

Factors Contributing to Burnout in Pastoral Ministry among Catholic Religious Men and Women in Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda

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Abstract: Burnout in pastoral ministry among the Church ministers is a problem that warrants attention. The current study examined the contributing factors to burnout in pastoral ministry among priest, brothers and sisters in Mbarara Archdiocese of Uganda. Mixed method embedded research design was utilized in the study. A sample size of 165 participants was selected using stratified random sampling. In addition, 10 participants were selected using purposive sampling to gather the qualitative data. A questionnaire and interview guide was used to collect data. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze the quantitative data with aid of SPSS. On the other hand, thematic analysis was used to analyze qualitative data. The results reported the major contributing factors to burnout in pastoral ministry among the Catholic priests, brothers and sisters were years spend in pastoral ministry, excessive work, high expectations from self and others and personality issues. Since those who have few years in pastoral ministry are likely to suffer from burnout due to over engagement with emotional issues of their parishioners, the study recommends to Bishops and Major Superiors to create awareness to their members on the need of taking care of their well-being as they serve the needs of others. Also, the Bishops and Superiors with help of mental health professionals such as counselors and psychologists need to come with programs that can enhance personal growth to their members in order to increase awareness of their personalities and to reach to a level of understanding that they cannot meet all the expectations of others.

I. INTRODUCTION

Burnout in pastoral ministry may arise due to situational, such as workload, personality, over commitment and setting of unrealistic job expectations (Gichara, 2017). Maslach and Leiter (2009) have identified two groups of factors, which dominate the person before burnout, as situational, such as workload, role conflict and ambiguity in relations with co-workers, agency policy and personal factors which include: demographic variables (such as age or formal education), personality characteristics, and work-related attitudes. Notably, most of the researches have focused almost exclusively on situational or job factors as main causative factors of burnout. On contrary, this study adopted an existential approach which is concerned with how individuals relate to their objective world, situations and the self. For instance, individual's personality type can determine how they are likely handle

stressors that make people prone to burnout (Maslach & Leiter, 2009).

Excessive or unbearable stress systematically leads to burnout. Chirico (2016) argued that burnout is outcome of work-related stressors which an individual is not able to manage. Gandi, et al. (2017) conducted a study on the role of stress and level of burnout in job performance among nurses in selected States of Nigeria. The study enlisted 2245 nurses who were selected using stratified random sampling. Their level of burnout was measured using an 'abridged measures booklet' adopted from the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS), Job Autonomy Questionnaire (JAQ), Questionnaire on Organizational Stress-Doetinchem (VOS-D) and Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS). One of the findings was that nurses' empathy for and connection with patients' core professional value, attracts factors capable of inducing stress which can initiate and promote burnout. Krok (2016), supports this argument by stating that how stress is processed determines how much stress is felt and how close a person is to burnout. An individual can experience stressors but be unable to process the stress well and thus experience burnout. Another person can experience a significant number of stressors, but process each well for instance, through self-care and avoid burnout.

According to Freudenberger and Richelson (2008), the process of burnout as entails to deplete oneself; to exhaust one's mental and physical resources; to wear oneself out by excessively striving to reach some unrealistic expectation imposed by oneself or by the values of the society. In some cases, these expectations are very high, both in terms of the nature of the work and the likelihood of achieving success such as curing patients, or getting promoted. Whether such high expectations are considered to be idealistic or unrealistic, one hypothesis has been that they are a risk factor for burnout (Maslach et al., 2008). Presumably, high expectations lead people to work too hard and do too much, thus leading to exhaustion and eventual cynicism when the high effort does not yield the expected results. When these individuals try to achieve something beyond their abilities, they often experience burnout as a result.

Presumably, some of the religious men and women push themselves just because they wish to satisfy the high expectation placed on them or for the sake of the attached benefits. This can weigh on the person's mind, body, and soul leading to exhaustion and an inability to fulfill one's job functions (Burnette, 2016). Frankl (2000), at some point observed that purpose matters more than the nature of work; if a person's attitude of work is to serve others or some worthy cause, they find work more meaningful than merely working for money. This vehemently supports the researcher's idea that personal factors play a crucial role in the prevalence of burnout.

Demographic factors, such as, gender, type of work and years of pastoral experience, play a precipitate role in the prevalence of burnout. Tatalovic and Mustapic (2012), conducted a study to investigate burnout and its internal and external factors among substance abuse counselors (no. = 68) who worked in Centre's for Prevention and Substance Abuse Treatment (no. = 18) in Croatia. Maslach Burnout Inventory was used which measured three burnout dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment; and questionnaire of internal and external burnout factors. Considering demographic variables (sex, age, work experience and full-time job), women showed significantly higher diminishment of personal accomplishment and significantly more personality characteristics prone to burnout than men; and older counselors showed more pronounced the tendency to achieve greater and more compelling personal accomplishments than the younger ones. From these reports, though performed on nurses and non-Catholic ministers, it is certain that one's gender and experience plays a role in the prevalence of burnout. It is on this premise that this study considered priests, brothers and sisters and their years of experience in the ministry, in examining the contributing factors to pastoral burnout in Mbarara Archdiocese.

Tatalovic and Mustapic (2012), ascertains that burnout symptoms can partly be explained by some personality traits, such as, perfectionism, idealization of support, self-promotion, the inability to say "no", refusing to share a part of the job demands, unrealistic expectations of the actions taken. Smith (2015), has also argued that low levels of hardiness, poor self-esteem, an external locus of control, and an avoidant coping style typically constitute the profile of actress-prone individual. In the same line of argument, Maslach et al. (2008), asserted that burnout is linked to the dimension of neuroticism. Neuroticism includes trait anxiety, hostility, depression, self-consciousness, and vulnerability thus, neurotic individuals are emotionally unstable and prone to psychological distress. In a study of 1,468 Roman Catholic parish-based priests in England and Wales, Francis and Crea (2021) found support for the correlation between burnout and aspects of personality: Higher scores of neuroticism and lower scores of extraversion were correlated with greater emotional exhaustion and cynicism. Although this study was conducted with only priests, the findings can as well apply to sisters and brothers as already confirmed that there is no gender difference in experiencing emotional exhaustion.

However, a study was needed to ascertain whether this is the case with pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese.

In a similar study Randall (2013) found strong, positive correlations between levels of neuroticism and emotional exhaustion using two different measures of burnout in a sample of Anglican clergy in England and Wales. Using a version of the MBI adapted specifically for clergy, Randall found a strong, positive correlation ($r = .50$) between levels of neuroticism and emotional exhaustion using the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) subscale of the Francis Burnout Inventory. In support of these findings, Azeem (2013) explains that individuals who are high in neuroticism tend to be nervous, suffer from high levels of worry, are emotional and insecure, have feelings of inadequacy and tend to view the world through a negative lens. This is in agreement with the earlier position that how work stress is processed determines how much stress is felt and how close a person is to burnout. Thus, neurotic religious men and women are stress prone, emotional, nervous, irritable and lacking in self-confidence exposing them to higher chances of burnout. Though factors contributing burnout among Church ministers have been well researched globally, there is lack of similar studies with pastoral agents of Mbarara Archdiocese and therefore, need for this study.

II. METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study employed mixed method research embedded design. It is a design used by the research when collecting both qualitative and quantitative data at the same time but within a larger quantitative or qualitative design. One type of data is secondary to the other. The quantitative strand played a supportive role qualitative strand. The design was suitable because the researcher aimed to examine the contributing factors to pastoral burnout including demographic details of types of vocation and number of years in pastoral ministry.

Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

To determine the sample size, Yamane sample size determination formula was adopted to determine the number of participants to participate in the study. According to Israel (2003) the confidence level is 95% and margin of error 5%. The formula is mathematically presented as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where n = sample size

N = target population

E = margin of error (0.05)

$$n = \frac{280}{1+280(0.05)^2} = \frac{280}{1.7}$$

Approximately, $n = 165$

Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was utilized in selecting 165 participants that were to

participate for the quantitative strand. Table 1 shows the proportionate stratified sampling for the Priests, Brothers and Sisters in Mbarara Archdiocese. In addition, 10 participants were selected for qualitative data using purposive sampling. This was to bring out the experiences on factors contributing to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents.

Table I. Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling

Type of Population	Total Population	Sample size	Percentage
Priests	152	90	55.0%
Sisters	115	68	41.2%
Brothers	13	7	3.8%
Total	280	165	100%

III. INSTRUMENTS FOR DATA COLLECTION

Questionnaire and Interview Guide was used to collect data on the factors contributing to pastoral burnout among pastoral agents. The questionnaire had two sections of data collection. The first section collected data from the participants on demographic details of type of ministry, years of pastoral experience and types of vocation. The second section collected data on pastoral burnout using MBI-HSS Scale developed by Maslach and Jackson (1996). Burnout is measured with 22 items, 9 to measure emotional exhaustion, 5 depersonalization, and 8 lack of personal accomplishment. The scores range from 0 (never) to 6 (always).

The Interview Guide was used to collect qualitative data. The first part captured the vocation category and years in working ministry among the Catholic pastoral agents. The second part captured open ended question on factors contributing to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents of Mbarara Archdiocese. The data was collected with this question: What do you think are contributing factors to pastoral burnout among Catholic priests, brothers and sisters in Mbarara Archdiocese?

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics with SPSS was used to analyze the quantitative data. On the other hand, qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The quantitative findings were presented with tables while qualitative data was presented in themes which were supported with verbatim.

IV. RESULTS

The study was conducted to establish the factors contributing to burnout in pastoral ministry among the Catholic pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese in Uganda. It presented findings on the role of demographic information in relation to pastoral burnout. Also, themes on factors contributing to burnout were identified and supported with verbatim from the participants. The demographic information for the participants interviewed was presented in table 2.

Demographic Details of the Interviewed Respondents

Identity of participants	Vocation Category	Years of Ministry
P1	Priest	Over 21 years
P2	Priest	over 21 years
P3	Religious Sister	over 21 years
P4	Religious Brother	10 to 20
P5	Religious Brother	over 21 years
P6	Priest	over 21 years
P7	Religious Sister	over 21 years
P8	Religious Sister	10 to 20
P9	Religious Sister	over 21 years
P10	Priest	over 21 years

Contribution of Demographic Details to Burnout in Pastoral Ministry

The study presents the results on the contribution of demographic details of type of ministry, years of pastoral ministry and type of vocation to burnout in pastoral ministry among the Catholic pastoral agents of Mbarara Archdiocese of Uganda.

Contribution of Type of ministry to Burnout in pastoral ministry

The study sought to understand whether burnout has a connection with the type of ministry one is engaged in. The respondents were asked to indicate their religious ministries to which they were serving or administering their pastoral duties. Data on Type of Ministry was analyzed reported in relations to the three dimensions of burnout namely emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. The descriptive results on contribution of type of ministry to burnout in pastoral ministry is presented in table 3

Table 3. Contribution of ministry category to burnout in pastoral ministry

Type of Ministry	Personal Accomplishment	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization
Parish	Mean	2.2941	2.3676
	N	68	68
	Std. Deviation	.79286	.64425
School	Mean	1.9804	2.3333
	N	51	51
	Std. Deviation	.70683	.65320
Hospital	Mean	2.3636	1.8182
	N	11	11
	Std. Deviation	.67420	.75076
Office	Mean	2.0000	2.5714
	N	7	7
	Std. Deviation	.00000	.53452
Counselling/Social Work	Mean	2.4000	2.4000
	N	5	5
	Std. Deviation	.54772	.54772
Total	Mean	2.1761	2.3239
	N	142	142
	Std. Deviation	.73706	.65827

Results in table 3 shows that personal accomplishment individuals working in the counseling or social work had the highest mean of 2.4000, while those working in the Parish had the lowest mean of 1.9804. In respect to emotional exhaustion, individuals working in the Office had the highest mean of 2.5714, while the individuals working in hospital had the lowest mean of 1.8182. As regards to depersonalization individual respondents working in counseling had the highest mean of 2.6000 and individual working in the Office had the lowest mean of 1.8571. It was observed that in every ministry, there are high scores in at least one of the components of pastoral burnout. There is no much difference in burnout scores based on the type of ministries Catholic religious men and women are involved in Mbarara Archdiocese.

Contribution of years of pastoral ministry to Burnout in pastoral ministry

The study sought to establish the contribution of years of religious ministry to burnout in pastoral ministry. Table 4 presents the contribution of years of pastoral ministry to burnout in pastoral ministry among Catholic pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese.

Table 4. Contribution of years of pastoral ministry to Burnout in pastoral ministry

Years of Religious life		Personal Accomplishment scores	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization
5-10	Mean	2.1395	2.4186	1.7805
	N	43	43	41
	Std. Deviation	.77402	.62612	.75869
10-20	Mean	2.1020	2.3265	2.6735
	N	49	49	49
	Std. Deviation	.68450	.65789	4.48789
21 and above	Mean	2.2800	2.2400	2.3000
	N	50	50	50
	Std. Deviation	.75701	.68690	.76265
Total	Mean	2.1761	2.3239	2.2786
	N	142	142	140
	Std. Deviation	.73706	.65827	2.73024

Results from table 4 shows that participants with 21 and above years of religious life had the highest mean of Personal Accomplishment (mean = 2.2800) while individuals with 5-10 years experienced had the lowest mean of Personal Accomplishment (mean = 2.1395). In addition, the respondents 5-10 years of religious life had the highest mean of emotional exhaustion (mean =2.4186) while respondents with the age range of 21 and above years had the lowest mean of emotional exhaustion (mean = 2.2400). With respect to depersonalization, the respondents of 10-20 years of service were found to have the highest mean of Depersonalization (mean = 2.6735) while those of 5-10 years had the lowest (1.7805). Similarly, findings from qualitative data showed that those young in religious life

are likely to experience pastoral burnout compared to those who have lived for many years. This was echoed by respondent 4 who said “*young religious men and women entering into ministry come with too much fire and overwork themselves until the same fire burns them. We see a number of them begin with energy and zeal but sooner or later, all is lost*” (P4, 2022). In addition, the respondent 7 said, “*the young people have a lot of energy and they really want to use it*” (P7, 2022).

Contribution of Vocation Category to Pastoral Burnout

Descriptive statistics was run to understand the contribution of type of vocation to pastoral burnout among the Catholic religious men and women. Table 5 presents the results in regard to contribution of type of vocation to pastoral burnout.

Vocation Type		Personal Accomplishment	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization
Priests	Mean	2.3333	2.3750	2.4366
	N	72	72	71
	Std. Deviation	.76912	.63772	3.75588
Brothers	Mean	1.7143	2.2286	1.8333
	N	7	7	6
	Std. Deviation	.48795	.53452	.75277
Sisters	Mean	2.0476	2.4540	2.1429
	N	63	63	63
	Std. Deviation	.68223	.69487	.82025
Total	Mean	2.1761	2.3239	2.2786
	N	142	142	140
	Std. Deviation	.73706	.65827	2.73024

The results in table 5 shows that the respondents who were priests had the highest mean of personal accomplishment (mean =2.3333) while brothers had the lowest mean of 1.7143. On emotional exhaustion, the sisters had the highest mean of 2.4540 while the brothers had the lowest mean of 2.2286. For depersonalization, priests showed the highest mean of 2.4366 and the brothers got the lowest (mean = 1.8333).However, the scores are relatively the same for all burnout components, for instance, emotional exhaustion is within the range of (m=2) for all the groups. This indicates that no vocation type (be it priests, sisters, brothers) is more vulnerable or risk free than the other. In other words, pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese experience the same levels of emotional exhaustion.

Apart from demographic factors of type of ministry, years in pastoral ministry and type of vocation contributing to pastoral burnout, three thematic themes that emerged from the qualitative data. These three were: excessive work, expectations and personality. The themes are discussed further and supported with verbatim.

V. EXCESSIVE WORK

All the participants mentioned that having a lot of work or responsibilities is the main reason for burnout among Catholic pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese Uganda. For instance participant 9 said “*In my own experience, I had too*

much work and a lot of responsibilities, and that really gave me burnout” (Interview, P9 January, 2022).

Similarly, the theme was supported by respondent 8 who said,

For me I think in the first place, we have many jobs and many different responsibilities and these make it difficult to have time for yourself because we are always running here and there. And if don't balance these with our spiritual life we enter into that state of burnout because we really need time for ourselves, to refresh, to sleep very well and something that can make us relax like listening to music or someone who can listen and support us. Generally, I think that we lack some free time because our time-table sometimes is very packed and even outside the timetable we create some extra things. At the end of the day, you are very tired and exhausted. Even when you go to bed, you can't sleep well. And this can cause many other problems (Interview, P8, January, 2022).

The same theme was echoed by participant 7 who claimed that Catholic pastoral agents are likely to suffer burnout as a result of overworking themselves in the name of serving God's people. The respondent reported that,

In the first place, I think we priests and nuns tend to overwork ourselves in the name of working for God. Under this pretext, we mistake it as if we are the second savior and forget that the savior is already there and we are just to work with him. And this very savior together with his apostles used to rest. I think we do not follow that; we think we can go on and push on until the last minute. So, we need to look into this as religious men and woman. Then we have been told that we are there to work for the people of God. But sometimes we forget that we are also people of God who need someone to look after us. And then we can give and give and very often it is hard for us to receive. Because we don't have the time for that (Interview, P7, January, 2022).

Similarly, respondent, P3, attributed burnout to unshared responsibilities when said,

I think the issue of unshared responsibilities contributes a lot to burnout; if the person sees him or her as the only one in charge, certainly he will end up burned out but when the person has collaborators and is ready to delegate some duties, he/she will be able to serve longer and happily without getting burnout. Then the longer you stay at work, the more you are likely to suffer burnout; staying in the same place or doing the same profession for many years will result into boredom, stress and boredom (Interview, P3, January, 2022).

Respondent P2 was of the similar opinion when said,

Personally, I believe that being over-ambitious contributes a lot to getting burnout. If I believe that only me can do it better and I don't want to involve others, the consequence is that I will overwork myself, get stress and eventually suffer burnout. This can be in a parish or any

administrative duty where one doesn't want to delegate others or share responsibilities (Interview, P2, January, 2022).

High Expectations

Majority of the respondents pointed out those high expectations from their families as one of the major contributing factor to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents. This comes out clearly from participant 6 who said,

Another serious cause for burnout is the demands of the family on the priest, brother or sister. Some families are very demanding on the priest or the nun. They expect him or her to do everything for them. For example, for medical and funeral bills, school fees, land issues and this put a lot of pressure on the priest that he can get overwhelmed and burned out (Interview, P6, January, 2022).

The theme was further supported by participant 10 who said,

Some of us have families which have endless needs. For example, if you have siblings who are entirely depending on you for their school fees or some of your siblings may have their own children and they are also looking up to you for support. You find that the little you get from your apostolate is not enough to sustain them. And sometimes you cannot tell them that you are not able to support them. So, you keep pushing yourself even when you know it is so heavy for you. So, you are there seem to be satisfied but not satisfied. And sometimes you will be moving but really look absent minded. That will be automatically lead you to burnout (Interview, P10, January, 2022).

Majority of the respondents were in agreement having higher expectations on the side of the religious or those around them put the person on pressure and end up overstretching him/herself. The theme was emphasized by participant 1 explained how expectations can lead to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents.

The Catholic pastoral agents are also likely to experience burnout as a result of putting high expectations on themselves. These expectations are related to lack of personal accomplishment. For instance, participant 1 said,

Before joining the seminary, I may have intentions e.g., driving, money, and being important in society. So, my intention is to live a good status and support my family. In the end, when I'm not able to achieve, e.g., no car in a remote parish where I use a bicycle or walk I end up frustrated and exhausted because I have no motivation (Interview, P1, January, 2022).

In addition, the respondent said,

You see when we are a young priest like you, we may feel maybe I should be the next superior General, or Bishop or Vicar General and in the process, things don't come out like that; for instance, a certain person from somewhere, whom I never thought of, is chosen as the bishop, then I

say ‘this person?’ I was even beating him in class. So, such a thing has made some people go down completely. I am serving, yes, but I feel that my expectations, or ambitions are not met and some people are completely burned out because of that. They may not be known by people but somebody is just there finished (Interview, P1, January, 2022).

Personality Issues

One’s personality and/or character were much emphasized as an indispensable factor for burnout among religious men and women. For instance, participant 5 said,

That tendency of always wanting to be the best can lead to burnout. It culminates into a kind of competition in regard to achievements. In this kind of showoff, you get worked up because you want to be identified with achievements and not who you are. For example, one would want to be identified with a number of projects he has set up in a particular place (Interview, P5, January, 2022).

The theme was also emphasized by participant 8 who said,

And sometimes, it can depend on the character and the temperament of the person. Some create time for themselves; others have their own way of doing things. Some are disciplined while others are not, they want to accomplish a lot. Some also don’t mind whether they have finished their duty or not. And others remain on tension and anxious and even guilt as they keep telling themselves “I did not finish my duty.” And this can, of course, contribute to burnout (Interview, P8, January, 2022).

Having domineering personality type was perceived as a contributing factor to pastoral burnout because the individual lacks the ability to work with others in harmony and they are reluctant to delegate the responsibilities to others. This supported by participant 3 who said,

I think the attitude of wanting to be in charge of everything contributes a lot to burnout. For example, if the person sees himself as the only one in charge, certainly he will end up burned out but when the person has collaborators and is ready to delegate some duties, he/she will be able to serve longer and happily without getting burnout (Interview, P3, January, 2022).

Another theme that kept recurring was that of an anti-social character or personality. Some Catholic religious men and women may not have close friends they can share their challenges and difficulties they are experiencing and that can easily lead them to burnout. This was echoed by participant 10 who said,

Sometimes one’s social life can be funny! Let say someone has problem, they may ask, “who is his closest friend?” They begin to look around in the diocese or Congregation and they can’t find one. So, such kind of a character also, where you have no person whom you can confide in. you are just there. When there is time for you to go for holiday, the only place you can go is your home. You cannot say let

me go and stay with some friends for some days and have good time together. Such kind of a character can of course cause you burnout. And it is common among us. If you are someone who is in school or teaching, you find your solace into reading a lot. If you are in a parish, you spend all your time in the field. And you lack that kind of socio-affinity (Interview, P10, January, 2022).

VI. DISCUSSION

The study was set out to establish the contributing factors to burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese in Uganda. The results showed that there were high scores in at least one of the dimensions of the burnout in relation to different ministries served by Catholic pastoral agents. This might mean that all kinds of ministries that Catholic pastoral agents are involved in can lead to burnout. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Strong (2017) who observed that with the pressures of ministerial leadership, all pastoral workers are susceptible to burnout in equal measure. It also resonates with the findings of Aaron et al. (2019) who reported that helping professionals working with people in different capacities are likely to suffer burnout because of the overwhelming nature of their work.

In regard to years of pastoral ministry, the findings showed that those pastoral agents between five to ten years had experienced high levels of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment compared to their counterparts. Those who were young in ministry could be highly motivated to work ministry and hence predispose them to burnout. Those who are older may have learned from experience on strategies to curb burnout and end up having balance in their ministry. These findings are in agreement with Rossetti (2011) who reported high levels of burnout among young priests compared to their counterparts. Moreover, the findings are consistent with findings of Leslie (2018) who found the priests who had worked ministry for many years were less vulnerable to burnout compared to the young priests.

The results showed there was no significant difference vocation category and burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents. The scores were relatively the same for all dimensions of burnout. For instance, emotional exhaustion was within the range of (m=2) for all the groups. This indicated that all priests, brothers and sister were vulnerable to burnout in pastoral ministry regardless of their vocation type. The findings were in agreement with the study of Leslie (2018) who found both male and female clergy had experienced burnout in equal measures. However, the findings were in disagreement with Tatalovic and Mustapic (2012), who’s investigation of burnout and its internal and external factors among substance abuse counsellors in Croatia reported that women showed significantly higher diminishment of personal accomplishment and significantly more personality characteristics prone to burnout than men. Likewise, the findings contradicted the findings of Muasa (2021) who found that pastoral agents working Kenyan rural areas had experienced burnout in the same manner.

Majority of the participants reported personality issues to be one of the factors contributing to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents. These findings resonate well with prior findings by Tatalovic and Mustapic, (2012) which ascertain that burnout symptoms can partly be explained by some personality traits, such as, perfectionism, idealization of support, self-promotion, the inability to say “no”, refusing to share a part of the job demands, unrealistic expectations of the actions taken, and so forth. In addition, the findings were in agreement with findings of Smith (2015) who reported that low levels of hardiness, poor self-esteem, an external locus of control, and an avoidant coping style typically constitute the profile of a stress-prone individual.

VII. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that there was no significant difference on type of ministry and type of vocation in relation to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents in Mbarara Archdiocese of Uganda. The young priests are vulnerable to pastoral burnout compared to the older priests. Excessive work, high expectations and personality issues were the major contributing factors to pastoral burnout among the Catholic pastoral agents. The Catholic Bishops and Superiors of Congregations need to come up with programs that will enhance self-care among their members in order to safeguard them from experiencing pastoral burnout.

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