings and business workshops. We men like to network and discuss opportunities. If the church can help us grow economically while growing spiritually, many of us will come back. Also, give us leadership positions that match our skills, not just ceremonial roles.”*

This response reveals men’s preference for multi-functional church activities that combine spiritual growth with economic empowerment. The suggestion for breakfast meetings and business workshops indicates men’s desire for practical, time-efficient engagement that respects their work schedules (Chatfield, 2018). The emphasis on meaningful leadership roles rather than “ceremonial” positions suggests that men feel marginalized in church decision-making processes, supporting research by Wenger (2015) on the importance of authentic participation in religious communities.

On the other hand during the interview with a Christian woman, she said,

*“Men need to feel respected and valued in the church. We women sometimes dominate church activities and make men feel unwelcome. The church should*

*create specific programs for men only, where they can freely express themselves without feeling judged. Also, activities should be scheduled considering their work commitments.”*

This response demonstrates women’s awareness of gender dynamics in church participation and their recognition of men’s need for autonomous religious spaces. The acknowledgment that women “sometimes dominate” church activities reflects research by Peek (2005) on gender competition in religious settings. The suggestion for men-only programs aligns with findings by Beaman (2017) that gender-segregated religious activities can increase male participation by reducing social pressure and allowing for more authentic expression of faith concerns.

Another Christian woman noted,

*“The church needs to involve men in decision-making about family and community issues. Men want to feel their opinions matter. We should also encourage our husbands and sons to attend church by supporting them, not criticizing them when they skip services. The church can organize father-son activities to build that connection.”*

This response highlights the importance of women’s supportive role in encouraging male church participation while recognizing men’s need for meaningful involvement in decision-making processes. The emphasis on reducing criticism and increasing support reflects research by Wilcox (2004) on how family dynamics influence religious participation. The suggestion for father-son activities demonstrates understanding of intergenerational transmission of religious values, supporting findings by Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) on the importance of father involvement in religious education.

During the interview with a youth of the Church, he said, *“The church should organize sports tournaments and modern music sessions to attract young men. Many of us stay away because church activities seem old-fashioned and boring. If the church can incorporate technology and contemporary approaches while maintaining the message of Christ, more young men will participate.”*

This response reveals the generational gap in church programming and young men's desire for contemporary worship styles. The emphasis on sports and modern music reflects research by Dollahite and Thatcher (2008) on the importance of culturally relevant religious programming for youth engagement. The suggestion to incorporate technology while maintaining Christian messages indicates young men's desire for modernized rather than secularized religious experiences, supporting findings by Smith and Denton (2005) on youth religious preferences.

Another youth stated, *"The church needs mentorship programs where older Christian men can guide us in career choices and life decisions. We need practical Christianity that helps us succeed in life. Also, create opportunities for young men to lead worship and preach, not just serve as ushers or cleaners."* This response emphasizes the need for practical mentorship and meaningful leadership opportunities for young men in church settings. The desire for "practical Christianity" reflects research by Dean (2010) on adolescent spiritual development, which shows that young people seek faith experiences that directly address their life challenges. The request for preaching and worship leadership opportunities, rather than service roles, indicates young men's desire for spiritual authority and recognition, supporting findings by Boyatzis et al. (2006) on youth religious leadership development.

During the interview with a church leader, he said, *"We need to restructure our church programs to be more inclusive of men's schedules and interests. This includes organizing weekend retreats, men's conferences, and vocational training programs. The church must also address cultural beliefs that discourage men from active church participation and create an environment where men feel comfortable expressing their faith."* This response demonstrates leadership awareness of structural barriers to male church participation and the need for cultural sensitivity in programming. The emphasis on weekend retreats and vocational training reflects understanding of men's work-life balance challenges and their preference for intensive, purpose-driven religious activities (Wilcox, 2004). The acknowledgment of cultural beliefs that discourage male participation shows recognition of broader social factors affecting

religious engagement, supporting research by Woodhead (2007) on the intersection of culture and religious practice.

In an interview with one of the lay readers, it was noted,

*“The church should establish men’s ministries with clear objectives and strong male leadership. We need to train men to become effective ministry leaders and give them ownership of specific church programs. Additionally, we should organize community outreach programs where men can serve using their professional skills and talents.”*

This response emphasizes the importance of male ownership and leadership in church programming, reflecting research by Ammerman (2003) on the significance of lay leadership in religious organizations. The suggestion for community outreach using professional skills demonstrates understanding that men often seek purpose-driven service opportunities that utilize their secular competencies, supporting findings by Putnam and Campbell (2010) on the relationship between professional identity and religious service. The emphasis on training and ownership reflects principles of empowerment theory in religious contexts (Chatfield, 2018).

The overall findings indicate that improving men’s participation in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry requires a multi-faceted approach addressing practical, cultural, and structural factors. The church needs to develop strategies that specifically consider men’s unique needs, time constraints, and interests while creating opportunities for meaningful involvement beyond passive attendance.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

#### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the theological reflection of the research findings on the assessment of the factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi diocese. It is presented as based on the objectives of study.

#### 5.1 Theological Reflection on factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities

This theological reflection examines the issue of low lay-men participation in church activities through three perspectives: Old Testament, New Testament, and contemporary Church teachings. These perspectives provide valuable theological frameworks for understanding and addressing the challenges identified in the research on male participation in church life.

##### Old Testament Perspectives

Patriarchal leadership and male spiritual responsibility. In Old Testament narratives, men held significant religious leadership roles. Patriarchs like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob led family worship (Genesis 18:19, 35:2-3) they are depicted instructing their families in the ways of the Lord and leading them in acts of worship and covenantal faithfulness. Institutional worship was further formalized through the Leadership of Moses, Aaron, and the Levitical priesthood, who were divinely appointed to mediate between God and the people of Israel (Exodus 28-29; Numbers 3:5-10). This biblical pattern establishes a theological framework in which male spiritual responsibility is both a vocation and a divine mandate for men. John Stott (2006) argues on this issue that true spiritual leadership, particularly among men, must be modeled after Christ's servant-hearted ministry. He insists that "leadership is not about power, but about service" and calls for a renewal of spiritual responsibility among laymen in both

public worship and private discipleship. This theological emphasis on humble yet active leadership serves as a corrective to both authoritarian and passive expressions of masculinity in the church. This suggests a need to recover and rearticulate a biblically grounded vision of male spiritual vocation that is neither patriarchal in a domineering sense nor disengaged, but rather rooted in servant leadership, covenantal faithfulness, and communal responsibility. Such a reframing not only honors biblical tradition but also responds constructively to the cultural and ecclesial challenges surrounding male disengagement from church life.

The period of the Judges, situated between the death of Joshua and the establishment of the Israelite monarchy, offers a compelling theological lens through which to examine patterns of male leadership and participation in covenantal community life. With the notable exception of Deborah, the biblical judges were predominantly male figures, raised by God as charismatic leaders to guide Israel through periods of spiritual and socio-political crisis (Judg. 2:16-19). These leaders did not function as judges in the modern judicial sense, but rather as divinely appointed deliverers whose authority encompassed both spiritual renewal and communal arbitration. Their role involved calling the people back to covenant fidelity, facilitating worship, and enacting justice—functions that underscore a holistic model of male engagement in religious and communal leadership. This biblical paradigm offers a theological framework for understanding contemporary challenges related to low male participation in church activities. The judges' integration of spiritual leadership, covenantal responsibility, and active communal service challenges modern dichotomies between lay spirituality and public engagement, their example invites the church to reflect on how male identity and vocation are shaped in ecclesial contexts, particularly in relation to divine calling, communal responsibility, and spiritual formation. Theologically, this calls for a reimagining of male participation not merely as functional involvement but as an expression of covenantal faithfulness and charismatic empowerment, thereby addressing potential disconnections between male identity and active lay ministry in today's church.

The Old Testament portrays men as having distinct spiritual responsibility for their households. In Joshua 24:15, Joshua declares, “As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD,” exemplifying male spiritual leadership. This declaration not only exemplifies male spiritual leadership but also underscores the expectation that men should guide their families in covenantal faithfulness and communal worship. This biblical model presents a theological framework wherein male identity is integrally connected to spiritual responsibility and active religious participation (Robin 2008). Theologically, Joshua’s statement reveals a covenantal orientation that links personal devotion with familial and communal leadership, suggesting that the neglect of these roles may contribute to the diminished participation of laymen in contemporary church life. Reviving the biblical vision of male leadership—rooted not in hierarchical dominance but in covenantal stewardship—can offer a transformative framework for encouraging greater laymen involvement in worship, discipleship, and church ministry.

Work-worship balance in Hebrew society. The economic responsibilities identified as a primary factor affecting men’s church participation finds resonance in Old Testament practices. The Hebrew calendar integrated work and worship through Sabbath observance and festival schedules that accommodated agricultural cycles. Deuteronomy 16:16 required males to appear before the Lord three times yearly at designated festivals, recognizing both their work responsibilities and worship obligations. This integration ensured that worship did not stand in opposition to labor but was interwoven into the fabric of daily and seasonal life. According to Craigie, P. C. (1976), This scriptural mandate acknowledges men's vocational obligations while simultaneously affirming their spiritual responsibilities, creating a balance that counters modern contradictions between work and worship.

Cultural identity and religious participation. The cultural tensions identified in the research parallel challenges in ancient Israel, where men navigated tensions between their religious identity and surrounding cultural influences. The prophets consistently addressed men who abandoned worship responsibilities due to competing cultural

priorities (Amos 6:1-7; Isaiah 5:11-12). This suggests that the tension between cultural identity and religious participation has deep historical roots.

### **New Testament Perspectives**

Transformation of male identity in Christ. The New Testament presents a transformed understanding of masculinity through Christ's example. Jesus embodied strength through service, vulnerability, and compassion; characteristics that challenge both ancient and contemporary notions of masculinity focused solely on dominance or provision. Philippians 2:5-8 depicts Christ's humility as a model for all believers, offering a counterpoint to the cultural barriers to church participation identified in the research. This Christological model addresses the concern that church demands conflict with traditional masculine identity offering a biblical framework for integrated masculine and Christian identity.

Diverse male discipleship models. The New Testament presents diverse models of male discipleship applicable to contemporary contexts. The disciples came from various occupations and backgrounds, demonstrating that following Christ transcends socioeconomic and cultural differences. These models address the concern about inadequate spiritual nurturing for men by illustrating various pathways to Christian maturity. Figures like Peter (impulsive but transforming), Matthew (professional background), John (contemplative), and Paul (intellectual) demonstrate different expressions of male discipleship. These varied models could inform approaches to spiritual formation that better engage men to participate in church activities.

Early Church community participation. Acts describes the early church's communal life where believers participated (Acts 2:42-47) regardless of gender (Keener, C. S. 2012). Early Christian communities developed structures that engaged men from various backgrounds, providing leadership opportunities according to spiritual gifts rather than social status (1 Corinthians 12:4-11; Romans 12:6-8). The communal life of the early church, as portrayed in the Acts of the Apostles, presents a theologically rich model of inclusive and participatory discipleship. Acts 2:42-47 depicts a vibrant ecclesial community in which all believers—regardless of gender or social status—

engaged in shared worship, teaching, fellowship, and service. Importantly, early Christian communities created structures that allowed for the active involvement of men from diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds, promoting leadership based not on societal hierarchy but on spiritual gifting. This approach offers insights for addressing limited leadership opportunities for men by emphasizing spiritual gifting over traditional status markers.

### **Contemporary Church Perspectives**

Theology of work and vocation. Contemporary theological discussions have developed robust frameworks for integrating faith and work. The Second Vatican Council's document *Gaudium et Spes* affirms that human labor participates in God's creative work, while Protestant theologians like Miroslav Volf have articulated theological frameworks for understanding work as participation in God's purposes. These theological developments address the tension between economic responsibilities and church participation by sanctifying daily work as an expression of faith rather than competing with it.

Male-specific ministry approaches. Contemporary ecclesiology has increasingly recognized the need for gender-specific ministry approaches that address men's spiritual formation needs. Movements like Promise Keepers, Men's Fraternity, and Catholic men's movements have developed frameworks for male spiritual engagement that address the concern about lack of male-oriented church programs. The Anglican Communion, including the Church of Uganda, has explored initiatives specifically designed to engage men through approaches that recognize masculine spirituality while challenging unhealthy cultural expressions of masculinity.

Contextualization and inculturation. Contemporary theological approaches emphasize inculturation; the process of expressing Christian faith in culturally meaningful ways. The concerns about perceived feminization of church activities and cultural conflicts point to the need for contextually appropriate expressions of faith that resonate with local masculine identity while transforming it through Christian values.

Theologians like Kwame Bediako (1995) and Lamin Sanneh (1989) have emphasized that authentic Christianity always engages with rather than erases cultural identity. This perspective suggests that addressing low male participation requires developing expressions of worship and church life that authentically engage with local conceptions of masculinity while transforming them through the gospel.

As far as the integration and application is concerned, the research findings from Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry reveal several barriers to male participation that can be addressed through integrated theological perspectives:

**Economic responsibilities (23%):** A theology that integrates work and worship, drawing from both Old Testament rhythms and contemporary vocational theology, could help men see their economic activities as complementary rather than competing with church participation.

**Cultural and traditional beliefs:** Drawing on Christ's transformation of masculine identity and contemporary inculturation approaches could help develop church expressions that both honor and redeem local masculine identity.

**Lack of male-oriented programs:** Biblical models of diverse male discipleship and contemporary male ministry approaches provide frameworks for developing programs that specifically address men's spiritual formation needs.

**Perceived feminization:** Early church practices of incorporating diverse gifts and contemporary contextual theology offer pathways to worship expressions that engage both genders authentically.

**Time constraints:** Old Testament sacred rhythms and contemporary practical theology provide models for integrating spiritual practices into men's daily lives despite busy schedules.

**Inadequate spiritual nurturing:** New Testament discipleship models provide diverse approaches to spiritual formation that could be adapted to local masculine identity and learning styles.

Negative peer influence: Both Old Testament community standards and New Testament brotherhood models offer counter-cultural alternatives to negative peer pressure.

Leadership limitations: Early church leadership models based on spiritual gifts rather than status provide frameworks for engaging men through meaningful service and leadership opportunities.

The theological reflection on factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities reveals that this challenge is not merely sociological but deeply theological. The intersection of masculine identity, cultural values, economic realities, and church practices requires theological responses that affirm men's economic contributions as part of their spiritual vocation, engage with local conceptions of masculinity while transforming them through Christ's example, develop contextually appropriate expressions of worship and spiritual formation, create meaningful pathways for male leadership and service and address practical barriers through flexible approaches to participation

These theological responses, grounded in Scripture and contemporary ecclesiology, provide a foundation for addressing the specific objective of assessing factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities.

## **5.2 Theological Perspective on suggestions for improving male participation in Church Activities**

This theological reflection examines the issue of suggestions for improving male low lay-men participation in church activities through three perspectives: Old Testament, New Testament, and contemporary Church teachings. These perspectives provide valuable theological frameworks for understanding and addressing the challenges identified in the research on male participation in church life.

## Old Testament Perspective

Patriarchal leadership model. The Old Testament consistently presents a patriarchal model where male figures led family and community worship. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob built altars and led their households in worship (Genesis 12:7-8, 26:25, 35:1-3), while Moses, Aaron, and subsequent priests and Levites served as designated religious leaders. This established pattern suggests that developing clear male leadership roles in church can connect with men's sense of spiritual responsibility and purpose, potentially increasing their participation.

Generational faith transmission. Male figures in the Old Testament bore specific responsibility for transmitting faith to future generations, as evidenced in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road." This emphasis on fathers as spiritual teachers suggests that framing church participation as fulfilling generational responsibility might motivate men to engage more actively in church activities.

Community gathering requirements. The Old Testament mandated male attendance at key religious festivals as seen in Exodus 23:17: "Three times a year all men are to appear before the Sovereign Lord." These required gatherings created rhythms of male participation in community worship, suggesting that establishing clear expectations and regular opportunities specifically designed for men could help normalize male church involvement.

Work-faith integration. Old Testament worship and religious practice were deeply integrated with agricultural work, harvest festivals, and daily life rhythms rather than separated from men's labor. The Sabbath, Passover, and harvest festivals like Sukkot directly connected faith practices with work life. This integration suggests that connecting church activities with men's work identities and practical skills could increase relevance and participation among working men.

Male accountability structures. The Old Testament describes systems where men held each other accountable, seen in the council of elders at city gates (Deuteronomy 21:18-21) and in wisdom literature's emphasis on male counsel: "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another" (Proverbs 27:17). These accountability structures suggest that creating forums where men can challenge and support each other spiritually could foster deeper engagement in church life.

Physical space and territory. Throughout the Old Testament, physical spaces and territories held significant meaning for male identity and worship - from Abraham's altars marking territory to the Temple's careful design with designated spaces. This territorial aspect of masculine spirituality suggests that creating designated physical spaces for men within church settings might increase their sense of belonging and ownership in the community.

### **New Testament Perspective**

Male discipleship circles. Jesus established an intentional pattern of male discipleship, gathering twelve men whom he mentored closely (Mark 3:13-19). This discipleship model continued as Paul mentored Timothy, Titus, and others in church leadership. This pattern suggests that establishing intentional male discipleship groups within in church could provide the relational connections and spiritual development pathways that might draw men back to church participation.

Brotherhood identity. The New Testament frames Christian relationships in familial terms, with male believers referred to as "brothers" over 130 times in Paul's letters alone. This language created a spiritual brotherhood identity that transcended biological family, social status, and ethnicity. Developing a strong sense of Christian brotherhood that addresses men's need for meaningful male relationships could help overcome isolation and disconnection that may be keeping men from church activities.

Counter-cultural masculinity. Jesus and the apostles modeled a counter-cultural form of masculinity that balanced strength with service, authority with sacrifice, and

wisdom with vulnerability. Jesus washing his disciples' feet (John 13:1-17) exemplified leadership through service rather than domination. Articulating and modeling this balanced Christian masculinity could help men reconcile traditional masculine values with church participation.

Diverse ministry roles. The New Testament describes diverse ministry roles beyond formal leadership that engaged men according to their various gifts, as outlined in Romans 12:4-8 and 1 Corinthians 12. This diversity allowed men to contribute meaningfully according to their strengths rather than fitting a single model. Creating multiple pathways for men to serve according to their specific gifts and interests could significantly increase male engagement in church activities.

Problem-solving focus. New Testament teachings often addressed practical problems with clear directives for action. Jesus' parables frequently posed problems requiring resolution, while the epistles addressed specific community challenges with actionable guidance. This problem-solving orientation aligns with how many men process information and find meaning, suggesting that framing church participation in terms of addressing community challenges might engage more men.

Marketplace engagement. The early church engaged men where they worked, with Paul evangelizing in marketplaces, working as a tentmaker, and using work-related metaphors in his teaching. This integration of faith with economic life acknowledged the central role of work in men's identity. Developing ministry approaches that engage men in their workplaces and address work-related challenges could help bridge the gap between Sunday worship and daily life for men.

### **Contemporary Church Perspective**

Cultural masculinity analysis. Contemporary church scholarship emphasizes understanding how cultural definitions of masculinity affect church participation, recognizing that in many African contexts, Christianity has sometimes been perceived as feminine in its expression and expectations. Research by scholars like Ezra Chitando (2012) demonstrates that effective male ministry requires analyzing specific

cultural masculinities at play in communities where traditional male roles might seem disconnected from church activities, and developing approaches that address these perceptions directly.

**Economic pressures recognition.** Contemporary churches increasingly acknowledge the economic pressures on men as providers that compete with church involvement, especially in developing regions. A study by the Barna Group (2020) found that men who feel unable to fulfill provider expectations often withdraw from church participation out of shame or time constraints. Addressing these economic realities through church-based skills development, entrepreneurship training, and scheduling that accommodates work commitments could significantly improve male participation in church activities.

**Active learning approaches.** Modern church education recognizes that many men prefer active, participatory learning styles over passive listening. Research by Murrow (2011) found that churches with interactive Bible studies, debate-friendly discussions, and problem-based learning reported higher male retention. Implementing these active learning approaches in Bible studies and discipleship programs could make spiritual formation more engaging for men in churches who might otherwise find traditional teaching methods disconnecting.

**Male-specific ministry programming.** Contemporary churches have developed male-specific ministry programs recognizing unique spiritual needs and communication styles of men. Organizations like Promise Keepers and Men's Fraternity have demonstrated the effectiveness of programs specifically designed around masculine identity and challenges. Developing contextually appropriate men's ministry programming that addresses local masculine identity and challenges could create entry points for disengaged men.

**Intergenerational mentoring.** Research by the Fuller Youth Institute highlights the importance of intergenerational relationships in sustaining faith commitment, with particular benefit when older men mentor younger men through life transitions. Churches that implement formal mentoring structures connecting men across

generations show stronger male retention rates. Establishing structured mentoring relationships between older and younger men could create the relational connections necessary for sustained male participation.

Technology and flexible participation. Contemporary church leaders recognize that traditional church schedules often conflict with men's work responsibilities, particularly in communities where economic survival requires long or irregular hours. Churches successfully engaging men have implemented flexible participation options, including digital content delivery, multiple meeting times, and "micro-commitment" opportunities that accommodate busy schedules. Developing these flexible engagement pathways could help men to maintain church connection despite work demands.

Social impact ministry. Contemporary research indicates that men often connect most strongly with faith communities engaged in tangible social impact projects that utilize their skills and strength. Churches with high male participation frequently sponsor community development initiatives, disaster response teams, construction projects, and justice ministries that appeal to men's desire to make visible difference. Developing ministry initiatives in that address community needs through action rather than discussion alone could significantly increase male engagement and participation.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

This theological reflection demonstrates that the challenge of low male participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry connects to broader theological themes regarding masculine identity, the integration of faith and daily life, culturally appropriate expressions of worship, and meaningful avenues for spiritual formation and service. By drawing on the rich resources of Old Testament patterns, New Testament discipleship models, and contemporary theological approaches, the church can develop responses that authentically engage men in the life of the church while addressing the specific barriers identified in the research.

This study on addressing low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry reveals a complex interplay of biblical foundations, cultural factors, and contemporary realities affecting male engagement. The integration of Old Testament patriarchal models, New Testament discipleship patterns, and contemporary church approaches provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and addressing this challenge. The findings indicate that effective male participation requires addressing both structural factors (such as scheduling conflicts and ministry design) and deeper issues of masculine identity, spiritual purpose, and cultural perceptions of church involvement. Respondents consistently identified the need for male-focused approaches that acknowledge men's unique spiritual journeys while providing practical relevance to their daily lives.

The synthesis of biblical perspectives and contemporary research suggests that increasing male participation is achievable through intentional strategies that respect cultural context while creating new pathways for engagement. Particularly significant is the recognition that men in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry appear to respond more positively to church participation when it connects with their identity as providers, problem-solvers, and community leaders. The integration of practical skills development with spiritual formation, coupled with mentoring relationships and clear pathways for meaningful contribution, presents promising approaches for reversing current trends of male disengagement. This study demonstrates that addressing male participation requires holistic ministry approaches that engage men as active participants rather than passive recipients.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The researcher recommends that the Church should develop a comprehensive men's ministry program specifically designed for the Kanyantorogo context that integrates biblical teaching on masculine spirituality with practical life applications. This program should include regular gatherings with flexible scheduling options, mentoring relationships between experienced and newer male church members, and skill-building components that address local men's needs as providers and community

leaders. Implementation should involve identifying and training key male leaders who can serve as catalysts for wider male participation.

This study also recommends that the Church should establish concrete projects and initiatives that engage men's skills, strength, and problem-solving abilities in addressing community needs. These might include construction projects, agricultural initiatives, community development efforts, and economic empowerment programs that demonstrate the practical relevance of faith while creating natural contexts for spiritual discussion and growth. Special emphasis should be placed on initiatives that allow men to contribute meaningfully according to their specific gifts and interests.

The church should evaluate and adapt its worship styles, teaching methods, and communication approaches to ensure they resonate with masculine spirituality in the Kanyantorogo context. This might include incorporating more active learning methods, problem-based teaching, practical applications, and imagery that connects with local masculine identity. Additionally, church leaders should work to create physical spaces and roles within church settings that affirm men's sense of belonging and purpose in the faith community.

With generational shift in priorities among young men today, where secular activities take precedence over spiritual engagement, the church should develop a paternal concern and recognition of responsibility for mentoring younger men. This can be achieved by organizing events that can attract these young men like sports and before a game starts let there be teaching of mentoring young men.

With men's preference for multi-functional church activities that combine spiritual growth with economic empowerment, the church should organize men's breakfast meetings and business workshops for men to network and discuss opportunities thus attracting more men in church. If the church can help men grow economically while growing spiritually, many men will come back to church.

The church should create opportunities for young men to lead worship and preach for example giving them time to lead worship, leading choir, taking lessons and leading intercessions, not just serve as ushers or cleaners and also, give men leadership positions that match with their skills, not just ceremonial roles. This will motivate them to participate in church activities.

The church should also collaborate with the government in implementing policies that regulate bars and drinking time. This will help to regulate on the number of men that attend to these bars from morning to evening and this will help to have men in church activities who dodge in disguise of going to bars.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Research Questionnaire for Respondent (Christian men and women)

Dear Respondent,

I am Twinamasiko Levi, a final year student of Uganda Christian University - Mukono, pursuing a Master of Divinity. I am currently carrying out a Research entitled “assessment of the factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi diocese” You have been selected to participate in this research exercise and any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you very much for cooperation.

#### Part I: Respondents’ bio data

1. Name of Church: .....
2. Name of Parish: .....
3. Kindly select your gender  
Male                       Female
4. What is your age bracket? (Select from the alternatives given below)  
Youth (18-35)                       Adult (36-60)                       Elderly (60 & above)
5. Responsibility/ role play in Church  
.....  
.....

#### Part II: Low men participation in Church activities

6. a) Does your Church has other services and church activities in addition to Sunday service?  
Yes                       No

b) What are these activities?

.....  
.....

According to your observation, which gender out numbers the other in Church services and activities?

Men

Women

If men, what factors do you think have led to that?

.....  
.....

If women, what factors do you think have led to that?

.....  
.....

If women outnumber men, according to you why do you think men are few in participating in church services and activities?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. How do you advise the church on what to do to bring and keep men back to participate in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Thank you very much for your responses. May God bless you.**

## Appendix II: Interview Guide for Church leaders

Dear Respondent,

I am Twinamasiko Levi, a final year student of Uganda Christian University - Mukono, pursuing a Master of Divinity. I am currently carrying out a Research entitled “assessment of the factors contributing to low lay-men participation in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi diocese” You have been selected to participate in this research exercise and any information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality. It will be used for academic purposes only. Thank you very much for cooperation.

### Part I: Respondents’ bio data

- 1) What is the name of your church?
- 2) What is the name of your parish?
- 3) How old are you?
- 4) For how long have you served in this church/ parish?
- 5) What responsibility/ role do you play in this church / parish?
- 6) Does your Church has other services and church activities in addition to Sunday services?
- 7) According to your observation, which gender out numbers the other in Church services and activities?
- 8) If women outnumber men, according to you why do you think men are few in participating in church services and activities?
- 9) How do you advise the church on what to do to bring and keep men back to participate in church activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese?

Thank you very much for your responses.

**Research Questionnaire for Respondent (Christian men and women)**

Dear Respondent,

Eizina ryangye ndi Twinamasiko Levi, omwegi womumwaka rwahamuheru omukoshoma. Ninshoma ebyokuhereza omukanisa obwahure kandi ninshoma Diguri ya kabiri omubyedini. Obwahatiya ndiyo nincondoza ahakimasho ekirikugyira ngu “ ahabwenki abasheija abakristayo bari bakye omu kanisa kandi nomumirimo yekanisa omubu sebadikoni bwa Kanyantorigo omu bureberezi bwa Kinkiizi”.

Mbwenu nahabweshonga egyo nkutoreine kandi ninkushaba kumpwera okungarukamu ahari ejoshonga. Ebyorangambire ninza kubirindagye kandi noza kuba wampwera omukushoma kwangye

Webare munonga

**Part I: Respondents' bio data**

1. Ekanisa yaawe: .....

2. Oburisa bwawe: .....

3. Omusheija  Omukazi

4. Emyaka  
(18-35)  (36-60)  El (60 & above)

5. Nokora murimoki omukanisa?  
.....

**Part II: Low men participation in Church activities**

6. Ekanisa yaawe eyineho ebindi ebyokura oyihireho kushaba sande kusha?

Yes

No

Nibiiha?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. Omukurebera kwawe nogira ngu enamba erikusinga obwingyi omukwejumbira omukushaba nomurimo yekanisa neha

Abasheija

Abakazi

Kubarabe bari abasheija abarikukira obwingyi, ahabwawe notekateka ngu nahabwashongaki erikuretera abasheija baaba beingyi okukira abakazi?

.....  
.....

Kubarabe bari abakazi abarikusinga obwinyi, ahabwawe notekateka ngu nahabwashongaki erikuretera abakazi baaba beingyi okukira abasheija?

.....  
.....

Abakazi kubarabe baribo beingi omukushaba nomumirimo yekanisa, notekateka nishongaki eziretera abasheija batakanya omumirimo yekanisa nomukushaba.

.....  
.....  
.....

8. Iwe Ekanisa okagihaburaki omuki eine kukora kugarura abasheija nokubagumya omukanisa nomurimo yaayo omubu sebadiikoni bweitu bwa Kanyantorogo nomu Bureberezi bwa Kinkiizi?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Yebare munonga kungarukamugye nokumpwera omukushoma kwangye.**

## APPENDIX III: REC CERTIFICATE



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Research Ethics Committee UG-026



29<sup>th</sup> May, 2025

**TWINAMASIKO LEVI,**  
Uganda Christian University  
+256 778 465182  
Email: [twinamasikolevi82@gmail.com](mailto:twinamasikolevi82@gmail.com)

UG-REC-026 APPROVAL NOTICE

To: Twinamasiko Levi, Principal Investigator

**Re: UCU-REC Application titled: *Assessment of the Factors Contributing To Low Lay-Men Participation in Church Activities in Kanyantorogo Archdeaconry Kinkiizi Diocese.***

Application Number: UCUREC-2025-1690

Version: 4.1

Type:  INITIAL REVIEW  
 Protocol Amendment  
 Letter of Amendment (LOA)  
 Continuing Review  
 Material Transfer Agreement  
 Other, Specify:



I am pleased to inform you that the UG-REC-026; UCUREC approved the above referenced application.

Approval of the research is for the period from 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2025, to 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2026

This research is considered minimal risk category.

As Principal Investigator of the research, you are responsible for fulfilling the following requirements of approval:

1. All co-investigators must be kept informed of the status of the research.
2. Changes, amendments, and additions to the protocol or the consent form must be submitted to the REC for re-review and approval prior to the activation of the changes. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence.
3. Reports of unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or other must be submitted to the REC. New information that becomes available which could change the risk: benefit ratio must be submitted promptly for REC review.

1 of 2

Research and Ethics



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4. Only approved consent forms are to be used in the enrollment of participants. All consent forms signed by subjects and/or witnesses should be retained on file. The REC may conduct audits of all study records, and consent documentation may be part of such audits.
5. Regulations require review of an approved study not less than once per 12-month period. Therefore, a continuing review application must be submitted to the REC eight weeks prior to the above expiration date of 29<sup>th</sup> May, 2026 in order to continue the study beyond the approved period. Failure to submit a continuing review application in a timely fashion may result in suspension or termination of the study, at which point new participants may not be enrolled and currently enrolled participants must be taken off the study.
6. The REC application number assigned to the research should be cited in any correspondence with the REC of record.
7. Your research details have been shared with the Executive secretary of Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) and you are not required to get clearance since you are a Master's Degree research. Refer to UNCST Research registration and clearance Policy and guidelines (July 2016) in Uganda section 6(e).

The following is the list of all documents approved in this application by UG-REC \_026:

	Document Title	Language	Version	Version Date
1.	Protocol	English	1.0	2025-04-26
2.	Questionnaire	English	1.0	2025-04-26

Signed and Stamped

Prof. Peter Waiswa,  
UCUREC Chairperson,  
[pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug](mailto:pwaiswa@musph.ac.ug)



# APPENDIX IV: TURNITIN REPORT



## Twinamasiko Levi

### DESSERTATION PLAGIARISM CHECK

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