

Pastoral Burnout and Psychosocial Wellbeing among the Clergy in Kiambu County at the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya

Geoffrey Polycarp Nganga¹ Elijah Macharia Ndung'u PhD² & Wambua Pius Muasa PhD³

^{1,2}Catholic University of Eastern Africa

³Tangaza University

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ABSTRACT

Clergy members bear significant emotional, spiritual, and pastoral responsibilities, as they provide continuous support and guidance to their congregations—a role that often results in emotional exhaustion and stress. This study examined the relationship between pastoral burnout and psychosocial wellbeing among Catholic clergy in Kiambu County, within the Archdiocese of Nairobi. Specifically, the study examined how demographic factors such as age, educational level, and years of ministry experience relate to burnout dimensions and psychosocial wellbeing. Using a correlational research design and data from a census, 175 priests in the region were involved in the study, the study employed the Maslach Burnout inventory to measure the elements of burnout and the Ryff's Psychosocial Well-being Scale, and analyzed data through SPSS version 25. This study established a weak negative correlation between psychosocial wellbeing and burnout among priests in Kiambu County. The study also revealed that priests aged 35–40 and over 51 experience greater emotional exhaustion than those aged 41–50. The findings suggest that a greater sense of personal accomplishment is linked to improved psychosocial wellbeing. Consequently, the study recommends revising the training curriculum for priest formation and enhancing ongoing education to address stress management and mitigate burnout.

Key words: Pastoral burnout, Psychological wellbeing, Clergy, Kiambu County, Kenya.

INTRODUCTION

Pastoral burnout is a growing concern, stemming from the challenges of managing conflicting roles within the pastor's office. The nature of pastoral work, involving a close-knit connection with both the congregation and family, sets the stage for increased burnout risks. Living alongside the congregation inevitably leads to inter-role conflict. Additionally, pastors often experience emotional exhaustion as they invest themselves in supporting and nurturing their congregants (Frederick et al. 2023). The emotional commitment to their flock requires pastors to tap into their psychosocial reserves, especially when addressing conflicts. When conflicts arise, pastors must employ some labour specific strategies including deep and surface acting to respond as required to meet the congregation's needs. However, these approaches deplete the limited psychosocial resources available to pastors, contributing to emotional exhaustion. Given the distinctive demands of the pastoral role, incorporating Christian Devotion Meditation (CDM) or Christian contemplative practices becomes particularly relevant in cultivating the emotional resilience needed to combat burnout. (Frederick et al 2023).

The word "burnout" was familiarized and initially explored in the 1970s by Herbert Freudenberger and Christina Maslach. The contemporary definition broadly acknowledged characterizes burnout as "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job, and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy" (Maslach et al. 2001). The evolution of studies about burnout can be traced through three phases: the pioneering phase (1970s-1980s), marked by exploratory efforts to describe and define burnout; the empirical phase (1980s-1990s), during which studies transitioned to longitudinal and quantitative approaches, extending to various occupations; and the expanding phase, in which researchers broadened the study to diverse professions and investigated the impact of technology on burnout (Dunbar et al. 2020).

Research indicates that burnout is not confined to specific industries, organizations, or job types; no career is

immune (Basar & Basim 2016). While early studies predominantly focused on the medical field, recent research explores burnout in parenting, university students, psychiatry, teaching, and athletics. The relationship between burnout and various psychosocial phenomena is expanding, including associations with depression, job performance, cognitive performance, stress, self-esteem, personality traits, job resources, organizational politics, empathy, work overload, supervisor support, and role ambiguity (Taylor & Ayyala 2019). For instance, role ambiguity significantly affects job burnout and performance, while job burnout negatively impacts job satisfaction and performance. Some of the main constituents of burnout is being emotionally exhausted, a key component of burnout, is linked to low support by supervisors and work overload. The consequences of burnout extend to both individuals and organizations, resulting in neglect, turnover, unhappiness, depression, achievement, isolation, attempted suicide, health issues, diminished satisfaction, poor work performance, as well as substance abuse (Atalayin et al. 2015; Basar & Basim 2016; Taylor & Ayyala 2019; Walburg et al. 2015).

When one is overwhelmed by responsibilities they struggle to concentrate and retain information. Burnout has very negative effects on the mental health of leaders according to Craig (2018). Within the realm of psychosocial well-being various emotional, social and psychosocial factors intersect to shape our overall quality of life. It means finding fulfillment and satisfaction by using our gifts to the full. Keyes (2007), Lamers et al (2015) and Trompetter et al (2016) highlight the importance of psychosocial well-being in preventing mental illness. These researchers point to things like strong social support networks, a sense of personal control and being able to influence our environment as Wersebe (2018) also notes. Essentially psychosocial well-being acts as a buffer protecting us from the negative effects of burnout especially in relation to clergy mental health. By focusing on these areas clergy can build resilience and manage the challenges of their pastoral role.

Burnout in clergy has been researched extensively since its effect on mental wellness. Numerous global reports highlight instances of clergy experiencing burnout (Currier, 2016; Miles & Proeschold-Bell, 2013). Common manifestations of burnout in clergy include a diminished sense of accomplishment, increased cynicism, and difficulties concentrating (Cocklin, 2014). Given the unique role clergy play in contributing to overall societal health and functioning, their mental well-being is of paramount importance (Bonner et al., 2014). Cocklin (2013), Elkinton (2013) have documented an alarming trend of clergy resignations, with approximately three clergymen leaving ministry in America daily. The high rate among the clergy is often linked to the considerable occupational challenges they face in their roles. The demands on clergy, as noted by Crisp-Han et al. (2015), are becoming increasingly distressing, placing emotional, physical, and financial burdens on them. Doehring (2014) points out that clergy are expected to excel in a multitude of roles, ranging from preacher and educator to leader, administrator, mediator, fundraiser, companion, counselor, problem-solver, confidante, and surrogate parent. Consequently, many clergy members tend to suppress their emotions and strive to portray an image of well-being, perhaps driven by their belief in their divine calling and a reluctance to be perceived as struggling with stressors.

Psychosocial wellness, in the context of pastoral burnout, refers to the overall well-being of individuals within the clergy or pastoral profession, taking into account both psychosocial and social aspects of their lives. Pastoral burnout is a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that can occur when individuals in pastoral roles experience prolonged stress and demands, often related to their responsibilities in providing spiritual guidance, support, and care to others (Dunbar et al. 2020). In this context, psychosocial wellbeing involves addressing the psychosocial and social dimensions of a pastor's life to promote a healthy and balanced lifestyle. Among the clergy psychosocial wellbeing may include emotional resilience where one develops the ability to cope with stressors, manage emotions, and bounce back from challenges. Self-awareness is also featured where one is able to understand own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, and being attuned to signs of burnout and implementing effective coping mechanisms to deal with the unique stressors associated with pastoral work (Dunbar et al. 2020). Social wellbeing include cultivating healthy connections with others, both within and outside the religious community, to provide a support system. Creating barrier between personal work and daily activities to prevent burnout and keep a fulfilling lifestyle and community engagement Encouraging pastors to actively participate in their community and engage in activities that bring joy and fulfillment. By promoting psychosocial wellness, pastoral organizations and communities aim to create an environment that supports the mental, emotional, and social health of pastors, thereby reducing the risk of burnout and enhancing overall job satisfaction and effectiveness in ministry (Craig, 2018)

According to the perspective put forth by Abernethy et al. (2016) assert that clergy, regardless of their life stage, face significant risks of burnout and other stress-related challenges associated with their work. These challenges can deplete the clergy's materials and psychosocial resources hindering their ability to effectively provide pastoral amenities to congregants as well as their respective families. In the United States, elevated rates of burnout among clergy have been documented, with self-reported figures ranging from 13 percent to 45 percent (Jackson-Jordan, 2013).

In Brazil, Catholic Priests contend with numerous stressors in their pastoral work, facing demands, unrealistic expectations, scrutiny, and a seemingly less supportive cultural environment, leading to significant levels of burnout (Dias, 2019). Similar challenges are observed in Belgium, where religious leaders exhibit higher post-traumatic stress disorder rates than the general population, accompanied by low well-being, high burnout, work-family conflict, and limited job satisfaction (Ruffing, Bell & Sandage, 2020).

Australia reports a substantial percentage of clergy members experiencing burnout as a severe or significant problem, with half considered at risk of developing burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2017). In India, Raj and Dean (2005) found that 15% of Catholic priests were highly exhausted, and 12% experienced high levels of depression. In Mexico, priests face challenges such as doubts, inner conflicts, tiredness, and anxiety, with stressors including lack of social support, work overload, interpersonal goals, and self-esteem problems (Vicente-Galindo et al., 2017).

Ghanaian clergy encounter workplace stress as they provide counseling, social amenities, moral, and financial support to their congregations, communities, and families, with stress levels increasing as their roles in the church become more demanding (Bonsu, 2016). Finally, in Nigeria, Rossetti and Rhoades (2013) link psychosocial well-being of the priest to factors like inner peace, job satisfaction, their association with God, and the presence of supportive friends, emphasizing the importance of robust psychosocial and spiritual support systems, especially for those in demanding care giving positions.

While empirical research on burnout among clergy is limited in the African context, some studies have been conducted in South Africa (Buys & Rothmann, 2010; Van Rensburg, 2015). These surveys indicate the occurrence of burnout within the population of priests appears to align with global trends, albeit at relatively lower rates. For example, burnout occurrences have been reported in South Africa (Buys & Rothmann, 2010), and a recent study in two South African cities found a higher incidence, with 26 percent of respondents experiencing burnout (Van Rensburg, 2015). A study by Kokonya et al. (2014) among Kenyatta National Hospital medical workers showed that of the 345 polled, 95.4 percent were burnt out. Ruto (2015) confirmed prevalence of burnout among AGC pastors in Bomet County that was attributed to poor communication too many demands from members, too much work and lack of cooperation as major triggers.

A study on Pastoral Burnout and Meaning in life among Catholic Religious Men and Women in Mbarara Archdiocese, Uganda (Musinguzi & Wambua, 2023) found that majority of the participants have higher presence of meaning in life. The association and analysis indicated no connection of the sense of life and the various dimensions of burnout. Therefore, the research revealed that having a meaningful life is not correlated with achieving at personal level or emotional exhaustion.

Kamau (2018) undertook a study focusing on the risk factors for compassion fatigue among clergy in the Full Gospel Church in Nairobi's Kasarani Sub-County. The study included at least three females and fourteen male members of the clergy and providers of care at the Nairobi North full gospel churches. These respondents accomplished an improved ProQOL-CSF-R-III. This is a tool evaluating both positive and negative impacts of the service provided. A significant finding was that what was referred to as fatigue of compassion that was characteristic of physical exhaustion as well as emotional exhaustion resulted in lower satisfaction in ministry. Kamau also observed that compassion fatigue negatively impacted the clergy's well-being and their motivation to remain in pastoral ministry

Egunjobi (2019) has further highlighted that priests and religious individuals are frequently exposed to traumatic situations as part of their pastoral work, such as attending to auto accident victims or witnessing the death of terminally ill patients. In the course of providing care, support, and compassion to those who are suffering or

traumatized, these individuals often neglect their own self-care. Media reports often highlight instances of priests setting a “poor example” in moral standards’ contributing to a shortage of priests. The demanding nature of priesthood, characterized by a life of self-sacrifice, results in priests handling multiple tasks, leading to mental and physical fatigue, psychosocial strains arise from poor working relationships, burnout issues, aspirations of the families, health problems and strained associations with superiors.

This lack of self-care can contribute to significant mental trauma pain and personal suffering. Various physical and psychosocial symptoms, including anger, dissociation, sleep disturbances, feeling of powerlessness and depression may manifest—serving as warning signs or signals of burnout. It is crucial to address these warning signs promptly to prevent the development of more serious disorders. Studies conducted in Kenya focus on exploring various aspects of burnout and psychosocial well-being among clergy members, particularly within the Christian ministry context for example Shikanda (2022) Investigate the influence of burnout on the mental health of clergy members of Christ Is The Answer Ministries in Kenya (CITAM) found that emotional exhaustion was the most prevalent burnout sub-type. The sub-types of burnout showed a weak correlation with poor mental health. Psychosocial resources were accessible to 54% of the respondents, contributing to their overall mental health was high, with 85% reporting good mental health.

Wambua (2021) examined the prevalence of burnout in Christian ministry, the relationship between spirituality, work engagement, and organizational commitment, and coping strategies to prevent burnout. In the study depersonalization and emotional exhaustion were reported, on the same personal accomplishment was reported to have been at high levels. No significant correlation was established in spirituality, work engagement, burnout, and organizational commitment. Machogu (2022), examines the relationship between psychosocial stress and psycho-social well-being among priests in the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kenya. Low correlation between stress and psycho-social well-being. Moderate levels of burnout among priests, with high scores in positive relations and self-acceptance, but low scores in purpose in life as well as environmental mastery.

Overall, these studies provide insights into the prevalence of burnout, its influence on mental health and wellness, strategies to cope, and the role of psychosocial resources among clergy members in Kenya's Christian ministries. While qualitative methods are used in all three studies, the depth of qualitative exploration varies. This survey anticipates to make a contribution to the pool of knowledge by examining the association of burnout and the psychosocial well-being of clergy in Kenya, with a particular focus on specific areas of interest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Nairobi’s Kiambu County.

The clergy, especially priests, are called to lives of self-sacrifice, serving in roles that extend far beyond traditional religious duties. They act as organizational psychologists, mediators, administrators, educators, and counselors—responsibilities that demand a high moral standard and often an expectation of near perfection. This can take a toll on their personal well-being and work efficiency, with both international and local studies, such as those by Machogu (2022) and Dias (2019), showing that clergy often face various levels of burnout influenced by vocational, psychosocial, and personal environmental factors.

In Kenya, for example, some priests have fallen into unhealthy lifestyles as a way of coping with psychosocial stress. A 2020 report by the Archdiocese of Nairobi revealed that issues like alcoholism, depression, and addiction are affecting priests’ lives, with one deanery noting that 4 out of 14 priests experienced mental health challenges that required spiritual retreats, sabbaticals, study leaves, rehabilitation, or professional therapy. Furthermore, this report highlighted how some priests were setting poor moral examples, contributing to an overall shortage of clergy. The demands of priesthood—self-sacrifice, multiple responsibilities, and an expectation of high moral integrity—can lead to significant mental and physical exhaustion. Adding to this strain, relationships with colleagues, family expectations, and conflicts with supervisors further fuel psychosocial stress.

Despite these challenges, support for emotional and mental health remains limited. Unlike clergy in other regions who may receive self-care training or emotional support, many priests in Kenya rely primarily on spiritual practices to cope, addressing their challenges in ways that may not fully meet their emotional and psychological needs. This study sought to address these gaps by exploring the psychosocial well-being of clergy in the Archdiocese of Nairobi, Kiambu County. It aimed to provide updated insights that could enhance the mental

health support available to priests, ensuring their well-being is recognized and supported in meaningful, modern ways.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Relationship between the clergy experience, age and education on burnout levels

According to Fulmer and Sinclair (2023), where a study was conducted using data from the U.S. Congregational Life Survey (USCLS) collected during 2008 to 2009, encompassing a diverse sample across Catholic and Protestant Christian denominations, with a small representation from other religious traditions. Employing a correlational research design, the study assessed the association between burnout and various aspects of church organizational health, including the so called religiousness (intrinsic and extrinsic) of financial stability, pastor turnover intentions and worship service attenders. Sampling techniques involved a systematic selection of participants from congregations participating in the USCLS. Instruments of measure included standardized surveys assessing pastor burnout, religiousness of attenders, church pastor turnover intentions, financial stability, and the social emanating from members of the congregational community. Data analysis utilized correlational techniques to explore the associations between variables. Findings revealed negative correlations between extrinsic religiousness and clergy burnout indicators of attendees, particularly sense of belonging and participation, while intrinsic religiousness showed no significant relationship. Moreover, younger pastors seemed to experience grater levels of burnout. The level of education as well as ratings of financial stability. The study lays emphasis on the rationale of addressing pastor burnout to enhance overall church organizational health, suggesting implications for church members, denominational boards in implementing strategies to prevent and alleviate burnout among pastors, thus promoting the vitality of local ministry. This study is limited in that it was done in a developed nation and cannot be generalized to Kenya whose economic and social setup is different.

The study by Francis and Crea (2021) delves into the psychosocial factors influencing professional burnout among Catholic priests, religious brothers, and religious sisters in Italy. They explore the effects of both negative psychosocial factors and positive psychosocial factors (including emotional intelligence, religious faith and purpose in life) on burnout, as indicated by satisfaction in ministry and emotional exhaustion. The findings reveal that there was no meaningful relationship between burnout levels and ones level of education, the same can be said of ones experience as a pastor moreover, psychosocial variables did not have any significant effect on satisfaction in ministry.

In a study that was conducted in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, focusing on pastors who had an affiliation with the Assemblies of God Church. Adopting a descriptive survey design, the research aimed to explore the pastors quality of life is influenced by stress and burnout. Utilizing a sample size of 254 individuals from a population of 744, a combination of stratified and simple random sampling techniques was employed. Data collection was achieved through the administration of a questionnaire. Analytical techniques including linear regression, standard deviations and t tests as well as the one way analysis of variance were utilized for data analysis. The findings revealed that younger pastors frequently encountered stressors related to resource scarcity, conflicting roles, delays in achieving ministry goals, and managing multiple tasks simultaneously, leading to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Moreover, the study highlighted a significant relationship between stress, burnout, and the age among pastors. This survey suggests the need for periodic workshops organized by the Assemblies of God Church leadership to equip pastors with coping mechanisms for emotional strains associated with pastoral duties. However, the study leaves gaps in exploring potential contextual factors contributing to stress and burnout among pastors, as well as the effectiveness of various intervention strategies in mitigating these issues. (Fia, Fosu-Ayarkwah, & Kusi, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

To effectively address the objectives, a correlational research design was utilized. The correlational design is ideal for examining how different aspects of burnout relate to psychosocial well-being and how demographic variables, such as experience, age, and education level, influence these relationships.

The study was done in Kiambu County is situated in the central part of Kenya, neighboring the capital city, Nairobi. It is one of Kenya's 47 counties, encompassing an area of approximately 2,543 square kilometers. The county has 10 different regions, or deaneries, including Githunguri, Thika, Ruiru, Ruaraka, Mang'u, Gatundu, Kikuyu, Kiambu, Kabete, and Limuru Deaneries. It also has a good mix of urban and rural populations; this was good in generalization of the study findings. The County has one hundred and seventy five (175) priests, a homogenous population. The choice of this population is the fact that Kiambu County has a fair mix of rural urban and semi urban populations meaning that the study findings can be generalized in several similar populations. Since the population of this study is relatively small, this study used the census method.

For the purpose of collecting the necessary data for this analysis, standardized tools mainly questionnaires were distributed to clergy members. The researcher employed Ryff's Psycho-social Well-being Scale to assess the priests' psychosocial well-being, which served as the dependent variable in the study. Six key dimensions were evaluated: positive relationships with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, self- acceptance and purpose in life. To gauge the prevalence of stress among priests, the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) was utilized. This survey measured the occurrence of psychosocial stress. The MBI is a tool mostly self- reported and made up of 22 items created to do an assessment of burnout, with responses rated on a seven-point Likert scale from "never" (0) to "every day" (6). The subscales include emotional exhaustion (EE; 9), depersonalization (DE; 5), and personal accomplishment (PA; 8). On data analysis, key analytical methods included the Pearson's Correlation Coefficient. This was used to measure the relationship between emotional exhaustion and psychosocial well-being. The Pearson's r was calculated to determine the correlation between emotional exhaustion and psychosocial well-being.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The priests in the study were classified based on their educational achievements, age, and years of work as a priest. This classification aimed to comprehend the demographic profile of the respondents and determine whether various priests characteristics can be used to predict the levels of stress and psychosocial wellness. The ages of the participants are listed in Table 4.2

Age of the Respondents

Figure 1 Age of the Respondents

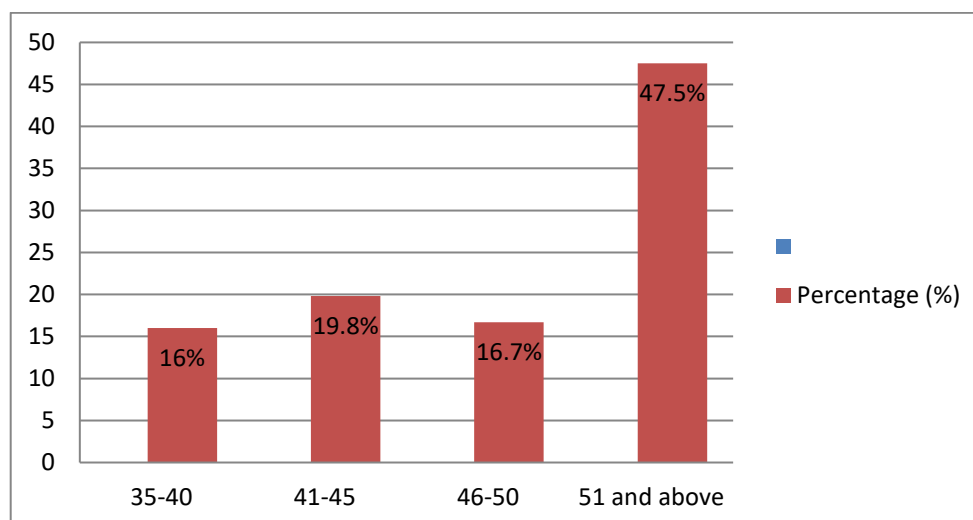


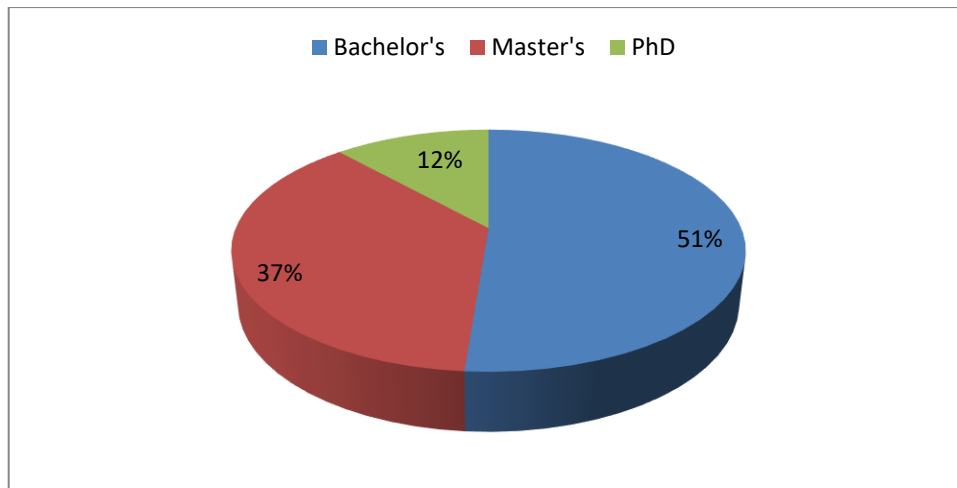
Figure 4.2 shows the age distribution of the respondents who participated in the study where 16% were found to be within the age bracket of 35-40 years. Those between 41 and 45 years made up 19.8%. 16.0% were between the ages of 35 and 40, 19.8% were between 41 and 45, 16.7% were between 46 and 50, and 47.5% were 51 or older. This distribution indicates that respondents of various age groups were utilized in the study, with a significant proportion being over the age of fifty. This diversity allowed the researcher to analyze whether stress

levels varied significantly with age.

Academic Qualifications of the Respondents

The study sought to understand their greatest level of educational achievement. The findings are as indicated in the figure 4.3.

Figure 2: Highest Level of Education of the Respondents

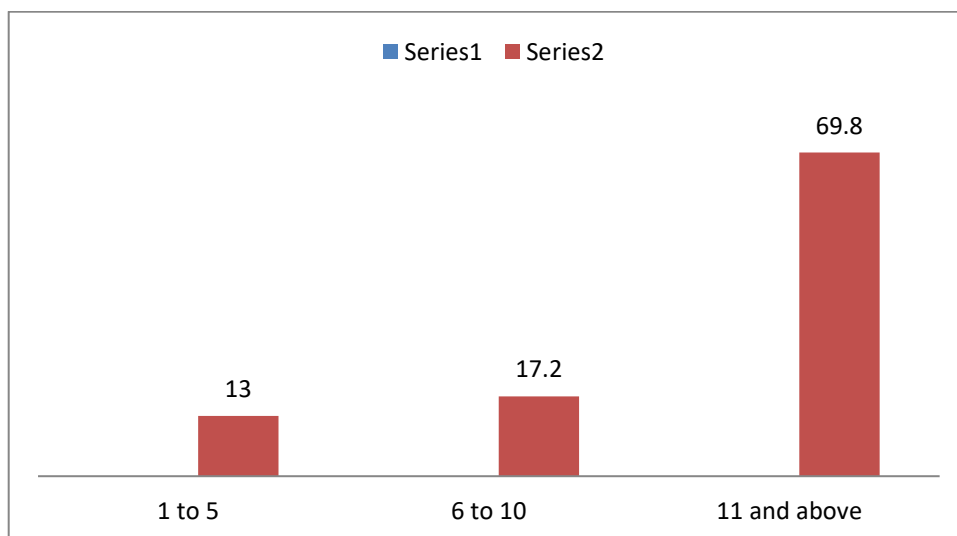


Most of the priests in Kiambu County hold a Bachelor's degree (51.2%), followed by 37.0% have attained at least a master degree while 11.7% have a PhD.. This indicates that the priests who participated have attained at least an undergraduate degree, Furthermore, many priests pursue higher education to serve their community better and make professional advancement within their work.

Years of Work Experience

The priests years of work experience were also determined, where the priests tenure in Kiambu County are presented in Figure 4.4.

Figure 3: Years of Work Experience



As shown in Figure 4.1, 69.8% of the priests surveyed had been in the priesthood for over 10 years. A smaller group, 13.0%, had served for 5 years or less, while 17.2% had served for 6-10 years. These results indicate that most respondents had significant experience as priests, making them well-equipped to provide credible insights on issues related to priests' mental health. Extensive professional experience often strengthens individuals' expertise, confidence, and decision-making abilities..

The relationship between age, educational level, and years of ministry experience with burnout dimensions in Kiambu County at the Archdiocese of Nairobi

The study further sought to determine if there were differences in the prevalence of stress among priests based on educational achievements, experience and age as shown in the table below.

Age

Table 1: Age versus burnout dimension among Priests

Age Group	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
35-40 years	Mean = 8.75	Mean = 9.60	Mean = 10.80
	Std. Dev. = 3.05	Std. Dev. = 3.45	Std. Dev. = 2.25
41-45 years	Mean = 8.85	Mean = 10.50	Mean = 10.40
	Std. Dev. = 2.78	Std. Dev. = 3.15	Std. Dev. = 2.80
46-50 years	Mean = 8.55	Mean = 9.60	Mean = 10.00
	Std. Dev. = 2.98	Std. Dev. = 3.20	Std. Dev. = 2.60
51 and above	Mean = 9.01	Mean = 9.00	Mean = 9.00
	Std. Dev. = 2.93	Std. Dev. = 3.05	Std. Dev. = 3.70

The results indicate that priests between the ages of 35 and 40, as well as those over 51, tend to experience greater emotional exhaustion compared to those in the 41-50 age range. Priests aged 46 to 50 show increased levels of depersonalization, whereas those between 41 and 45 report a stronger sense of personal accomplishment.

Education Level against burnout dimensions

The study also examined the relationship between the education level of priests and their burnout levels. The findings are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 2: Education Level versus burnout dimensions among Priests

Education Level	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Bachelor's	Mean = 9.33	Mean = 11.17	Mean = 9.36
	Std. Dev. = 3.32	Std. Dev. = 2.56	Std. Dev. = 4.28
Master's	Mean = 8.91	Mean = 11.23	Mean = 9.71
	Std. Dev. = 2.42	Std. Dev. = 2.03	Std. Dev. = 2.95
PhD	Mean = 9.01	Mean = 9.70	Mean = 8.60
	Std. Dev. = 2.93	Std. Dev. = 1.95	Std. Dev. = 2.37

The findings in Table 4.4 show that priests with only a bachelor's degree reported experiencing high levels of

emotional exhaustion than those with a master's or PhD. Priests with a master's degree scored higher in personal accomplishment and depersonalization compared to those with a bachelor's or PhD.

Experience versus burnout levels among Priests

The study also examined the relationship between the number of years priests have served and their burnout levels. The findings are presented in Table 4.5

Table 3: Experience versus burnout dimensions among Priests

Years of Service	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
1-5 years	Mean = 8.91	Mean = 12.00	Mean = 8.73
	Std. Dev. = 3.15	Std. Dev. = 3.26	Std. Dev. = 4.58
6-10 years	Mean = 9.63	Mean = 11.53	Mean = 10.74
	Std. Dev. = 2.85	Std. Dev. = 1.90	Std. Dev. = 2.40
Above 11 years	Mean = 8.82	Mean = 10.67	Mean = 9.11
	Std. Dev. = 2.94	Std. Dev. = 2.19	Std. Dev. = 3.66

The findings presented in Table 4.9 indicate that priests with 6-10 years of service experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion, while depersonalization tends to be more pronounced in those who have served for 1-5 years. Additionally, personal accomplishment appears to peak among priests within the 6-10 year range.

Relationship between Demographic variables and Burnout dimensions

To further understand the relationship between age, educational level, and years of experience with the dimensions of burnout, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The results are summarized as follows:

Table 4 Pearson Correlation Analysis between Demographic Variables and Burnout Dimensions

Variables	Emotional Exhaustion	Depersonalization	Personal Accomplishment
Age	0.12	-0.05	-0.09
Educational Level	-0.18*	0.14*	-0.20*
Years of Experience	-0.07	-0.32**	0.15*

*p < 0.05

**p < 0.01

Findings regarding age show that there was a weak positive correlation between age and emotional exhaustion ($r = 0.12$, $p > 0.05$), and a weak negative correlation between age and personal accomplishment ($r = -0.09$, $p > 0.05$). However, these correlations were not statistically significant. Regarding the level of education. A weak negative correlation was found between educational level and emotional exhaustion ($r = -0.18$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that higher education may slightly reduce emotional exhaustion. There was a weak positive correlation between educational level and depersonalization ($r = 0.14$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that higher educational attainment may be associated with higher depersonalization. There was also a weak negative correlation between educational level and personal accomplishment ($r = -0.20$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that higher education might reduce feelings of personal accomplishment. A moderate negative correlation was observed

between years of experience and depersonalization ($r = -0.32, p < 0.01$), indicating that more experience is associated with lower depersonalization. There was also a weak positive correlation between years of experience and personal accomplishment ($r = 0.15, p < 0.05$), suggesting that more experience might enhance personal accomplishment.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Age

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA Results for Age Differences on Burnout

Burnout Dimension	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Emotional Exhaustion	Between Groups	118.420	5	23.684	1.390	.230
	Within Groups	2124.870	126	16.868		
	Total	2243.290	131			
Depersonalization	Between Groups	66.210	5	13.242	1.540	.180
	Within Groups	940.560	126	7.465		
	Total	1006.770	131			
Personal Accomplishment	Between Groups	195.780	5	39.156	2.710	.023*
	Within Groups	1898.120	126	15.063		
	Total	2093.900	131			

The results highlight that for Emotional Exhaustion, there were no statistically significant differences among the age groups, $F(5,126) = 1.390, p = .230$ ($p > 0.05$). For Depersonalization, the differences across age groups were also not significant $F(5,126) = 1.540, p = .180$ ($p > 0.05$). However, a significant difference was noted in Personal Accomplishment $F(5,126) = 2.710, p = .023$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that age group has a statistically significant impact on Personal Accomplishment, while no significant differences were observed for Emotional Exhaustion and Depersonalization.

Table 6: Independent Sample T-Test Results for Educational Level Differences on Burnout

Burnout Dimension	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Emotional Exhaustion	Between Groups	16.230	3	5.410	0.310	.820
	Within Groups	2203.610	126	17.490		
	Total	2219.840	129			
Depersonalization	Between Groups	25.730	3	8.577	0.910	.433

	Within Groups	976.560	126	7.752		
	Total	1002.290	129			
Personal Accomplishment	Between Groups	39.210	3	13.070	0.740	.530
	Within Groups	2050.670	126	16.275		
	Total	2089.880	129			

The results in Table above indicate that differences in educational levels did not produce statistically significant effects on the three dimensions of burnout. The results showed no significant difference between educational levels $F(3,126) = 0.310, p = .820 (p > 0.05)$. Similarly, there were no significant differences for this burnout domain, $F(3,126) = 0.910, p = .433 (p > 0.05)$. Educational level differences also did not have a significant impact on this burnout dimension $F(3,126) = 0.740, p = .530 (p > 0.05)$.

Table 7: One Way ANOVA Results for Ministry Experience and Burnout

Burnout Dimension	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig. (p-value)
Emotional Exhaustion	Between Groups	16.230	3	5.410	0.310	0.820
	Within Groups	2203.610	126	17.490		
	Total	2219.840	129			
Depersonalization	Between Groups	25.730	3	8.577	0.910	0.433
	Within Groups	976.560	126	7.752		
	Total	1002.290	129			
Personal Accomplishment	Between Groups	39.210	3	13.070	0.740	0.530
	Within Groups	2050.670	126	16.275		
	Total	2089.880	129			

The One Way ANOVA results presented show that there were no significant differences between the groups in terms of burnout across all three dimensions measured: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal Accomplishment. The ANOVA result for emotional exhaustion yielded a value of $F=1.318F = 1.318F=1.318$ with a significance value of 0.277, indicating that ministry experience did not have a significant effect on emotional exhaustion. For depersonalization, the ANOVA produced an FFF-value of 0.407 and a significance value of 0.748, also indicating no significant differences based on the level of ministry experience. The result for personal accomplishment showed an FFF-value of 0.299 and a significance value of 0.832, again indicating no significant impact of ministry experience on this aspect of burnout.

DISCUSSION

These findings suggest that while age, educational level, and years of experience have some relationships with the dimensions of burnout, these relationships are generally weak and may not be significant predictors of psychosocial stress among priests. The study highlights the complexity of burnout and suggests that multiple factors, including personal, environmental, and organizational influences, contribute to the well-being of clergy.

The analysis of age and its relationship with burnout dimensions reveals weak correlations, suggesting that age alone does not strongly predict emotional exhaustion or personal accomplishment among priests. These findings are consistent with those of Wang et al. (2015), who found that age had minimal impact on burnout among healthcare professionals. Their study indicated that while older professionals might have different stress coping mechanisms, age did not significantly correlate with burnout levels. Similarly, Kox et al. (2012) reported that age was not a significant predictor of emotional exhaustion among Dutch police officers, highlighting that burnout is influenced more by factors other than age, such as job demands and support systems.

In contrast, the correlation between educational level and burnout dimensions provides a more nuanced view. A weak negative correlation between educational level and emotional exhaustion suggests that higher education may slightly reduce emotional exhaustion, aligning with findings from Goh et al. (2018). Their study on academic burnout indicated that higher educational qualifications could contribute to better stress management and lower emotional exhaustion. However, the weak positive correlation between educational level and depersonalization, and the weak negative correlation with personal accomplishment, reflects the complexity of these relationships. This finding is supported by research from Xu and Cooper (2019), which found that higher education levels could lead to increased expectations and job demands, potentially resulting in higher depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment.

Regarding years of experience, the moderate negative correlation with depersonalization indicates that more experience is associated with lower levels of depersonalization, which aligns with the findings of Schaufeli et al. (2009). Their study on burnout among teachers found that experienced professionals generally exhibited lower levels of depersonalization, attributing this to improved coping strategies and better job management skills acquired over time. The weak positive correlation between personal accomplishment and years of experience suggests that experience might enhance feelings of achievement, although the effect is modest. This finding is consistent with the work of Judge and Bono (2001), who observed that increased work experience could lead to greater job satisfaction and personal accomplishment, albeit to a lesser extent in some professions.

Priests aged 35-40 and over 51 years of experience higher emotional exhaustion, suggesting that these age groups face particularly high job demands (perhaps due to external responsibilities or health concerns in older age). In line with JD-R, these priests may lack adequate personal resources to manage stress. Priests with only a bachelor's degree, experiencing higher emotional exhaustion than those with advanced degrees, might have fewer coping skills or less refined resource utilization, which higher education could help develop. Higher levels of depersonalization among priests aged 46-50 years and those with less experience (1-5 years) could be seen as a defensive response to job demands. According to the JD-R model, depersonalization can occur when individuals try to distance themselves from overwhelming responsibilities. Newer priests may still be building resources like resilience and social support, making them more vulnerable to depersonalization as a way to cope.

This dimension appears to peak among priests with 6-10 years of experience and those aged 41-45 years, possibly because they've developed effective resources (coping skills, supportive networks) that help them achieve a sense of mastery in their role. According to JD-R, these resources can buffer the effects of high job demands, contributing to a positive sense of accomplishment. SDT focuses on the fulfillment of psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. When these needs are met, individuals tend to experience greater motivation and well-being, which can protect against burnout. SDT helps explain how varying degrees of autonomy, skill, and support in priests' roles may influence burnout levels. Priests with bachelor's degrees experiencing more emotional exhaustion may be struggling with feelings of competence, one of the core needs in SDT. Those with advanced degrees, having likely developed greater self-efficacy and confidence, may feel more capable in addressing challenges, thus mitigating emotional exhaustion. Furthermore, priests in the 35-40 and 51+ age brackets might face situational or systemic pressures that limit their sense of autonomy, leading to greater emotional exhaustion.

The correlations between age, education, and years of experience with burnout dimensions support both JD-R and SDT perspectives, as priests gain experience and education, they likely acquire resources (e.g., coping mechanisms, networks) that help manage job demands. This helps explain why burnout is initially high but decreases after 10 years of service, as resources catch up with demands. As priests' roles evolve with experience and education, their needs for autonomy and competence may be better met, which can explain the decrease in

burnout levels. Higher educational levels potentially enhance their feelings of competence, and more years in ministry could enhance relatedness through stronger community ties. Both theories thus offer insights into how personal attributes and professional resources play a significant role in shaping the burnout experience for clergy members, with implications for strategies to support their psychosocial well-being.

CONCLUSION

The study findings that younger Priests' excessive pastoral responsibilities and financial constraints were major stressors. Additionally, older priests were cited as being more vulnerable to various dimensions of burnout due to their difficult personalities and control, leading to younger priests feeling misunderstood and engaged in unhealthy competition; Older Priests' Poor relationship networks, excessive responsibilities, and family-related issues contributed to their stress. The negative attitudes of priests towards these stressors significantly impacted their psycho-social wellness.

Priests recorded a high score on self-acceptance, indicating that they had embraced their roles and performed all their respective activities as expected by their seniors and congregants. They also maintained good relations with colleagues, church leaders, and congregants and strived for personal growth through further education or benchmarking. However, autonomy was a challenge due to decision-making being centralized within the church hierarchy.

This study underscores the importance of addressing burnout among priests to improve their psycho-social wellbeing. Effective support systems and positive coping mechanisms are crucial. Church authorities should ensure that stress management strategies and support systems are viewed positively and accessible to all clergy members. Additionally, fostering better interpersonal relationships and reducing the burden of excessive responsibilities can significantly enhance the wellbeing of priests.

The study found a significant correlation between burnout and psychosocial well-being among priests in Kiambu County, with a correlation value of 0.002. This indicates that the relationship between these variables is statistically significant. There is a weak negative correlation ($r = -0.280$, $p < 0.05$) between the prevalence of stress and the psycho-social wellbeing of priests. This suggests that as stress prevalence increases, psycho-social wellbeing slightly decreases. There is a moderate to strong inverse relationship between emotional exhaustion and psycho-social wellbeing ($r = -0.631$, $p < 0.01$). As emotional exhaustion increases, psycho-social wellbeing significantly decreases. There is a moderate inverse relationship between depersonalization and psycho-social wellbeing ($r = -0.525$, $p < 0.01$). Increased depersonalization, characterized by detachment or cynicism towards others, leads to decreased psycho-social wellbeing.

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