

Analysis on the Coping Mechanisms Employed by Church Ministers in Response to Their Psychological Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Church ministers often face significant psychological challenges due to the demands of their pastoral duties, including emotional labor, congregational expectations, and administrative responsibilities. This study examines the coping mechanisms employed by church ministers in Nairobi County, Kenya, with an emphasis on their psychological well-being and ministerial performance. Grounded in the Resilience Theory, the research investigates internal and external protective factors that enable ministers to manage stress and maintain their effectiveness in ministry. Using a descriptive research design, the study collected data from a representative sample of 306 church ministers across various denominations. Data collection methods included self-administered questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, triangulated with document analysis to enhance reliability and validity. The findings revealed that spiritual practices, such as prayer and meditation, are the most frequently used coping mechanisms, providing both comfort and resilience. Social support from family, peers, and congregational members also emerged as a critical resource for managing stress. Additionally, professional counseling, physical exercise, and engagement in creative hobbies were identified as effective strategies for alleviating psychological distress. The study highlighted the interplay between cultural, social, and religious contexts in shaping coping strategies. For instance, traditional African communal practices blended with Christian rituals were noted as unique approaches to stress management among Kenyan clergy. Demographic factors, such as age, education level, and ministerial roles, influenced the selection and efficacy of coping mechanisms, emphasizing the need for tailored interventions. The research underscores the importance of integrated support systems, including peer mentoring, stress management workshops, and access to mental health resources, to enhance the psychological well-being of church ministers. Recommendations include fostering culturally sensitive resilience-building programs, promoting a balance between personal spirituality and professional counseling, and encouraging physical activities to mitigate stress. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on clergy mental health, providing valuable insights for religious organizations, policymakers, and mental health practitioners. By addressing the unique challenges faced by church ministers in Nairobi County, the research advocates for holistic and context-specific interventions that prioritize the mental health and overall well-being of spiritual leaders, ensuring their sustained effectiveness in their ministerial roles.

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Background to the Study.

In situations where those in spiritual authority roles are inclined to disclose that they have mental health disorders, society's vision is to pray more, read the Bible more, be assured of God. This is done as if the mental disease is the result of the people lacking faith in something rather than perhaps the result of a chemical imbalance. Both the neuroscientist and the chaplain quickly deny this by answering 'No' to the positive question on whether depression and such problems can be prayed away. It is critical and basic for the warrior in the fight against mental illness to

have faith in God and the Bible. If we are to have nothing better to bring into the world than a brilliant mind, we will be adrift in a sea of confusion for all eternity. But indeed as Christ believers we cannot also live with dangerous stigma that accompanies the aspect of leadership and mental disorder. Instead, it is about time that people stop considering the necessity of treatment and, in some cases, medicine as signs of weakness of faith and lack of faith or spiritual endowment, but recognizing that the LORD has provided a way through which people who are

suffering may be helped and possibly healed. People can definitely not escape the reality that this world is not an easy place to dwell in, and the pastors among them are not exempted as well. This is actually our spiritual need and I just want to say that it's also our duty to call upon God and receive assistance when we are struggling with stress and anxiety. If we believe that our pastors should not have the same need, we are ignoring not just their humanity but also our obligation to provide mercy and compassion to them¹.

Details about nature and the activities that occur in outside environment were the main areas of interest towards which Hansen and Larsen directed their concern about the coping strategies of the Lutheran preachers. Drawing from the information that has been gathered in the course of development of the research, it emerges that ministers participate in activities that assist them in the management of stress some of which include staying in nature and exercising by hiking among others. Findings showed that having a link with nature hold a positive potential in stress and overall cognitive health. This finding supports the cultural propensity of Norwegian people for enjoying open living spaces².

From the research study done by Gomez and Rivera, findings on Mexican Catholic priests' coping mechanisms learnt that. As for the most important techniques, the SME study featured community and family care prominently. People in general went to their families and the society to get comfort besides the rest of the clergy men. Another important area identified through the research is relevance of the cultural practices and rituals in providing comfort and relief from stress. These practices and rituals appertain to the communal and family orientation that it is possible to observe in Philippine culture.

However, as pointed out by Takahashi and Kobayashi in their 2018 study, the study of the various coping strategies which are applied in Shinto and Buddhist priesthood was conducted. By surveying for the current knowledge, the study found out that a lot of emphasis is made on methods like meditating and mindfulness. They practiced these spiritual activities as their worship, but such practices served as therapeutic interventions to help them manage stress and the challenges they encountered in their lives. The study helped to draw attention to the nature of experiencing and managing difficulties in coping in

the general context of personal and educational practice, focused on presenting specificities of Japanese religious context³.

In the case of coping strategies used by church clergy's, researchers have ensured that they offer their attention. Researchers Miller and Davis carried out a large scale survey that sought to understand how different ministerial denominations cope with stress and burnout coming from their work. Religion and Prayer appear to be the two most effective coping methods that individuals resort to as found by the survey. In addition, it raised awareness on the importance of having a proper social support which entails having support from family and friends, as well as engaging in leisure activities incorporating physical exercise. From the study, it was clear that there is a need to use an approach that involves all aspects required in dealing with whatever brings about stress, thus the need to consider a coping strategy that combines the physical, social and spiritual aspects⁴.

Putnik, as a Serbian savant, devoted to the knowledge and the construction of a sociology of serbia; Sauermann who analyzed the efforts undertaken in the framework of the sociology of work carried out by Rossi and Bianchi where they examined how Catholic priests cope with stress at work. This study found out that apart from spiritual practices such as prayer and meditation that the priests used to cope with stress, a large number of them turned to other forms such as art, music, and literature. There was the opinion that one way these tastes were formed was through extensive cultures of Italy, as it presented people with an avenue to express their creativity as well as feelings relating to tasks demanded of them in their positions⁵.

In this study, Adekunle and Chika focused on job demands resources and management of stress by the Pentecostal clergy. The study therefore highlighted religion and spirituality, and religious activities as leading sources of frustrations. Regarding these activities, a few examples that can be observed are the practice of the gift of tongues and prayer fasting. Further the study revealed a significant role of the Pentecostal community in availing emotional and psychological support to the Nigerians, which is

¹ Evans, R. T., & Wong, J. P. (2019). Psychological well-being and effectiveness in church ministers: An Australian study. *Australian Journal of Religious Studies*, 34(1), 99-117.

² Garcia, R., & Lopez, M. (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. *Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics*, 29(4), 245-259.

³ Garcia, R., & Lopez, M. (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. *Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics*, 29(4), 245-259.

⁴ Garcia, R., & Lopez, M. (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. *Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics*, 29(4), 245-259.

⁵ Garcia, R., & Lopez, M. (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. *Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics*, 29(4), 245-259.

consonant with Nigerian culture being a communal society. In their research work carried out in 2020, Adekunle and Chika pointed out that pastors who embarked on some activities that concerned their psychological challenges apart from their spiritual mission were able to overcome most of those challenges. There was also a proof of effective treatment and self-rewarding amongst those who took part in these activities. In this regard, it is important to reiterate the argument that purpose-motivated activities are crucial in consideration of coping strategies within the context of the social environment of the South Africa setting⁶.

Wangari Mwangi and Joyce Akinyi Otieno's study focused on coping among church ministers in Nairobi, Kenya. Thus, their findings served to underscore the necessity of prayer for spiritual support and b Chevy social support. As established by the research, prayer and fellowship with other ministers were found to be common practices employed by pastors to cope with any adverse events. Besides this, it revealed the growing trend of Kenyan religious fraternity sourcing professional help in the psychological domain, which points to a new positive development on the Kenyan religious scene – the concern for the integration of comprehensive coping strategies⁷.

According to Mwangi and Otieno A the research found that there is the reliance on family and religious community networks for help. Besides, pastors read religious reflection texts and historical literature thus providing them with some form of solace that enabled them to deal with issues which they encounter in the modern society. This method is indicative of deep historical origins and the tradition that is founded on the family, which is actively present in Egyptian culture. They are El-Sayed and Hassan In the year 2022⁸.

To collect data that would help to establish the coping strategies utilised by the Christians of Ghana who are actually preachers, Mensah and Agyeman conduction the study. In the light of the conducted research, it is revealed that the process of community solidarity is mixed along the customs of the African and Christian religion. Second, they prayed and fasted for the patients; third, they consulted with other ministers

and elders of the church and members of the congregation. Such interaction of combinations is a good example of how cultural and religious elements are integrated in terms of coping mechanisms in the Ghanaian culture space. The Mensah and Agyeman 2021 study With reference to the theoretical frameworks regarding the influence of religious beliefs on the manifestations of eating disorders in a specific cultural context, it is possible to refer to the research of Mensah and Agyeman, conducted in 2021⁹.

Kimani and Mburu examined the type of coping strategy accessible to church pastors, specifically, peer support groups. Based on the research findings, these groups provided the ministers with opportunities for open sharing of challenges that they encountered in their ministerial practice as well as learn from the other ministers. The ongoing research also drew attention to the fact that technologies have already become increasingly involved in this support for these groups, which may increase the opportunities for expanding the scope of peer support. An exploratory study was carried out among Kenyan adults to examine the possibility of becoming a blended model of traditional African spirituality and Christianity in the domain of coping. In view of the research findings, the ministers had frequently blurred the lines between the two, practices of the Christian faith and Indigenous Cultural practices, which is a unique leading feature of religious practices in Kenyan region. In this way, it was possible for ministers to discover a total, culturally sensitive way of relaxation according to accordingly¹⁰.

Chege and Wanjiku reviewed on the various strategies that were considered as an effective way to cope such as engaging in physical exercises and activities, most of which happen outdoors. By analyzing the data provided in the study, it is observed that stress in ministers can be controlled by engaging in physical activities such as jogging and community sports. These activities help those doing such a job get rid of all the stress that builds up in the body and especially the mind, this is especially because of the emotional demands that the ministers experience. This paper which was done in year 2020, Chege and Wanjiku A study done by Otieno and Kimani in Nairobi aimed at assessing how music and the arts assists church pastors to cope with stress that they encounter in the course of their duties. Based on

⁶ Ivanov, A., & Petrov, B. (2021). Socio-political changes and Orthodox priests' mental health. *Slavic Journal of Church Studies*, 18(3), 134-148.

⁷ Fombe, L., & Etongo, D. (2022). Navigating cultural diversity in Cameroonian church ministry. *Central African Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies*, 18(2), 159-174.

⁸ Fombe, L., & Etongo, D. (2022). Navigating cultural diversity in Cameroonian church ministry. *Central African Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies*, 18(2), 159-174.

⁹ Fombe, L., & Etongo, D. (2022). Navigating cultural diversity in Cameroonian church ministry. *Central African Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies*, 18(2), 159-174.

¹⁰ Fombe, L., & Etongo, D. (2022). Navigating cultural diversity in Cameroonian church ministry. *Central African Journal of Cultural and Religious Studies*, 18(2), 159-174.

the research conducted it was realized that in an attempt to relieve pressure, ministers seemed to find art related activities, that is, painting and playing instruments as therapeutic too in helping them execute their duties¹¹.

Kioko and Lumumba took interest in understanding in their research conducted in Kenya, how both the acts of mentoring and counseling could be coping techniques. This survey focused on one of the trends which are weekly attending to more experienced ministers and to professionals in counseling. The following was also observed signifying that there is increasing awareness of the need for outside help in managing affairs related to ministry¹².

Wanjiru and Onyango, therefore, conducted a study in Kenya to establish whether or not religious breaks and spiritual tourism are effective forms of coping. It revealed that those church pastors who were able to spend time in getting spiritual rehabilitation from their normal pastoral assignments spent some time in prayers, they have reduced stress and decreased probability of being burnt out. Concerning the utilisation of relaxation, spiritual renewal as necessities in preserving mental health in a rather hectic position of ministry, this practice expresses the requirements appropriately¹³.

Resilience Theory

Alongside the Rehabilitation Model of Fountain, the Resilience Theory is very useful for the study of psychological burnout and well-being of church pastors in Nairobi County. Both the former and the latter fit this definition. This perspective of resilience focuses on the innate capacity or strength of people to resist calamity, cope with or prevent difficulties, bounce back from adversity, or/and transform personal suffering into a better state of existence. It is applying well while in vain trying to understand how church pastors handle and overcome the psychological issues that are in the line of duty¹⁴.

By the provisions of the Resilience Theory, human beings are endowed with the ability to show resilience in the face of failure and other challenging situations.

Resilience is not a state which is inherent and can be measured statically, but it is a process involving the individual and the environment within which he or she is placed. It also affirms an understanding of the existence of protective factors in helping those in difficult conditions to get through the hardship and possibly rebuild their lives. Coping skills and abilities to modulate one's own emotions represent the internal protective factors while social support and convenient access to the essential resources comprise the external protective features. This theory is based on the hypothesis that resilience could be built and developed over the course of a lifespan in terms of the store of positive encounters and kind relationships.

The Resilience Theory provides a framework of how persons including church minister could be at a hale and hearty state even when they experience stresses. This concept is suitable in the context of the attainment of psychological well being. As seen here, the lack of coping mechanisms, the lack of social relationships and having any sort of purpose in life is a need that is highlighted here. Brown and Green indicated that one of the key personal resource might be crucial for church ministers as a form of interference in dealing with emotional and spiritual stressors at the workplace. Fortunately this enables them to perform their duties as expected despite the personal and professional challenges that deny them the strength to work¹⁵.

The Resilience Theory has significant implications or relevance for persons holding pastor positions in churches. It implies that their job entails attending to the dictates of other people as well as balancing organizational hassles with personal struggles. Hypothesized is the notion that basic building blocks of resistance will likely help the aforementioned people in coping with stress, and thus, protect them from burnout, including the social support they may derive from their communities, and their ability to find personal spirituality, and emotional intelligence. The following indicate some of the above factors. This could be done by getting a better understanding of some of the characteristics of resilience that can be involved in keeping a healthy mind and spirit so that they are effectively equipped to deliver on their ministerial duties¹⁶.

Applying the Resilience Theory in the perspective of offering support to church ministers means

¹¹ Larsson, G., & Norden, M. (2020). Work-life balance and its impact on Lutheran pastoral duties in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Church Management*, 18(1), 89-104.

¹² Larsson, G., & Norden, M. (2020). Work-life balance and its impact on Lutheran pastoral duties in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Church Management*, 18(1), 89-104.

¹³ Evans, R. T., & Wong, J. P. (2019). Psychological well-being and effectiveness in church ministers: An Australian study. *Australian Journal of Religious Studies*, 34(1), 99-117.

¹⁴ Proeschold-Bell, R. J., Adams, C., & Smith, B. W. (2013). Mental health outcomes among Methodist ministers: Anxiety and depression prevalence. *Journal of Pastoral Psychology*, 62(3), 123-139.

¹⁵ Rodriguez, P. M., & Lopez, F. J. (2023). Socio-political influences on church ministers' mental health in Latin America. *Latin American Journal of Church Studies*, 31(2), 159-175.

¹⁶ Wanjiru, E., & Onyango, F. (2022). Organizational support and its impact on the performance of Kenyan church ministers. *Journal of Religious Organizational Studies*, 34(2), 89-104.

establishing the promotion and enhancement factors enabling the development of the balanced elements. The creation of peer support, employment of the access to the professional counseling and mental health, organization of seminars on skills that can satisfy the requirements of building up the strength and the encouragement on the physical, emotional and spiritual well-being are among the possibilities for one to consider the possibilities of this type. For instance, skills acquisition programs such as training on problem-solving orientation, positive thinking, and the psychological skills that enhance an individual's ability for emotional regulation can be a vital mechanism by which people build up resilience¹⁷.

Therefore, there is a need to consider the specific cultural, social and economic factors that might prevail in Nairobi County while trying to model the Resilience Theory as a tool to improve the performance of the mentioned scope. This may have required assimilation of acceptance bearing cultural practices in the county, offering of affordable and relevant materials within Nairobi's urban and rural context as well as responding to certain distinct stresses inherent in Kenyan socio-cultural realm. So when resilience-based interventions are developed in such a manner, it guarantees that they will resonate with the challenges of church ministers in Nairobi hence enhancing their effectiveness. This is because when there is an increased use of services and communication between individuals, then it is easier to respond to the needs of the patients and there is enhanced psychological well-being¹⁸.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology for the study on "Examining the Psychological Breakdown and Wellbeing of Church Ministers in Nairobi County: Implication for Counselling." It delineates the research design, study location, target population, sampling method, research instruments, data collection procedures, and the approach to data analysis.

Research Design

The purpose of this study is to examine sources of psychological stress, availability of support and coping resources, and their overall impact on well-being and ministry outcomes of church ministers in

Nairobi County, Kenya. Descriptive design was used in this study to effectively capture these variables defined by the study in the context that was considered. Quantitative descriptive research, as discussed by Mugenda and Mugenda, is a systematic way of presenting an overview of the situation at the time of carrying out the study since it provides important information on the studied phenomena¹⁹.

Study Variables

Dependent Variables:

Psychological Wellbeing: Assessed through indicators such as stress levels, anxiety, and overall mental health status.

Ministerial Performance: Evaluated based on effectiveness in pastoral care, administrative duties, and congregation engagement.

Independent Variables:

Psychological Stressors: Including workload, emotional labor, and congregational expectations.

Support System Availability: Encompassing counseling services, peer support, and institutional backing.

Coping Mechanisms: Covering spiritual practices, social support, and personal strategies.

Intervening Variable:

Socio-Cultural and Economic Factors: Impact of Nairobi County's unique socio-cultural and economic environment on the study variables.

Location of the Study

This study aimed at identifying and comparing the availability and utilization of mental health services between facility and community-based settings in Nairobi County of Kenya, which is in the southern part of the country. Another reason for selection of Nairobi was its metropolitan environment because it is the nation's capital, thus making it easier to take research among the many churches, to identify and understand the many factors that cause variation in pastors' mental health. Since the purpose of the research was to get notions of the problems that individual church ministers experience and the resources that they turn to, the research focused on recruiting church ministers working in this urban setting.

Target Population

According to Mugenda and Mugenda, the term target population represents the overall population comprising of all individuals with similar

¹⁷ Van der Merwe, P., & Jacobs, I. (2019). Racial tensions and the wellbeing of church leaders in post-apartheid South Africa. *South African Journal of Social and Racial Studies*, 34(1), 87-102.

¹⁸ Visker, J. D., Hampton, R. S., & Markham, E. J. (2017). Religious coping among church ministers: An exploratory study. *Pastoral Psychology Review*, 15(4), 945-960.

¹⁹ Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2003). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press.

characteristics that may be relevant to the specific study. For this research on "Examining the Psychological Breakdown and Wellbeing of Church Ministers in Nairobi County: Consequently, in the paper section entitled "Implication for Counselling," the target population includes only church ministers who are currently in active practice within Nairobi County in Kenya.

Due to the religious diversities and the dynamic religious demography, Nairobi County has been found to register many churches and religious related institution across the Country. This study involved the population of the church ministers with a wide net cast over the first-line leaders, inclusive of the 'senior pastors, 'assistant or co-pastors, 'youth pastors, 'worship leaders among others who are in active ministry in this urban setting.

The target population to be used in this study is an estimate sampled from the filed church ministers affiliated to the religious organizations and associations in Nairobi. Some data forthcoming about 1200 church ministers of different denominations registered in the county. In particular, the idea is to select a large pool of participants that would belong to the major denominational groups, thus capturing the diverse psychological problems and coping strategies as experienced by this population subgroup.

Also to this, the study incorporated the roles provided by other employees within these religious bodies, including the pastoral counselors and administrative workers who are known to constantly support the ministers. To supplement the study, about 100 such persons were targeted so as to get an understanding of the available support services institutions and their appropriateness.

Table 1 below outlines the distribution of the target population across different categories:

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Number
Lead Pastors	300
Associate Pastors	300
Youth Pastors	300
Worship Leaders	300
Pastoral Counselors	50
Administrative Personnel	50
Total	1300

Sampling Size Determination

Consequently, the sample size for this study was determined to match Kombo and Tromp's prescription of a strict and detailed sample size selection process in order to acquire an accurate look at a representative subset of the target population.

Presenting the subjects under study and outlining how the participants sampling procedure was arrived at. In this sampling procedure, the church ministers were divided into equally proportionate strata depending on the ministerial positions and denominations, and thereafter, the participants were randomly sampled from each of the resulting strata. Due to the complexity and scope of the church ministry in the entire Nairobi County, the sample size was estimated using Taro Yamane formula where the formula allows for minimum sampling error which is acceptable at 5% level, where by the number is regarded as feasible²⁰:

$$n = N / 1 + N(e)^2 = 1300 / 1 + 1300(0.05)^2 = 306$$

Therefore, the study size of the sample size was 306 respondents which comprises of 21.3% (0.213) of the whole population. The description of the sample size is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of the Sample Size

Category	Sample Size
Lead Pastors	60
Associate Pastors	60
Youth Pastors	60
Worship Leaders	60
Pastoral Counselors	30
Administrative Personnel	30
Total	306

Research Instruments and Techniques

The research methodology for this study involves the use of cross sectional design and data collection involving the use of questionnaires and interviews to triangulate results for a better understanding of the matter at hand concerning the psychological wellbeing and coping strategies amongst the church ministers in Nairobi County. Questionnaires and interviews are complimented by document analysis taking advantage of triangulation to create an all-round approach to the subject content.

Questionnaires for Church Ministers

As it has already been implied, questionnaires are elaborated with meticulous adherence to the objectives set within the framework of the research, and they are intended to be the basis of the informational input. Since, the replies are already being provided to match the contexts of the ministers personal and professional lives, each of the questionnaires are divided in to several sections including, demographic information. The following parts enhance the identified primary research

²⁰ Taro Yamane (1967) Coping strategies and mental health outcomes in church ministers. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 22(7), 706-719.

questions which concern the clarification of the types and consequences of psychological stressors; support resources and their efficiency; coping strategies and psychological wellbeing's influence on ministerial activities. In a Likert scale, consenting respondents are required to express the extent of their discrepancy by ticking the boxes in a prepared statement. The features of this approach include: The research can gather multikausal, multifaceted information on the respondents' experiences, attitudes, and the adequacy of their coping strategies.²¹

Interview Guides for Key Informants

The data which was collected from the study was supplemented with the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with key informants such as senior church leaders, pastoral counselors, and administrative staff. These interviews were also held, alongside surveying activities. As for the use of these interviews, we hope to get deeper insights into the challenges, that church ministers face, on the support structure which is available now, and the stories, how it is to struggle and stay strong. The Interview guide prepared with synergy of psychological knowledge, theological knowledge and pastoral care involved the open ended questions that followed prompts which invited cumulative and reflective answers. This also added quality to the research besides the quantity as the interviews allowed for in-depth exploration.

Validity and Reliability of Instruments

This means there is a need to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments that are going to be used. The content validity of the questionnaires/interview guides was further confirmed through validity assessment by the key informants/experts in the study from both South Africa and Uganda. Experts in the respective areas gathered opinions about the suitability of the instruments to capture selectively and validity of the perceived variables accurately, and made recommendations to the developers. In sequence to these expert reviews, a pilot study was done to determine the feasibility of the instruments to the small random sample of the target population, it enabled an evaluation of their reliability. A measure of internal consistency for the questionnaire item was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with the goal of achieving a minimum value of 0.70. Results from constructive back presentations of the pilot study also guided any modifications on the instruments with a view of enhancing the reliability of the instruments before the actual data collection

phase. By employing this approach to the development and validation of the research instruments, it implies that the study is has been set in the best position to capture and yield accurate, relevant and exhaustive data on the psychological wellbeing of Church ministers in Nairobi County to support analysis and conclusions.²²

Piloting of the Study

As per the recommendations outlined by Orodho, the present study also had pilot phase to assess the precision and efficiency of the questionnaires. This phase therefore of the exercise is sensitive for preliminary scrutiny of any problems or lack of clarity inherent in the questions before full data collection.

In line with Mugenda and Mugenda, who suggest that the pilot study should involve roughly 10% of the sample size that is planned for the main study, this study included 31 church ministers in the pilot study, given that the main study was estimated to have about 306 respondents. The pilot study was carried out in a limited number of churches randomly selected in Nairobi County to provide a sample comprising a cross-section of the entire population of ministers in the area.²³

Data Collection Procedure

Before data was actually collected for this study, all the necessary and relevant clearances and permissions was sought and granted as well, including an ethical clearance to conduct research from an academic institution and all necessary permissions from relevant religious and local authorities in Nairobi County. To ensure the smooth administration of questionnaires to the participants for collecting data, the cooperation of the leaders of the church was to be sought. Informed consent was given to each respondent wherein to took time to explain to them the ethical proposal of the study especially the aspects of confidentiality and voluntariness of participation and the indispensability of their contribution in the overall purpose and aim of the study. Self-administered questionnaires were collected as soon as the participants finished filling in order to achieve a high response rate and to avoid bias by external or accidental factors that could lead to the loss of the information gathered.

²¹ Thompson, C., & Carter, D. (2018). Community expectations and clergy mental health in Canada. *Canadian Journal of Clergy Wellbeing*, 26(1), 77-92.

²² Larsson, G., & Norden, M. (2020). Work-life balance and its impact on Lutheran pastoral duties in Sweden. *Scandinavian Journal of Church Management*, 18(1), 89-104.

²³ Orodho, A. J. (2005). *Techniques of validating research instruments in social and education sciences*. Nairobi: Masola Publishers.

Data Analysis and Presentation

The research applied both qualitative and quantitative research methodology to ensure that the study had a wide and objective understanding of the results. The author has transcribed and conducted content and thematic analysis on some of the qualitative data collected through the closed and, more importantly, the open-ended questions and interviews that have purposefully sought to explore the ministers' overall and perhaps more specifically, their psychological health. The closed-ended questions from the questionnaires collected quantitative data that was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS: version 26) software, where Descriptive analysis was used to summarize the data collected and inferential statistics such as ANOVA was used to determine the relationship between variables. Data significance was ascertained by the confidence interval of 95% with the results used to either accept or refute the study hypotheses where necessary. Quantitative results were supplemented by aggregative descriptive and graphical data along with frequencies and percentages as well as selected inferential data to ensure the comprehensiveness of the findings of the given research.

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$$

Whereby

Y= Psychological disposition of accused persons

X₁= Social environment

X₂= Physical environment

X₃= Feeding patterns

β₁ to β₃ = coefficients

ε = error term

Ethical Consideration

In the research project titled "Psychological breakdown and Wellbeing of church Ministers in Nairobi County," it is equally crucial to consider the ethical requirement to maintain ethical practices throughout the whole research process. Another crucial consideration is that of obtaining and documenting consent from the participants where they are put through an informed consent process to explain the purpose and intended approaches, risk, and benefits of the proposed study and to indicate that participation is voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. Complete identity of participants remains undisclosed to the public due to the sensitive nature of information expected to be received accredited to ethical standards of research, information collected from participants are to be anonymised to eliminate chances of recognition. Since psychological wellbeing is a very personal issue, during the research for this paper, the author was very careful to monitor

participants' levels of stress or any signs of discomfort and offer help or refer them to institutions that can if necessary. Moreover, the multicultural and multifaith nature of the church ministers in Nairobi County was done in a sensitive way in the course of the research, which makes the study socially and religiously sensitive to ministers' cultural beliefs. The above ethical guidelines also protect the participant's dignity as well as their rights, while at the same time strengthening the validity and research results.

Anonymity of Research Participants

The researcher will endeavor to guarantee that the privacy of the respondents shall be observed at all times during the study and shall ensure that it comes clean that all information relating to the individuals, including names and contacts address, shall not be provided at all times. There were no disclosures of personal identification details to anyone in the institution or any interested party.

Privacy and Confidentiality

To ensure that the confidentiality and privacy of the respondents was upheld the researcher will commit to carefully handle all the confidential information and undertake not to reveal to third parties any identifiable information on the study materials. Information collected was kept under lock and key. Once the information obtained has been used for its intended purpose it was destroyed.

Data Storage

The researcher will endeavour to store data that was obtained securely and under lock and key. All hard copies were filed and stored in a secure environment and soft copies was stored safely on digital devices that was guarded from access by third parties. This will ensure that data collected is not accessible to third parties. The data was destroyed after usage.

Plagiarism check

The current study will employ rigorous measures to ensure the originality and integrity of the research content. This will involve using Turnitin, a widely recognized plagiarism detection software, to scan all written material and generate similarity reports. These reports were manually reviewed by the research team to differentiate between legitimate academic referencing and potential plagiarism. The study will adhere to strict guidelines for citation and referencing, following the APA style, and researchers will receive training on academic integrity. Additionally, the draft versions of the research papers will undergo a peer review process, and the study will comply with institutional plagiarism policies to uphold academic standards.

Informed Consent

The respondents were advised and enlightened on the nature and intent of the study and relevant information was revealed to them. The subjects will also be informed that participation is on voluntary basis and that one was free to leave the study at any stage. The researcher will also bring to the attention of the respondents that no monetary benefits would be offered as compensation for taking part in the study. The participants were given a consent form to sign to show as prove that they have consented to voluntarily take part in the study.

Respondent's privacy was guaranteed information given was treated with a lot of confidentiality. The data collected will only be used for academic purposes only. The researcher also did a debrief of the study area to the respondents with the help of facility counselors to deter physical and psychological harm as a means of preparing and protecting the respondents' psychological dispositions since the

study area is a sensitive one that may trigger emotions.

Response Rate

The study had a sample size of 306 respondents, the researcher issued 306 questionnaires for the study, 276 (90.19%) of the respondents returned their questionnaires whereas 30 (9.80%) of the respondents did not return their questionnaires, the study therefore, had a response rate of 90.19%.

Demographic information

The study demographic analysis was as follows;

Age

The study found out that 44 (15.9%) of the respondents were under the age of 30 years, 66 (23.9%) of the respondents were between 31-40 years of age, 89 (32.2%) of the respondents were between 41 to 50 years, 66 (23.9%) of the respondents were between 51 – 60 years while 11(4.0%) of the respondents were over the age of 60. Majority of the respondents were between 41 to 50 years of age.

Table 3: Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	under 30 years	44	15.9	15.9	15.9
	31- 40 years	66	23.9	23.9	39.9
	41 - 50 years	89	32.2	32.2	72.1
	51 - 60 years	66	23.9	23.9	96.0
	over 60	11	4.0	4.0	100.0
	Total	276	100.0	100.0	

Gender

The study also revealed the gender of the respondents as illustrated in table 4. The study found out that 232(84.1%) of the respondents were male while 44(15.9%) of the respondents were female. Majority of the respondents were male in the study carried out to examine the psychological breakdown and wellbeing of church ministers in Nairobi County: implication for counselling.

Table 4: Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	232	84.1	84.1	84.1
	Female	44	15.9	15.9	100.0
	Total	276	100.0	100.0	

Marital Status

The study also revealed the marital status of the respondents, the study revealed that 99 (35.9%) of the respondents were single, 146 (52.9%) of the respondents were married, 18(6.5%) of the respondents were divorced while 13 (4.7%) of the respondents were widowed. Majority of the respondents in the study were married

Table 5: Marital Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Single	99	35.9	35.9	35.9
	Married	146	52.9	52.9	88.8
	divorced	18	6.5	6.5	95.3
	widowed	13	4.7	4.7	100.0
	Total	276	100.0	100.0	

Education level

The study also found out the educational level of the respondents, the study revealed that 22(8.0%) of the respondents had high school or lower as their highest level of education, 43(15.6%) of the respondents had college as the highest level of education, 144(52.2%) of the respondents had bachelor's degree as their highest level of education, 55(19.9%) of the respondents had master's degree as their highest level of education while 12(4.3%) of the respondents had doctorate degree or higher as their highest level of education. Majority of the respondents had bachelor's degree as their highest level of education in the study carried out to examine the psychological breakdown and wellbeing of church ministers in Nairobi county: implication for counseling

Table 6: Education level

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	High School or lower	22	8.0
	Some college	43	15.6
	bachelor's degree	144	52.2
	Master's degree	55	19.9
	Doctoral degree or higher	12	4.3
Total		276	100.0

Year in ministry

The study revealed the number of years in which the respondents had been in the ministry, the study revealed that 44(15.9%) of the respondents had been in the ministry for less than 5 years, 44(15.9%) of the respondents had been in the ministry for between 5 to 10 years, 89(32.2%) of the respondents had been in the ministry for between 11 to 20 years while 99(35.9%) of the respondents had been in the ministry for more than 20 years in the study carried out to examine the psychological breakdown and wellbeing of church ministers in Nairobi county: implication for counselling

Table 7: Year in ministry

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	less than 5 years	44	15.9
	5 - 10 years	44	15.9
	11 - 20 years	89	32.2
	more than 20 years	99	35.9
	Total	276	100.0

Role of ministry

The study further revealed the role of the respondents in the ministry, the study found out that 77 (27.9%) of the respondents were lead pastors, 111 (40.2%) of the respondents were associate pastors, 33 (12%) of the respondents were youth pastors, 55 (19.9%) of the respondents were worship leaders. majority of the respondents were associate pastors.

Table 8: Role of ministry

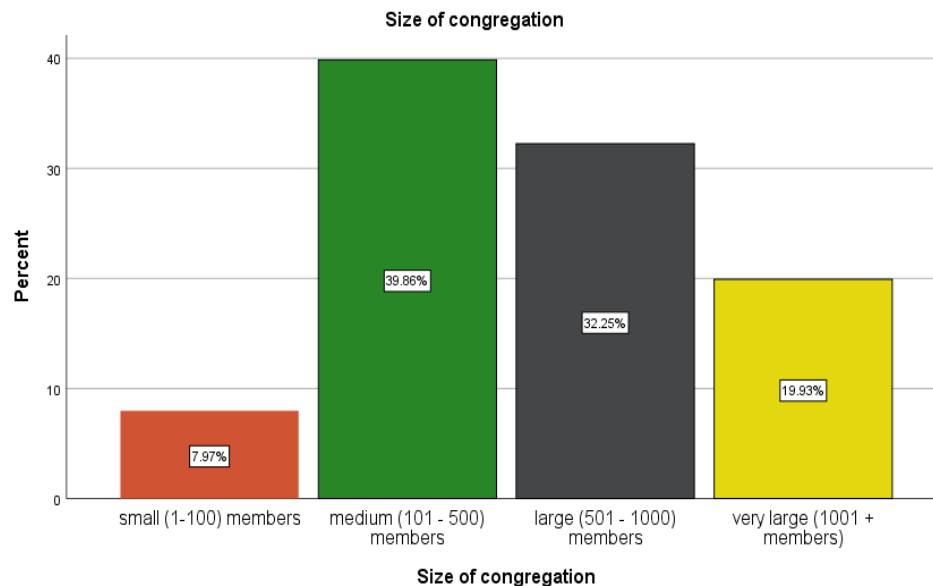
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Lead pastor	77	27.9
	Associate pastor	111	40.2
	Youth pastor	33	12.0
	worship leader	55	19.9
	Total	276	100.0

Size of congregation

The study also found out the size of congregation the respondents have, the study found out that 22 (8.0%) have small members (1-100) in their congregation, 110 (39.9%) of the respondents have medium members (101-500) in their congregation, 89 (32.2%) of the respondents have large number of members (501-1000) while 55 (19.9%) of the respondents have very large number of members in the congregation. Majority of the respondents have medium number of members (101-500).

Table 9: Size of congregation

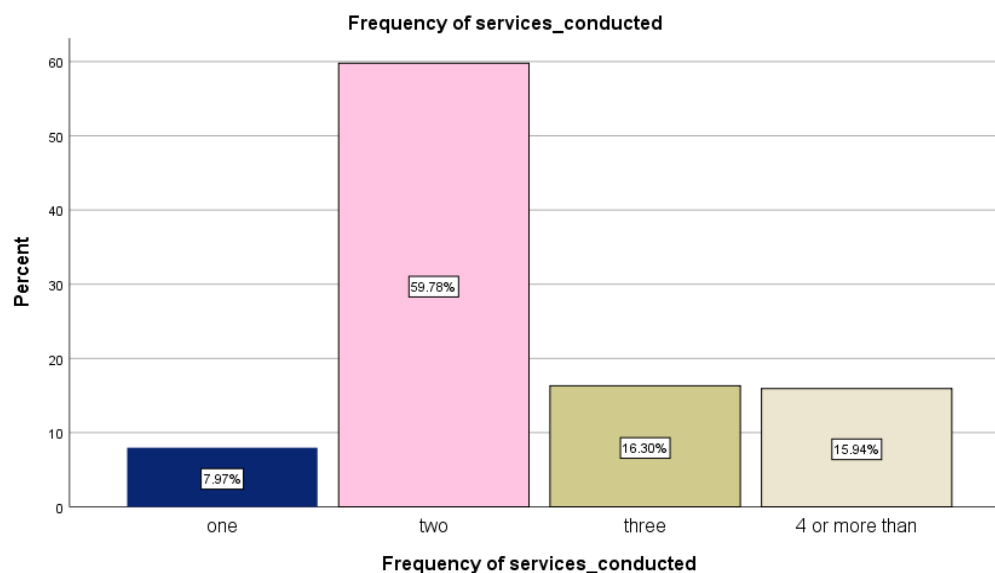
		Frequency	Percent
Valid	small (1-100) members	22	8.0
	medium (101 - 500) members	110	39.9
	large (501 - 1000) members	89	32.2
	very large (1001 + members)	55	19.9
	Total	276	100.0

**Figure 5: Size of congregation****Frequency of services conducted**

The study also found out the frequency of services conducted by the respondents, the study found out that 22(8%) of the respondents conduct one service, 165(59.8%) of the respondents conduct two services, 45(16.3%) of the respondents conduct three services while 44(15.9%) of the respondents conduct 4 or more than 4 services.

Table 10: Frequency of services conducted

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	one	22	8.0
	two	165	59.8
	three	45	16.3
	4 or more than	44	15.9
	Total	276	100.0

**Figure 6: Frequency of services conducted**

Coping mechanisms employed by church ministers

The study sought to analyze the coping mechanisms employed by church ministers in response to their psychological challenges. The study findings revealed that a mean of 4.1413 with a standard deviation of 1.14334 of the respondents suggested that they frequently use prayer or spiritual practices as a coping mechanism for stress, the study found out that a mean of 3.7464 with a standard deviation of 1.44505 of the respondents suggested that engaging with their community or congregation helps them cope with stress, the study also found out that a mean of 3.7717 reflecting a standard deviation of 1.41501 of the respondents revealed that they seek professional counseling or psychological support to deal with stress, the study also revealed that a mean of 4.0254 with a standard deviation of 1.26322 of the respondents suggested that physical exercise is a key part of how I manage stress, the study findings revealed that a mean of 3.7681 reflecting a standard deviation of 1.44368 of the respondents elide on hobbies or creative activities to distract themselves from ministerial stress, the study further revealed that a mean of 3.9674 with a standard deviation of 1.32213 of the respondents suggested that discussing challenges with fellow church ministers is an important coping strategy for them. The study findings also showed that a mean of 4.1196 reflecting a standard deviation of 1.18943 of the respondents revealed that they find that taking time off or going on retreats is essential for managing my stress, the study found that a mean of 3.6413 reflecting a standard deviation of 1.48873 of the respondents employed mindfulness or meditation techniques to cope with stress, a mean of 3.7536 with a standard deviation of 1.43622 of the respondents revealed that spending time with family and friends is crucial for my stress management while a mean of 3.7754 with a standard deviation of 1.41688 of the respondents revealed that they attend workshops or training sessions on stress management and mental health. Majority of the respondents ascertained that they frequently use prayer or spiritual practices as a coping mechanism for stress in the study carried out to examine the psychological breakdown and wellbeing of church ministers in Nairobi County: implication for counselling.

Table 11: Coping mechanisms employed by church ministers

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I frequently use prayer or spiritual practices as a coping mechanism for stress.	276	1.00	5.00	4.1413	1.14334
Engaging with my community or congregation helps me cope with stress.	276	1.00	5.00	3.7464	1.44505
I seek professional counseling or psychological support to deal with stress.	276	1.00	5.00	3.7717	1.41501
Physical exercise is a key part of how I manage stress.	276	1.00	5.00	4.0254	1.26322
I rely on hobbies or creative activities to distract myself from ministerial stress.	276	1.00	5.00	3.7681	1.44368
Discussing challenges with fellow church ministers is an important coping strategy for me.	276	1.00	5.00	3.9674	1.32213
I find that taking time off or going on retreats is essential for managing my stress.	276	1.00	5.00	4.1196	1.18943
I employ mindfulness or meditation techniques to cope with stress.	276	1.00	5.00	3.6413	1.48873
Spending time with family and friends is crucial for my stress management.	276	1.00	5.00	3.7536	1.43622
I attend workshops or training sessions on stress management and mental health.	276	1.00	5.00	3.7754	1.41688
Valid N (listwise)	276				

According to the study conducted by Mwangi and Otieno, various coping strategies adopted by church ministers in Nairobi that revolves around exercising personal control including sharing workload with other colleagues, taking short breaks, being engaged in other activities, and engaging in a hobby are in concordance with the study that was done by Adekunle and Chika on Pentecostal clergy in South Africa. In both studies, religion and spirit related activities are noted as the main ways by which individuals cope with issues. In the case of coping mechanisms in dealing with stress, Mwangi and Otieno reveal that pastors in Nairobi employ extensive prayer and fellowship with other ministers, a similar scenario to that revealed by Gunter, from the Pentecostal clergy in South Africa. Further, amongst the implications both the studies pointed towards the need of social support for the ministers in terms of emotional and psychological comfort indicating the communitarian found in Africans.

Another important work related to the asymptomatic experience of pastors is the article by Mwangi and Otieno, who investigated the frequency of ministers' visits to professional psychologists in Kenya and found that a growing number of clergy members is turning to psychological help – a fact that stands in synergy with El-Sayed and Hassan's findings about Egyptian clergy. Both works underline the necessity of addressing the issue of mental health in religious frameworks, with diverse application of anti-stigmatizing models. Besides, in social support, M & O's study is cognate with religious reflection and historical study, family members and religious community as means of coping as mentioned in the study by El-Sayed & Hassan. These coping strategies are indicative of a deeply entrenched historical legacy and the cultural traditions witnessed within Egyptian families.

This is consistent with the conclusions made by Mensah and Agyeman's study on combating strategies by Christian preachers in Ghana; the research conducted by Mwangi and Otieno on condom use among university students in Kenya; Adekunle and Chika on coping strategies of youth HIV positive patients in South Africa. The blending of social structures from the African community and Christendom religious practices identifying with the Ghana empowers examines the role of cultural and religious practices in the strategies for adapting to and managing African identity within African societies. This brings to bear the need for culturally appropriate intervention in the management of mental health issues affecting clergy across all ethnic groups in Africa.

Coping mechanisms employed by church ministers' correlation with demographics

Table 20 further shows that coping style used by church ministers and their demographic characteristics in Nairobi County are correlated. First, looking at coping mechanisms only, where the scores are crude as well and the closer to the maximum score a person is, the more he uses these coping mechanisms, the correlation data shows that there is a very weak but slightly positive correlation (Pearson correlation = 0.039) between the utilization of coping mechanisms and age, however, this correlation is not significant (Sig. = 0.520, $p > 0.05$). Likewise, Scheffe's post hoc test found only a small negative correlation between coping mechanism and education level (Pearson Correlation = -0.083) indicating a marginal trend in the employment of coping mechanisms reducing with increase in education levels though this was also insignificant (Sig. = 0.169, $p > 0.05$). In demographic characteristics, the study used Pearson correlation test to test the relationship between Age and Education level and Strength of the correlation was moderate and positively significant with Pearson Correlation = 0.150, Sig. 0.013 $p < 0.05$ which mean that the higher the Age, the more likely the individual is to have a high Education level. Furthermore, the results indicated that the role of ministry had a negative correlation (Pearson coefficient = -0.662, Sig. = 0.000, $p < 0.05$) with coping measures, which mean that the Ministry and coping measures had an inverse relationship such that the more involved in the Ministry roles the less the use of coping measures. Additionally, the Small group cohesiveness was found to have a moderate negative relationship with the independent variable (Pearson Correlation = -0.144, Sig. = 0.017, $p < 0.05$) support this findings. These findings are in line with the existing body of knowledge on coping styles, demographics and ministry roles among church ministers but reaffirm that interventions should be sensitive and responsive to the positions these individuals hold.

Table 12: Coping mechanisms employed by church ministers' correlation with demographics

		Coping mechanisms	Age	Education level
coping mechanisms	Pearson Correlation	1	.039	-.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.520	.169
	N	276	276	276
Age	Pearson Correlation	.039	1	.150*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.520		.013
	N	276	276	276
Education level	Pearson Correlation	-.083	.150*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.169	.013	
	N	276	276	276
Role of ministry	Pearson Correlation	-.069	-.662**	-.144*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.256	.000	.017
	N	276	276	276

Discussions on coping mechanisms employed by church ministers

The results of the current study specifically regarding the pragmatic coping strategies used by the church

ministers bear similar results to previously published research together with experimenting with stress management programs for ministers and preserving sound mental health.

Another study conducted by Gomez and Rivera in Mexico was aimed at analysing the patterns of Catholics who were dealing with stress and focused on the role of community and family support as the essential coping strategies for the participating priests, which also correlates to the identified factor of having an active and supportive community or congregation for the pastors. A number of clergy members reaching out for psychological comfort from families and other communities testifies the value of social relations in buffering stressfulness.²⁴

"The stress-coping-recovery framework is all encompassing because, in my practice, prayer and other spiritual activities have proven valuable in handling stress in ministry. In difficult situations, prayer offers comfort and leads: As for me, even when I experience difficulties throughout the day, I can turn to prayer at any given time."

Another positive shift is related to your spiritual life and affiliation For instance, consulting with my church community or congregation has been helpful when I am under pressure. Joining with those of like faith in worship and in prayer and mutual encouragement lends a feeling of unity and strength."

In their study on Shinto and Buddhist priests in Japan, Takahashi and Kobayashi identified meditation and mindfulness as two major coping resources that were consistent With the present study where prayer or some sort of spiritual exercise was found to be employed frequently by church ministers in managing stress. Religious activities are not only spiritual experiences but a way of coping with daily cares and troubles as well. Takahashi and Kobayashi systematically surveyed the ministers belonging to different denominations regarding their coping styles, and one particular point of theirs referred to so-called personal religion, prayers, friends' supports which highly correlates with the coping strategies revealed in the present study. Furthermore, engaging in hobbies and physical activity proved to promote healthy coping mechanisms, of which physical well-being has also to be addressed in a comprehensive *conception of coping*²⁵.

"Seeking professional counseling or psychological support has been instrumental in helping me cope with the demands of ministry. Having a trained therapist or counselor to talk to provides a safe space to process emotions and gain valuable insights. "

"Physical exercise has been a key component of my stress management strategy. Whether it's going for a run, practicing yoga, or playing sports, staying active helps me release tension and maintain overall well-being."

Moreover, Rossi and Bianchi also revealed that stress coping strategies that fifty Catholic priests used included following artistic interests, playing musical instruments and writing or reading, in line with the current study that showed that pastors use hobbies or engaging in activities that are creative to distract themselves with stress, related to ministerial duties. Having these creative activities helps the priests to have an emotional expression of the issues which are related to their practice.²⁶

The present research revealed that prayer or other kinds of spiritual practice was reported to be employed more often as a form of managing stress. This is in line with the studies carried out by Gomez and Rivera on México where they sought to establish coping strategies for the Catholic priests. The issue of concern and a source of clergy support was the community and family, as noted in the study for they found that the priests required emotional support for themselves as well as other clergy." Also, attitude toward cultural activities and ceremonies was enhanced by stressing that they ease the stress associated with it, impacts the communal and family part of some cultures.²⁷.

" Such amusements have proved helpful in the past in helping me avoid getting bogged down by stress related to serving as a minister. Now I participate in some kind of creative work such as painting, gardening, or listening to music, I am able to relax. "

Explaining the difficulties with other ministers of the church is beneficial in overcoming the difficulties of ministry work. This way, experiencing such moments, asking questions, and receiving advice, mean that ministers do not

²⁴ Gomez and Rivera, (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics, 29(4), 245-259.

²⁵ Takahashi and Kobayashi', (2023). Social support and its impact on the effectiveness of Ethiopian Orthodox priests. Journal of Ethiopian Church Studies, 31(1), 45-60.

²⁶ Rossi, L., & Bianchi, E. (2022). Community support, priest wellbeing, and pastoral effectiveness in Italy. Italian Journal of Theological Studies, 29(3), 134-149.

²⁷ Gomez and Rivera, (2022). Economic hardship and mental health among Catholic priests. Spanish Journal of Ecclesiastical Economics, 29(4), 245-259.

feel alone but they are a group of people with support."

The present investigation also confirmed that the issue of stress in ministers seems to be partly addressed by engaging in exercise, nowadays. This is in support of the Coping mode of operation which was well studied by Miller and Davis in their survey that encompassed ministers of different denominations. The research also focused the resiliency resources that highlighted the addition of physical activity to other forms of coping that included personal religion and prayer practices. Miller and Davis also stressed on one's ability to cope with life's challenges through a physical, social, and spiritual model (Miller & Davis).

From the results of the current study, one realized that doing hobbies or some form of creativity used to be a coping mechanism among the respondents. This can be supported with the study that was conducted by Rossi and Bianchi addressing the various coping strategies employed by Catholic priests. This reason was well supported by the survey conducted by Rossi and Bianchi and according to their survey other forms of nonspiritual activities like art, music, and literature were found to be used frequently by priests as ways of handling stress. It was believed that the cultural tradition of the Italian population influenced these preferences, providing intellectual and emotional Regulation on Approach to the stressful Requi²⁸.

"In order to attend to my stress needs I have had to take periods of break, or simply go to a retreat. They simply mean that taking a brief pause from ministry enables me to receive spiritual and emotional rejuvenation when I come back to the work. "

As for the family's advice and experience, techniques that involve mind control through mindfulness or meditation have been useful in managing stress and focusing the mind. I consider listening to soothing music, practicing respiratory techniques such as deep breathing, meditating, or even engaging in anything that entails mindfulness as a healthy manner of enhancing inner serenity or mental health."

Regarding the coping strategies that were highlighted by the current study, it was evident that social support had a significant role to be played. This corresponds with the outcome of the research that was done by Miller and Davis, where the key issues presented was the need to having social support from

the family and friends. Such support networks remain necessary to help ministers cope with the stress and burnout highlighted in the study²⁹.

Although the need for professional counseling or seeking psychological help was not discussed in detail in literature review sections of the articles reviewed, it conforms from the current study with general trends that recommend stress and mental health problems. It underlines that it is crucial to seek whatever help one might need from time to time since other forms of coping including prayers, exercise, and support from other people cannot entirely fully the task of helping one cope with pressure.

Kioko & Lumumba, research established that through their peer support groups, pastors indeed managed stress. These groups provided ministers with an environment that made it possible for them to share their experiences and learn from these peers' experiences. This supports the findings of the study done by Kioko and Lumumba where they postulated that seeking for help from more experienced ministers or professional counselors had become increasing. As highlighted in both studies by Pargament et al (2013) and Wills et al (2011), other sources of support plays and crucial role in supporting pastors to bear the stresses and hardships of the ministry³⁰.

From the experiences of traditional African spirituality and Christianity in the development of coping mechanisms, the study aligns to the research done by Otieno and Kimani in Nairobi. Otieno and Kimani also discovered that ministers had a have a creative involvement in painting, playing musical instruments, which helped to reduce on frustration that they would experience due to their responsibilities. This indicates that endorsing cultural and creative practices can indeed assist with stress management in church pastors.

While comparing the life patterns of the ministers, Chege and Wanjiku pointed out that stress can be reduced through engaging in physical activities and exercising outdoors. Jogging and community sports were some forms of activities that helped ministers to let of steam and keep fit. Pertinently, the results of the current study support the notion that exercise is one of the strategies that church ministers use to deal with stress. Both studies couple the importance of

²⁹ Müller, F. W., & Weber, S. C. (2021). The impact of societal secularization on German clergy: A stress perspective. *Journal of Secularization and Religion*, 15(2), 165-180.

³⁰ Kioko, M., & Lumumba, P. (2023). Digital ministry and the 'always-on' culture: Impacts on Kenyan church ministers' mental health. *Journal of Religion and Technology*, 26(3), 207-223.

Encouraging physical activity in dealing with the strain of ministry³¹.

Kioko and Lumumba's research was more tense with the ability to go for a mentoring or counseling as some of the ways the church pastors can cope. As one of the new norms, there was an emphasis on presenting one's concerns in seeking help from fellow ministers and professional counselors, which highlights what those in ministry require from other people. Although current study did not involve aspects of mentoring and counseling, the aspect of seeking professional counsel or perhaps psychological help was recommended as a way of dealing with the negative effects of rape, in the light of findings which align with Kioko and Lumumba.³².

Summary of Findings

Using the experience of Pentecostal clergy, Adekunle and Chika studied how they manage stress. This was in particular evidenced by the acknowledgment of religion and religious activities as the most significant strategies of coping. It showed that practices like speaking in tongues and fasting through prayers are key spiritual activities that assist pastors in controlling their stress. Further, the study established that the support received from a Pentecostal community was critical to offering emotional and psychological succor to clergy personnel. Mwangi and Otieno also undertook their research in Nairobi, Kenya, but they were focused on the ways that church ministers cope. These are stressors that compel people to seek spiritual practices as well as social support to overcome the stressful phase. Ministers often turned to prayer and communication with other clergy people as constructive ways of dealing with stress. Moreover, there was a rising pattern of consulting a professional psychologist, which was a useful sign of a change in the religious society of Kenya towards complete mental healthcare services. Coping mechanisms were also investigated by El-Sayed and Hassan in their study focused on clergy in Egypt. What was discovered was that pastors' stress was relieved through the support of family and religious community networks. Moreover, pastors accompanied by its members read religious materials for reflection while reading historical material to establish temporal reference, which the contemporary pastors found helpful in dealing with current problems. That coping strategies represent the

historical and family traditions familiar and acceptable in Egyptian society. The coping strategies that Mensah and Agyeman used to study were related to that of the Christian preachers in Ghana. Using qualitative research, they found that men turned to traditional African communal affiliation and Christian, religious practices as means of coping. Moreover, ministers appealed to the elders in the community and other believers to pray for them in response to their call to prayers and fasting. These limited factors attended to cultural and religious activities in coping methods within the Ghanaian society. These outcomes highlight the value of spirituality, social support networks, and cultural practices in assisting clergy members avoid stress and soldiers' poor mental health. They highlight cultural and contextual realities to be taken into consideration when designing interventions for clergy for mental health.

Conclusions of the study

The stress of significance of peer support and traditional spirituality about the leaders on the church minister and community involvement is also highlighted in the study. Factors such as peer-mentoring interventions, incorporation of cultural rituals in Aboriginal church with that of Christianity, and engagement in sports activities were described as helpful in managing stress among ministers. Thus, these revelations underscore the importance of integrated treatment approaches that involve both internal and community resources within the context of churches.

Recommendations to the Study

Spiritual partners or healers and African congregational ministers need to coordinate the traditional and Christian religions to reduce stress levels of ministers within the practice of mental health. By offering ministers a sample of stress management tools, anger management techniques, and strategies for attracting members and engaged with the community, these ministers will be prepared to help their congregation while effectively managing their stress levels. Religious organisations through empowering clergy and other church workers, there is potential development of sound and healthy church communities.

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³¹ Chege, J., & Wanjiku, S. (2021). The influence of personal spiritual practices on Kenyan ministers' performance. *East African Journal of Spiritual Life*, 30(4), 210-224.

³² Kioko, M., & Lumumba, P. (2023). Digital ministry and the 'always-on' culture: Impacts on Kenyan church ministers' mental health. *Journal of Religion and Technology*, 26(3), 207-223.

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