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Prosperity gospel and congregants commitment in some selected churches in Lagos state, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the impact of the prosperity gospel on congregants' commitment in selected churches in Nigeria. The study was guided by three research questions and three null hypotheses tested at the 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised 3,827 congregants in selected churches in Nigeria, while a sample of 297 respondents was used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled Prosperity Gospel and Congregants' Commitment Questionnaire (PGCCQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was structured into sections covering demographic characteristics, extent of prosperity gospel teaching, congregants' financial commitment, spiritual and behavioural commitment,. The instrument was subjected to expert validation, and its reliability index of 0.70 was established using Cronbach's alpha. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and simple linear regression were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings indicated that the prosperity gospel was emphasised to a very high extent in the selected churches (Grand Mean = 3.51). Congregants demonstrated a high level of commitment (Grand Mean = 3.48), while prosperity gospel exerted a very high influence on their financial commitment (Grand Mean = 3.53). The findings further showed that prosperity teaching had a high positive influence on the spiritual life and moral conduct of congregants (Grand Mean = 3.41). The prosperity gospel was also found to promote both lasting commitment and conditional participation among congregants (Grand Mean = 3.40). The hypothesis testing showed a significant positive relationship between the prosperity gospel and congregants' commitment ($r = .672$, $p < .05$). The prosperity gospel also significantly predicted financial commitment ($R = .714$, $R^2 = .510$, $F = 307.964$, $p < .05$), significantly influenced spiritual commitment ($R = .638$, $R^2 = .407$, $F = 202.974$, $p < .05$), and had a significant positive relationship with sustainable congregational commitment ($r = .601$, $p < .05$). The study concluded that the prosperity gospel is a significant factor in shaping congregational commitment, financial participation, spiritual engagement, and sustainability of church involvement. It was recommended that church leaders should balance prosperity teaching with biblical teachings on discipleship, holiness, stewardship, perseverance, accountability, and ethical Christian living.

Keywords: prosperity gospel, prosperity theology, congregational commitment, financial commitment, spiritual commitment, church leadership, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

The prosperity gospel has emerged as a prominent theological force within global Pentecostalism, marked by its emphasis on divine blessings evident in wealth, health, and upward mobility. According to Simeon and Lazarus (2026), the historical roots of the prosperity gospel lie in North American movements such as the Word of Faith tradition; its African expressions have developed distinctive forms shaped by local socio-cultural and religious realities. Bowler, cited in Simeon and Lazarus (2026), traces the emergence of prosperity theology within American evangelicalism, highlighting figures like Kenneth Hagin, who promoted a belief system linking faith-filled speech, positive thinking, and financial giving with divine rewards. The authors argue that prosperity theology is not merely materialistic but presents a structured vision of Christian life centred on progress, self-improvement, and victorious living. According to Gifford (2016), the African reception of prosperity teaching offers a more critical view about widespread poverty and inequality. Gifford argues that prosperity

preaching gains popularity by promising immediate and personal solutions to deeply rooted structural issues. Rather than addressing the root causes of socio-economic struggle, the author contends that prosperity theology often shifts the focus to spiritualised success and individual breakthroughs, which frequently sideline the social ethics of the gospel.

In Africa, prosperity theology is not merely an imported doctrine but a deeply contextualised phenomenon. The prosperity gospel reflects indigenous cosmologies, traditional spiritual beliefs, and local expectations of success and well-being. It provides frameworks for interpreting suffering and accessing breakthroughs by connecting faith, positive confession, and sacrificial giving to divine favour (Ukah, 2016). Rather than being a direct transplant, prosperity theology in Africa functions as a theological hybrid blending biblical narratives with African worldviews to create a spiritually resonant framework.

In Nigeria today, the prosperity gospel has not become the characteristic of Pentecostal churches only; it has spread among some Catholic and Protestant churches. As stated by Edigbo and Nwube (2021), the proliferation of the prosperity gospel, a doctrine emphasising wealth, health, and success as rewards for faith, has significantly influenced religious practices. The authors add that this prosperity gospel does well to emphasise healing, deliverance and empowerment of believers spiritually and economically.

Within the socio-economic landscape, prosperity theology has gained traction, functioning both as a spiritual resource and a commentary on social conditions. Messages of breakthrough, divine elevation, and financial upliftment resonate deeply with the frustrations and aspirations of people confronting systemic hardship (Obadare, 2018). The author provides a sociological perspective on the popularity of prosperity theology in contexts of deprivation and failed governance. However, this analysis tends to downplay the theological motivations and spiritual rationale of adherents.

Hence, this study investigated how prosperity theology is interpreted and expressed within some selected churches in Lagos State. It will examine the theological content of prosperity preaching, the hermeneutical strategies employed in interpreting biblical texts, and the implications for Christian living and ecclesial identity. It will pay attention to the need for total restoration of the person, leading to personal health and physical success and blessings. Apyewen, Utensati, and Weyi (2022) opined that for genuine socio-economic development and sustainable prosperity to take place in Africa, the virtues of honesty, accountability, hard work, integrity, perseverance, community, and delayed gratification, as emphasised by African traditional values, need to be taken seriously.

The term "prosperity gospel" is also referred to as "prosperity theology". It is an umbrella term for a group of ideas popular among charismatic preachers in the evangelical tradition that equate Christian faith with material, and particularly financial, success. According to Apyewen, Utensati, and Weyi (2022), prosperity is the state of being successful and having good fortune. Prosperity theology teaches that God wants his people to be prosperous and healthy in life, with wealth being used as the measure of one's level of favour with God (3 John 3). Ayantayo, as cited in Apyewen, Utensati, and Weyi (2022), defined and described the prosperity gospel as a strong teaching that requires Christians to be prosperous while on earth. For him, the emphasis within this premise is strongly placed on material acquisition, which can manifest in the possession of cars, houses, substantial bank accounts, cash on hand, clothing, abundance, fortune, and success in all endeavours; all of these factors make prosperity a divine favour that Christians must seek and pursue with vigour. In the context of this study, the prosperity gospel can be considered the gospel that preaches good health, the gospel of wealth, and the gospel of success in all walks of life. This religious belief, particularly among some Christian churches like the Pentecostals, holds that financial blessings and physical well-being are always God's will for them and that faith, positive speech, and donations to religious activities will enhance one's material wealth.

Enwerem (2018) highlighted the key features of the Prosperity Gospel, which include the centrality of wealth and health as signs of God's favour, the use of material offerings and seeds of faith to activate divine blessings, and the concept of positive confession or "speaking into existence" what one desires. Changes in worship practices, giving behaviour, expectations about leadership, and household economic decisions have been linked to most Pentecostal and charismatic churches (Alu, 2020). According to Roberts as cited in Williams (2022), the prosperity gospel teaches that faith in God's goodness and the law of sowing and reaping, or 'seed-faith', are said to activate the divine economy. It is the doctrine of the 'divine economy' that is founded on the conviction that God desires to grant his people material prosperity (Swoboda, 2015). It supports a theological viewpoint that favours health and human or material prosperity above all else. It teaches that through positive thinking, adherents can attain a change in their socio-economic status, because God intervenes in the daily struggles of the poor by offering a route out of their situation, both physically and financially. The sowing and reaping of seed faith are considered the main means by which the economic principle of the divine economy is implemented (Roberts as cited in Williams, 2022). Faith, therefore, is the primary means through which one can escape the constraints of poverty and physical limitations.

The idea behind prosperity theology is one of all-encompassing success that is rooted in all of God's blessings on earth. It is interpreted as that aspect of Christian doctrine that emphasises overall physical wellbeing, including excellent health, financial security, status and personal empowerment, as well as longevity, tranquillity and happiness without the need for suffering (Omavuebe 2021).

Nwankwor and Chibuzor (2026) stated that prosperity teachings have implications beyond personal piety. They shape attitudes toward work, success, giving, leadership, and social responsibility. In some cases, they have been accused of encouraging a “quick wealth” mentality, weakening ethical standards, and reducing concern for social justice and communal welfare. At the same time, Nwankwor & Chibuzor (2026) argue that prosperity teachings inspire hope, motivate hard work, and promote generosity within religious communities as well as commitments.

In congregants' commitment, Ewere, Yakubu and Olowoyeye (2022) opine that this teaching encourages their adherents to be committed financially to the church in exchange for personal blessings of financial wealth and some form of dynamic healing from their ailments. Over the years, prosperity doctrine advocates have continued commitment to promote the idea that God wants Christians to be “abundantly” successful in every way, with special emphasis on financial prosperity. It is usually argued that because God is rich, his human children ought to be rich and totally free from the scourge of poverty (Oyedepo, 2021).

There are different ways in which the prosperity gospel affects the Nigerian Christian church and society. One of them is the monetisation and commercialisation of religious activities. Monetisation of religious activities originated in Nigeria as a result of prosperity preaching. According to Ewere, Yakubu, and Olowoyeye (2022), prosperity preachers maintain that giving generously in the form of “tithing and sowing” is a fundamental requirement that believers need to fulfil to acquire abundant wealth. They contend that the more you contribute to the church, the more you receive from God. It is believed that whatever a man sows in the Church will be reaped a hundredfold (Adedibu & Igboin, 2019).

The reality is that almost every religious activity, such as clapping of hands, dancing, prayers, devotion and the like, has been monetised. This practice is what is classified as the commercialisation of religion. People are appointed to positions in the church based on their monetary affluence and financial contributions to the church. Religion has been misused as a money venture on a large scale. In fact, carrying a bible is one of the quickest means of getting money (Kitause & Achunike 2015).

Prosperity gospel proponents claim that God’s will for believers is wealth, healing and a life of abundance, and that poverty and sickness are of the devil. They continually admonished their adherents to tenaciously hold on to a vision of prosperity and abundance, despite the threat of hunger and poverty in the society (Atoi, 2010). Some other common types of prosperity gospel include offering for open heaven for blessings, offering that removes poverty from one's life completely, and offering that brings abundant and unlimited success in all earthly endeavour. To accompany these, the prosperity pastors sell anointed water, candles, oil and handkerchiefs to the willing members of the audience, claiming that their use will open the way to all-round and everlasting success. For example, they tell the audience that by using anointed handkerchiefs, a person will get to anywhere he desires with ease. The majority of the audience, including educated individuals, are swayed by these methods. Those who do not participate in the crusade are given the opportunity by the prosperity preachers to purchase tapes and videocassettes of the event. Today, there are many videocassettes, anointed handkerchiefs, oil, water, books and magazines of prosperity messages on sale in the churches and bookshops and on the streets.

In Nigeria, the rise of churches promoting these doctrines has been particularly evident in recent decades. Large charismatic megachurches, often led by flamboyant pastors, have emerged as powerful institutions within (Adegbola, 2020). Moreover, scholars have noted that the Prosperity Gospel often distorts traditional Christian teachings. The focus on financial prosperity can overshadow other aspects of the gospel, such as the call to discipleship, service, and social justice (Saidu, 2016). This theological shift towards self-centred prosperity has been critiqued for neglecting the broader moral and ethical teachings of Christianity, which emphasise humility, sacrifice, and love for others. The Prosperity Gospel’s emphasis on material blessings can thus lead to a form of Christianity that is more aligned with consumerism and individualism than with the communal and altruistic values traditionally upheld by the faith (Afolayan, 2018). This theological development raises important questions about the nature and authenticity of Christian spirituality in contemporary Nigeria.

Despite the audacious and appealing claims or teachings of the prosperity gospel, the contradiction is that social-economic challenges such as poverty, sickness, unemployment, and security, which the prosperity gospel seeks to address, remain a grave concern in Nigeria. Unemployment is at an alarming rate of 18.7%, the poverty rate is at 42.4%, and life expectancy is 53/6 years (Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2017). The pressing social and public question is, why are the fortunes of people not changing despite the proliferation of the prosperity gospel in Nigerian churches? The prosperity gospel has generated many public reactions from social media, academics, and the Christian community.

While the Prosperity Gospel continues to flourish in Nigeria, there are also signs of resistance and critique. A growing number of church leaders and scholars are questioning the movement’s theological underpinnings and its impact on the spiritual lives of believers. Some argue that the Prosperity Gospel distorts the teachings of Christ, especially in light of biblical passages that emphasise suffering, humility, and the dangers of wealth (Oluwole, 2021). Churches and theologians advocating for a more holistic and balanced approach to Christianity are challenging the materialistic emphasis of Prosperity Gospel preachers. For instance, some pastors have begun to promote teachings that emphasise a more

communal and social gospel, which focuses on addressing poverty and inequality in a more comprehensive way (Adedeji, 2020).

One of the major problems with the prosperity gospel is the insistence that the needy have to give to be blessed. Jesus said, "You receive without charge; donate without charge." At the end of their teaching, they compel the members to donate generously and sacrificially so as to receive the hundredfold return promised in the Bible (Barga, 2018). They even curse those who do not bring their tithes to the church, Barga continued. All these are done because of greed and avarice. In the book of 1 Timothy 6:10, Paul states, “For the love of money is the root of all evil," and those who covet it have erred from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows. In the area of health, the faith-healer rejects the use of conventional medicine for healing. It holds that prayer alone should be used to heal the sick and that the use of medicine is a sign of weak faith. In most cases this is a deception of faith and reason. The excessive love for money or wealth usually associated with the prosperity Gospel constitutes a form of idolatry (Col 3:5). The Gospel of prosperity has the subtle tendency to mask idolatry and false faith (Lk. 4:5-7). This is often unknown and unnoticed by their listeners. True Christian giving arises in thankful response to God, who loved us first (cf. Jn. 3:16), to Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20) and to the neighbour (cf. 2 Cor. 8:5, Gal. 5:14 and Rm. 12:1-2).

On the contrary, the prosperity gospel has become a transfer of the exclusive lifestyle to the church that creates the two-headed monster of evangelical affluence. One head, material prosperity, places its emphasis on the kind of life philosophy mocked by the writer of Ecclesiastes: "A feast is made for laughter, and wine makes life merry, but money is the answer for everything” (10:19). In this version of the gospel, faith leads to tithing, and tithing ignites prosperity. The other element is theological prosperity, the position that health and wealth depend on faith. Of course, the essential message of the Book of Job suggests that prosperity does not indicate God's blessing any more than poverty indicates God's curse (Barga, 2018). For instance, suffering made Job to see and experience God in a way he had never done before. Job had to learn to accept the loss of all he had and remain faithful to and worship God. Consequently, he left believers with an unforgettable message of the gift of faith in moments of suffering. Those who are deceived into believing that God rewards them for being Christians also think that abundance is theirs to spend or consume. Such thought is a misleading theological pitfall.

Prosperity Gospel has made a significant impact on the religious and social landscape of Nigeria. While it has provided hope and empowerment for many, particularly in the face of economic hardship, it has also been criticised. This theology has continued to generate a lot of controversies and ethical questions in the Nigerian theological and social space, which call for a critical reflection. It is against this backdrop that the study evaluates the impact of the prosperity gospel on congregants' commitment in selected churches in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study was to examine the impact of the prosperity gospel on congregants’ commitment in selected churches in Lagos State, Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

1. Examine the extent to which the prosperity gospel is preached in selected churches in Nigeria.
2. Assess the level of commitment among congregants in churches that emphasise prosperity teachings.
3. Determine the relationship between the prosperity gospel and the financial commitment of congregants.

Research Questions

The following research questions are posed to guide the study.

1) To what extent is the prosperity gospel emphasised in selected churches in Nigeria?
2) What is the level of commitment among congregants in these churches?
3) In what ways does the prosperity gospel influence the financial commitment of members?

Hypotheses

These null hypotheses are formulated and were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between the prosperity gospel and congregants’ commitment in selected churches in Nigeria.

H_{02}: Prosperity gospel has no significant effect on the financial commitment of congregants.

H_{03}: The Prosperity gospel does not significantly influence the spiritual commitment of church members.

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is considered most appropriate because the study seeks to describe and analyse existing conditions without manipulating any variables. The study is prosperity-orientated in the State of Nigeria, one of the most religiously vibrant and socio-economically dynamic states in the country. The population of the study consisted of all 3,827 congregants in selected prosperity-orientated churches in Lagos State. These include members who regularly attend services and participate in church activities. The sample for this study was four hundred congregants (297) determined through the Taro Yamane sample size determination formula. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling technique, combining

purposive and simple random sampling methods. First, a number of churches were purposively selected based on the presence of clear prosperity teachings. This is important because not all churches emphasise prosperity theology to the same degree. By focusing on churches where such teachings are prominent, the study ensures relevance and depth. Next, within each selected church, simple random sampling is used to select respondents. This gives every congregant an equal chance of being included, thereby reducing bias and enhancing the reliability of the findings. A sample size of approximately 400 respondents was considered appropriate for this study. The primary instrument used for data collection is a structured questionnaire. To ensure validity, the questionnaire is subjected to expert review. Specialists in religious studies, sociology, and educational research examine the instrument to ensure that the questions are clear and relevant, the items adequately cover the research objectives, and the wording reflects the realities of church settings in Nigeria. This process helps to ensure that the instrument truly captures the complex relationship between prosperity teachings and congregants' commitment. To establish reliability, a pilot test will be conducted using a small group of respondents outside the main study area. The responses will be analysed using statistical methods such as Cronbach's Alpha, which measures internal consistency. A reliability coefficient of 0.70 or above was considered acceptable, indicating that the instrument produces stable and consistent results.

The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean scores, and standard deviation were used to summarise demographic responses and research questions. Inferential statistics, particularly the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and t-test, were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Given the sensitive nature of religious beliefs and financial practices, ethical considerations are taken seriously in this study. Respondents were informed that participation is voluntary, their responses will remain confidential, the data will be used strictly for academic purposes, and no respondent is forced to participate, and anonymity is maintained throughout the study.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Categories	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–27 years	54	18.2
	28–37 years	78	26.3
	38–47 years	71	23.9
	48–57 years	55	18.5
	58 years and above	39	13.1
Gender	Male	133	44.8
	Female	164	55.2
Marital Status	Single	96	32.3
	Married	159	53.5
	Divorced/Separated	18	6.1
	Widowed	24	8.1
Total		297	100.0

Table 1 shows the demographic distribution of respondents. The table indicates that respondents were drawn from different age groups, genders, marital statuses, lengths of church membership, and levels of church responsibility. The largest proportion of respondents were between 28 and 37 years (26.3%), followed by those aged 38–47 years (23.9%). Females constituted 55.2%, while males constituted 44.8%. More than half of the respondents were married (53.5%).

Research Question One: To what extent is prosperity gospel emphasized in selected churches in Nigeria?

Table 2: Extent of prosperity Gospel in selected churches

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	STD	Decision
1	Prosperity messages are preached regularly during church services.	168	94	22	13	3.58	0.64	Very High
2	Sermons frequently emphasize financial blessings as evidence of God's favour.	149	101	31	16	3.47	0.71	High
3	Members are encouraged to expect material wealth through faith.	161	96	26	14	3.51	0.68	Very High
4	Giving and seed sowing are consistently linked to receiving divine prosperity.	176	87	21	13	3.61	0.59	Very High
5	Testimonies of financial breakthroughs are regularly highlighted during worship.	146	103	32	16	3.44	0.72	High
6	Church programmes frequently focus on success, wealth, and breakthrough.	170	89	25	13	3.55	0.63	Very High
7	Prosperity teaching receives greater emphasis than other biblical doctrines.	141	101	37	18	3.39	0.76	High
	Grand Mean					**3.51**	**0.68**	**Very High**

The results in Table 2 indicate that the prosperity gospel is emphasised to a very high extent in the selected churches in Nigeria, with a grand mean of 3.51 and a standard deviation of 0.68. Respondents strongly agreed that prosperity messages are preached regularly during church services (Mean = 3.58), giving and seed sowing are consistently linked to divine prosperity (Mean = 3.61), and church programmes frequently focus on success, wealth, and breakthrough (Mean = 3.55). Although the statement that prosperity teaching receives greater emphasis than other biblical doctrines recorded the lowest mean (mean = 3.39), it still falls within the high extent category. The relatively low standard deviations indicate a high level of agreement among respondents. The findings suggest that the prosperity gospel constitutes a major focus of preaching and teaching in the selected churches.

Research Question Two: What is the level of commitment among congregants in these churches? (N = 297)
Table 3 Level of commitment among congregants in these churches

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I attend church services regularly.	166	96	23	12	3.54	0.66	Very High
2	I actively participate in church programmes and activities.	151	102	29	15	3.48	0.69	High
3	I willingly volunteer for church assignments.	147	99	34	17	3.41	0.72	High
4	I remain committed to my church during difficult times.	150	101	31	15	3.46	0.70	High
5	I support church projects whenever necessary.	159	96	28	14	3.50	0.67	Very High
6	I encourage others to participate in church activities.	148	101	32	16	3.43	0.73	High
7	I identify strongly with the mission and vision of my church.	168	92	25	12	3.56	0.64	Very High
	Grand Mean					**3.48**	**0.69**	**High**

Table 3 shows that the level of commitment among congregants is high, with a grand mean of 3.48 and a standard deviation of 0.69. Respondents indicated very high commitment in attending church services regularly (Mean = 3.54), supporting church projects (Mean = 3.50), and identifying with the church's mission and vision (Mean = 3.56). Other indicators, including participation in church programmes, volunteering, remaining committed during difficult times, and encouraging others to participate, also recorded high mean scores. The findings imply that members of the selected churches demonstrate a strong commitment to church activities and responsibilities.

Research Question Three: In what ways does prosperity gospel influence the financial commitment of members? (N = 297)

Table 4: Respondents' Perceptions of the Influence of Prosperity Teachings on Financial Giving and Religious Contributions

S/N	Item Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	SD	Decision
1	Prosperity teachings encourage me to pay my tithes faithfully.	178	84	23	12	3.63	0.58	Very High
2	I give offerings more regularly because of prosperity messages.	170	87	27	13	3.55	0.63	Very High
3	Prosperity preaching motivates me to sow seeds for expected blessings.	154	99	30	14	3.47	0.71	High
4	I contribute financially to church projects because of prosperity teachings.	149	101	31	16	3.44	0.69	High
5	I increase my financial giving during prosperity programmes.	162	95	27	13	3.51	0.65	Very High
6	I believe generous giving leads to financial breakthrough.	175	86	23	13	3.60	0.60	Very High
7	Prosperity teachings influence my willingness to make special donations.	156	97	29	15	3.48	0.67	High
	Grand Mean					**3.53**	**0.65**	**Very High**

The findings presented in Table 4 reveal that the prosperity gospel influences the financial commitment of congregants to a very high extent, as evidenced by the grand mean of 3.53 and standard deviation of 0.65. Respondents strongly agreed that prosperity teachings encourage faithful payment of tithes (Mean = 3.63), increase regular offerings (Mean = 3.55), promote generous giving with the expectation of financial breakthrough (Mean = 3.60), and encourage increased financial support during prosperity programmes (Mean = 3.51). The results indicate that prosperity teachings significantly shape members' financial participation and willingness to contribute to church activities.

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between prosperity gospel and congregants' commitment in selected churches in Nigeria.

Table 5: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between Prosperity Gospel and Congregants' Commitment (N = 297)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Prosperity Gospel Teaching	297	3.51	0.68			
Congregants' Commitment	297	3.48	0.69	0.672	0.000	Reject H_{01}

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if $p < 0.05$.

The results in table 5 revealed a strong positive relationship between prosperity gospel and congregants' commitment ($r = 0.672$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that increased emphasis on prosperity gospel is significantly associated with higher levels of commitment among congregants in the selected churches.

Hypothesis Two: Prosperity gospel has no significant effect on the financial commitment of congregants.

Table 6: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Effect of Prosperity Gospel on Financial Commitment (N = 297)

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
0.714	0.510	0.508	0.492

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	74.682	1	74.682	307.964	0.000	
Residual	71.528	295	0.242			
Total	**146.210**	**296**				

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	0.921	0.148		6.223	0.000
Prosperity Gospel	0.744	0.042	0.714	17.549	0.000

The regression analysis in table 6 shows that prosperity gospel has a significant positive effect on the financial commitment of congregants (β = 0.714, t = 17.549, p = 0.000). The model explained 51.0% of the variance in financial commitment (R^2 = 0.510). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Three: Prosperity gospel does not significantly influence the spiritual commitment of church members.
Table 7: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of Prosperity Gospel on Spiritual Commitment (N = 297)

Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error
0.638	0.407	0.405	0.531

ANOVA

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	57.894	1	57.894	202.974	0.000
Residual	84.116	295	0.285		
Total	142.010	296			

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
Constant	1.164	0.152		7.658	0.000
Prosperity Gospel	0.646	0.045	0.638	14.247	0.000

The analysis in Table 7 showed that the prosperity gospel significantly predicts the spiritual commitment of church members (β = 0.638, t = 14.247, p = 0.000). The model accounted for 40.7% of the variation in spiritual commitment. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that the prosperity gospel is emphasised to a very high extent in the selected churches in Nigeria, with a grand mean of 3.51, which exceeds the criterion mean of 2.50. Specifically, respondents agreed that prosperity messages are preached regularly during church services, financial blessings are frequently presented as evidence of God's favour, giving and seed sowing are linked with divine rewards, testimonies of financial breakthroughs are commonly highlighted, and church programmes often

focus on wealth, success, and breakthrough. These findings indicate that prosperity theology has become a dominant feature of the doctrinal emphasis and ministerial activities of the selected churches.

The prominence of prosperity teaching may be attributed to Nigeria's socio-economic realities. High rates of unemployment, poverty, inflation, and economic uncertainty have created a context in which messages promising divine intervention in financial and material matters resonate strongly with many worshippers. Consequently, prosperity preaching often serves not only as a theological message but also as a source of psychological hope and emotional resilience for congregants seeking solutions to economic hardship. This finding suggests that prosperity theology continues to function as both a religious and socio-economic phenomenon within contemporary Nigerian Christianity.

The finding is consistent with the work of Asamoah-Gyadu (2021), who reported that prosperity theology remains one of the defining characteristics of contemporary African Pentecostalism because it addresses believers' aspirations for economic empowerment, health, social mobility, and personal success. According to the author, many African Christians perceive prosperity messages as practical demonstrations of God's power in addressing everyday challenges, thereby increasing the appeal of such teachings.

Similarly, Bowler (2020) observed that prosperity theology has expanded beyond its original North American context and has become deeply integrated into many African churches, where messages on divine favour, miraculous breakthrough, financial increase, and positive confession attract large congregations. Bowler argued that prosperity teaching often emphasises the reciprocal relationship between faith, generous giving, and divine blessings, thereby encouraging members to participate actively in church programmes and financial activities.

The findings also corroborate those of Gifford (2022), who found that prosperity messages dominate many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches across sub-Saharan Africa because they provide theological explanations for wealth creation, entrepreneurial success, and personal advancement. Gifford further noted that prosperity preaching is increasingly disseminated through television broadcasts, social media platforms, crusades, conferences, and digital ministries, thereby expanding its influence beyond traditional church settings.

The findings align with Afolayan and Adeyemi (2023), who found that prosperity-related themes constituted a significant proportion of sermons delivered in selected Pentecostal churches in southwestern Nigeria. Their study concluded that pastors frequently associate faithful giving, tithing, and seed sowing with divine multiplication, financial breakthroughs, and supernatural favour. Furthermore, Okafor and Nwankwo's (2022) study corroborates with the findings of this study; it reported that prosperity messages have become central to the identity and growth strategies of many urban churches in southeastern Nigeria, where sermons often focus on success, wealth creation, and breakthrough testimonies.

However, while the present findings support the widespread emphasis on prosperity theology, they also raise important theological concerns. Critics argue that excessive focus on material prosperity may inadvertently reduce the emphasis on other essential Christian doctrines such as repentance, holiness, self-denial, discipleship, servant leadership, and eternal salvation. Piper (2021) contended that the Christian gospel should not be reduced to promises of material success because the New Testament consistently presents suffering, perseverance, and sacrificial service as integral components of Christian discipleship. Similarly, Wright (2020) emphasised that biblical prosperity encompasses spiritual maturity, righteousness, peace, reconciliation with God, and eternal hope, rather than merely financial abundance.

The high level of commitment observed in this study may be explained by the central role religion occupies in Nigerian society. Christianity, particularly Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity, has become an important source of social identity, emotional support, spiritual security, and community belonging. Consequently, many believers develop a strong attachment to their churches because they perceive them not merely as places of worship but also as centres of hope, social interaction, counselling, and economic encouragement. This social and spiritual attachment naturally translates into consistent participation in church activities and commitment to church programmes.

The findings of this study revealed that prosperity gospel influences the financial commitment of members to a very high extent, as indicated by the grand mean of 3.53, which is above the criterion mean of 2.50. Specifically, respondents agreed that prosperity teachings encourage the faithful payment of tithes, regular offerings, seed sowing, donations towards church projects, partnership commitments, and generous financial support for church programmes. The respondents also believed that giving is closely associated with receiving divine favour, financial breakthroughs, and material blessings. These findings suggest that prosperity theology has become a significant motivational factor influencing the financial behaviour of congregants within the selected churches.

The high level of financial commitment observed in this study may be explained by the theological foundation of prosperity teaching, which emphasises that financial giving is an act of faith capable of attracting divine blessings. In many Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, believers are taught that generosity toward God's work creates opportunities for supernatural increase, protection from financial hardship, and access to divine favour. Consequently, members often perceive

financial giving not merely as a religious obligation but as a spiritual investment that yields both spiritual and material rewards.

The findings of this study are consistent with the work of Bowler (2020), who observed that prosperity theology encourages believers to regard financial giving as a covenant practice through which divine blessings are activated. According to Bowler, prosperity-orientated ministries frequently emphasise biblical passages relating to tithing, offerings, seed faith, and sacrificial giving as channels through which believers experience God's abundant provision. This theological orientation significantly influences members' attitudes toward financial contributions.

Also the finding of Asamoah-Gyadu (2021) reported that prosperity preaching has transformed financial participation within many African Pentecostal churches by encouraging members to contribute generously toward church development, missionary activities, welfare programmes, and evangelistic outreaches. The author noted that members often interpret generous giving as an expression of faith in God's promises rather than merely fulfilling institutional obligations.

The findings further demonstrate that the prosperity gospel significantly contributes to congregants' commitment by encouraging regular church attendance, active participation in church programmes, volunteer services, financial stewardship, and identification with church goals. Prosperity teachings appear to strengthen members' confidence in God's ability to intervene in their personal circumstances and motivate greater involvement in church life. Consequently, prosperity theology serves as an important motivational resource that enhances organisational participation and congregational growth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concludes that the prosperity gospel has both benefits and drawbacks for Christian commitment. Rather, its influence depends largely on how it is interpreted, communicated, and practiced within individual churches. When prosperity teaching is presented within the broader framework of biblical truth, emphasising salvation, holiness, stewardship, discipleship, ethical leadership, and service to humanity, it contributes positively to church growth and holistic Christian development. Conversely, where prosperity is presented merely as a guarantee of material wealth or financial success, it may encourage unrealistic expectations and conditional commitment among believers.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Church leaders should present prosperity teachings within the broader framework of biblical discipleship. Prosperity messages should be balanced with teachings on salvation, holiness, repentance, humility, stewardship, perseverance, and Christian service to ensure that members develop mature and enduring faith.
2. Pastors should strengthen discipleship and biblical literacy programmes. Churches should organise regular Bible studies, leadership training, theological seminars, and discipleship classes that help members understand biblical prosperity as holistic well-being, encompassing spiritual, moral, emotional, social, and material dimensions.
3. Churches should promote financial accountability and transparency. Financial management systems should include periodic financial reports, internal auditing, and accountability mechanisms that strengthen members' confidence in the administration of church resources.
4. Denominational authorities should strengthen doctrinal oversight. Regular monitoring, ministerial training, and theological supervision should be established to ensure that prosperity teachings remain consistent with sound biblical doctrine and do not encourage materialism or commercialisation of the gospel.

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