

Faith, Ministry, and Marriage: Examining the Relationship between Church Commitment and Marital Resilience among Pastors' Spouses

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ABSTRACT

Church commitment is widely regarded as a source of spiritual support that strengthens family relationships and promotes marital well-being. However, pastors' spouses often experience unique ministry-related responsibilities that may influence how church commitment relates to marital resilience. This study examined the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. A quantitative correlational research design was employed involving 87 pastors' spouses selected through multistage sampling. Data were collected using the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) and the Relational Resilience Inventory (RRI), both of which demonstrated excellent internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and levels of the study variables, while Pearson correlation analysis examined the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience. The findings revealed that most respondents reported high levels of church commitment but generally low levels of marital resilience. Pearson correlation analysis indicated a statistically significant but weak negative relationship between church commitment and marital resilience ($r = -0.235$, $p = .028$). The findings suggest that although church commitment provides spiritual meaning and identity, the demands associated with ministry may simultaneously challenge marital resilience. The study recommends that Pentecostal churches strengthen pastoral family support through marital enrichment programmes, counselling services, and initiatives that promote healthy work–family balance to enhance the well-being of pastors' spouses.

Keywords: Church commitment; Marital resilience; Pastoral families; Pentecostal churches; Religious commitment

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is widely recognized as a fundamental social institution that promotes individual well-being, family stability, and social cohesion. Within the Christian tradition, marriage extends beyond a social contract to represent a sacred covenant grounded in shared faith, commitment, and religious values. Despite its significance, marriage is continually exposed to social, occupational, and relational challenges that require couples to develop the capacity to adapt and thrive amidst adversity. This adaptive capacity, commonly referred to as marital resilience, encompasses a couple's ability to withstand, recover from, and positively adjust to stressful circumstances while maintaining relationship quality and stability (Salehuddin et al., 2023). Contemporary scholarship further recognizes that marital resilience is strengthened by relational processes such as effective communication, shared meaning-making, emotional regulation, and collaborative coping, all of which enable couples to navigate adversity without compromising the stability of their relationship (Walsh, 2016; Olson et al., 2020). Within religious contexts, spirituality and shared faith practices have been identified as valuable resources that promote adaptive coping and reinforce marital bonds, making the relationship between religious commitment and marital resilience an important area of inquiry (Ferreira et al., 2022; Prime et al., 2020).

Among Christian couples, pastors' spouses occupy a particularly distinctive position because they simultaneously navigate marital responsibilities and ministry expectations. Their lives are characterized by high visibility within church communities, continuous interaction with congregants, and expectations to exemplify Christian family

values. These responsibilities often blur the boundaries between private family life and public ministry, exposing pastors' spouses to unique emotional, relational, and social pressures that may influence marital functioning (Sohail et al., 2026). Consequently, understanding the factors that promote resilience within pastoral marriages has become increasingly important, particularly in church environments where ministry responsibilities are deeply integrated into family life.

One factor that may shape marital resilience among pastors' spouses is church commitment. Church commitment is a multidimensional construct encompassing emotional attachment to the church, active participation in church activities, spiritual involvement, and a sense of obligation or dedication to religious service (Mahoney, 2022; Ellison & Flannelly, 2020). Rather than being limited to attendance at worship services, church commitment reflects an individual's integration into the spiritual, social, and organizational life of the church. Within Pentecostal traditions, commitment is reinforced through active ministry participation, communal worship, and service-oriented practices that strengthen spiritual identity and foster a sense of belonging. For pastors' spouses, such commitment often provides meaning, purpose, emotional support, and opportunities for spiritual growth while reinforcing their identity within both the family and the church community (Knobloch et al., 2024).

Church Commitment and Marital Resilience in Pastoral Ministry

The relationship between church commitment and marital resilience can be understood through both Family Systems Theory and Stress and Coping Theory. Family Systems Theory conceptualizes the family as an interconnected emotional unit in which external systems, including religious institutions, influence internal family relationships and functioning (Walsh, 2026). Consequently, church commitment is not merely an individual characteristic but a relational process that shapes interactions within the marital system. Complementing this perspective, Stress and Coping Theory proposes that resilience depends not only on exposure to stress but also on how individuals appraise and respond to stressful experiences (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Within pastoral families, adaptive coping strategies may enable couples to effectively manage ministry-related demands, thereby strengthening marital resilience despite the pressures associated with church service.

Empirical evidence generally suggests that church commitment contributes positively to marital resilience. Couples who actively participate in religious life often benefit from shared moral values, common spiritual practices, and supportive faith communities that strengthen commitment, marital stability, and adaptive coping (Mahoney, 2019). Religious involvement has been associated with increased relationship quality through shared prayer, worship, and faith-based coping mechanisms that foster emotional support and collaborative problem-solving (Ferreira et al., 2022; Knobloch et al., 2024). These findings suggest that church commitment provides both spiritual and social resources that enable couples to withstand relational challenges and maintain healthy marriages.

Nevertheless, the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience is not uniformly positive. Emerging evidence indicates that excessive ministry involvement, role overload, institutional expectations, and competing church responsibilities may undermine marital well-being by increasing emotional exhaustion, reducing quality family time, and creating role conflict (Ellison et al., 2020). For pastors' spouses, whose ministry roles often extend beyond formal church activities into counselling, leadership, and congregational support, the demands associated with high levels of church commitment may simultaneously serve as sources of spiritual fulfilment and relational strain. These contrasting findings indicate that church commitment can function as both a protective factor and a potential risk factor, depending on the intensity of involvement, availability of support, and the broader ministry context in which it is experienced.

Church Commitment and Marital Resilience in the Kenyan Pentecostal Context

Within African societies, religion remains deeply embedded in family life, shaping marital expectations, social support systems, and community relationships. Religious participation has consistently been associated with stronger marital satisfaction and stability through shared beliefs and communal support (Gyimah et al., 2019). However, pastoral families often experience additional expectations arising from their leadership roles within church communities. In East Africa, rapid urbanization and changing family structures have intensified ministry demands while increasing the complexity of balancing church responsibilities with family life (Togarasei &

Chitando, 2020). In Kenya, the rapid expansion of Pentecostal churches has further reinforced expectations for active ministry involvement among pastors and their spouses. Although such involvement strengthens spiritual identity and community belonging, it also increases public scrutiny, emotional labour, and role expectations that may influence marital resilience (Kiprono et al., 2021; Proeschold-Bell et al., 2020). These contextual realities make pastors' spouses an especially relevant population for examining how church commitment relates to marital resilience.

Despite growing scholarship on religion and family life, important knowledge gaps remain. Existing studies have largely examined religious commitment and marital functioning among general Christian populations or clergy, with comparatively little attention given to pastors' spouses whose experiences are shaped by distinctive ministry responsibilities (Mahoney, 2019; Agadjanian & Yabiku, 2020). Furthermore, although previous research has documented both the supportive and demanding dimensions of church involvement, limited empirical evidence has specifically examined how church commitment relates to marital resilience among pastors' spouses within Pentecostal churches in urban Kenya (Gyimah et al., 2019; Kiprono et al., 2021). This lack of context-specific evidence limits the ability of churches and pastoral support programmes to develop interventions that effectively strengthen pastoral marriages.

Therefore, this study sought to determine the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Guided by Family Systems Theory and Stress and Coping Theory, the study tested the null hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. A correlational design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the strength and direction of the association between the study variables without manipulating them (Creswell & Creswell, 2022). The cross-sectional approach allowed data to be collected from participants at a single point in time, providing an efficient means of assessing church commitment and marital resilience within the study population.

Study Setting and Participants

The study was conducted in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya, an urban setting characterized by a high concentration of Pentecostal churches and active ministry engagement. The area was considered suitable because pastors' spouses frequently experience the interaction between ministry responsibilities and family life, making it an appropriate setting for examining the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience (Togarasei & Chitando, 2020). The target population comprised pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches within Starehe Sub-County. Participants were eligible if they were legally married, had been married for at least one year, were actively involved in church ministry, and voluntarily consented to participate in the study. Pastors, spouses of other church leaders, individuals married for less than one year, and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study (Kiprono et al., 2021).

The sample size was determined using Cochran's (1977) sample size formula with finite population correction for the relatively small study population. Based on an estimated population of approximately 100 pastors' spouses, a final sample of 88 respondents was obtained, including a provision for possible non-response. A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed. Purposive sampling was first used to identify eligible Pentecostal churches, after which simple random sampling was applied where participant registers were available. In churches without comprehensive participant lists, convenience sampling was used to recruit eligible respondents. Sampling frames were developed from church directories, denominational records, and church networks.

Measures

Church commitment was measured using the Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10) developed by Worthington et al. (2003). The instrument consists of 10 items assessing the extent to which religious beliefs, personal faith, church participation, and religious practices influence an individual's daily life. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The RCI-10 conceptualizes church commitment through intrapersonal commitment, reflecting personal religious devotion, and interpersonal commitment, reflecting participation and engagement within the faith community (Hill & Pargament, 2023). Marital resilience was assessed using the Relational Resilience Inventory (RRI) (Walsh, 2022). The 18-item instrument measures couples' capacity to maintain healthy and adaptive relationships despite challenges. The scale assesses key dimensions of marital resilience, including communication, emotional support, conflict resolution, adaptability, and emotional recovery. Responses were similarly rated on a five-point Likert scale.

Prior to the main data collection, a pilot study involving eight pastors' spouses from Pentecostal churches in Lang'ata Sub-County was conducted to evaluate the clarity, contextual relevance, and practicality of the research instruments. Participants in the pilot study were excluded from the final sample. Feedback obtained during the pilot exercise was used to refine the wording and administration of the questionnaires, thereby improving their contextual suitability (Saunders et al., 2023). Because both instruments were standardized measures, validity focused primarily on confirming their contextual appropriateness within the study setting. Content validity was established through expert review by the research supervisor and specialists in religious studies and family psychology, while face validity was assessed during the pilot study to ensure that questionnaire items were clear, relevant, and understandable to the target population (Saunders et al., 2023).

The reliability of both instruments was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The Religious Commitment Inventory demonstrated excellent internal consistency (Cronbach's $\alpha = .963$), while the Relational Resilience Inventory also exhibited excellent reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = .973$). These coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold of .70, indicating that both instruments were highly reliable for measuring church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses (Field, 2022).

Data Collection Procedure

Following ethical approval and authorization from the relevant authorities, permission to conduct the study was obtained from the leadership of the selected Pentecostal churches. Eligible participants were identified in collaboration with church leaders and invited to participate voluntarily. The researcher personally administered the structured questionnaires after explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining informed consent. Participants completed the questionnaires individually, and completed questionnaires were collected immediately after completion or within an agreed period to minimize non-response and missing data.

Data Analysis

Completed questionnaires were coded, cleaned, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were computed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics as well as levels of church commitment and marital resilience (Field, 2022). Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience, while simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the predictive influence of church commitment on marital resilience. Independent samples *t*-tests and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) were further conducted to examine differences across selected demographic characteristics where appropriate. Statistical significance was evaluated at $p \leq .05$ (Saunders et al., 2023).

Limitations of the Study

This study was conducted among pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches within Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County. Consequently, the findings may not be generalizable to pastors' spouses from other Christian denominations, religious traditions, geographical locations, or cultural contexts. In addition, the study employed a cross-sectional correlational design, which enabled the examination of associations between church

commitment and marital resilience but did not permit the establishment of causal relationships between the variables. Furthermore, although a statistically significant negative relationship was observed, the correlation was relatively weak, suggesting that other personal, relational, organizational, and contextual factors not examined in this study may also influence marital resilience among pastors' spouses.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained through the relevant university procedures, followed by research authorization from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Permission to conduct the study was also obtained from the leadership of the participating Pentecostal churches. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents before data collection commenced. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, with no identifying information collected in the questionnaires. All data were used solely for academic purposes, securely stored, and accessed only by the researcher. Throughout the study, participants' dignity, privacy, and well-being were protected in accordance with established ethical principles for social science research (Creswell & Creswell, 2022; Saunders et al., 2023).

RESULTS

Participant Characteristics

A total of 87 completed questionnaires were included in the analysis, representing a response rate of 98.9%. Table 1 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The majority of the respondents were female (64.4%), while males accounted for 35.6% of the sample. Most respondents were aged between 31 and 50 years (73.5%), with the largest proportion (37.9%) falling within the 31–40-year age group. Regarding educational attainment, the majority had attained at least college education, with 39.1% holding bachelor's degrees and 24.1% possessing postgraduate qualifications. In terms of marital duration, 31.0% had been married for more than 20 years, indicating considerable marital experience among the respondents. Additionally, 66.7% reported that their spouses were engaged in part-time ministry, whereas 33.3% indicated full-time ministry involvement.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	31	35.6
	Female	56	64.4
Age (years)	21–30	5	5.7
	31–40	33	37.9
	41–50	31	35.6
	51–60	13	14.9
	Above 60	5	5.7
Highest Level of Education	Secondary	3	3.4
	College	29	33.3
	Bachelor's degree	34	39.1
	Postgraduate	21	24.1
Duration of Marriage	Less than 5 years	11	12.6
	6–10 years	12	13.8
	11–15 years	20	23.0
	16–20 years	17	19.5
	More than 20 years	27	31.0
Spouse's Ministry Involvement	Full-time ministry	29	33.3
	Part-time ministry	58	66.7

Descriptive Statistics of the Study Variables

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics for the study variables. Overall marital resilience recorded a mean score of 1.71 (SD = 0.71), with observed scores ranging from 1.00 to 4.61. The variability in scores indicates differences

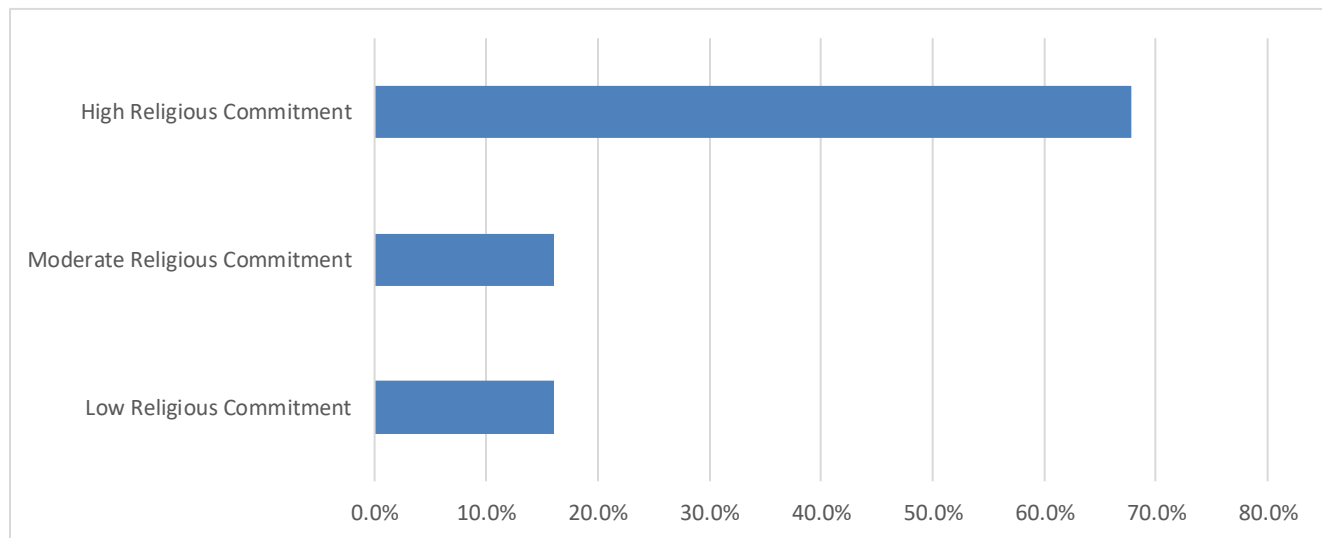
in the levels of marital resilience among pastors' spouses within the study population.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Marital Resilience among Pastors' Spouses.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
overall_rri	87	1.00	4.61	1.7082	.70915
Valid N (listwise)	87				

The distribution of respondents according to their level of church commitment is presented in Figure 1. The findings indicate that 59 respondents (67.8%) demonstrated high church commitment, while 14 respondents (16.1%) each reported low and moderate levels of commitment. These results suggest that church commitment was generally high among pastors' spouses participating in the study.

Figure 1. Overall Level of Church Commitment among Pastors' Spouses.



Relationship between Church Commitment and Marital Resilience

Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to determine the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses. As shown in Table 3, a statistically significant negative correlation was observed between church commitment and marital resilience ($r = -.235$, $p = .028$). Although statistically significant, the magnitude of the relationship was weak, indicating that higher levels of church commitment were associated with slightly lower levels of marital resilience.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation between Church Commitment and Marital Resilience among Pastors' Spouses.

		overall_rri	overall_rci
overall_rri	Pearson Correlation	1	-.235*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.028
	N	87	87
overall_rci	Pearson Correlation	-.235*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.028	
	N	87	87
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Predictive Influence of Church Commitment on Marital Resilience

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to determine whether church commitment significantly predicted marital resilience. The regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 85) = 4.99$, $p = .028$, with an R value of .235 and an R^2 of .055, indicating that church commitment explained approximately 5.5% of the variance in marital resilience.

As presented in Table 4, church commitment was a statistically significant negative predictor of marital resilience ($B = -0.017$, $\beta = -.235$, $t = -2.233$, $p = .028$). This indicates that higher levels of church commitment were associated with lower levels of marital resilience among pastors' spouses. Specifically, for every one-unit increase in church commitment, marital resilience decreased by 0.017 units. The standardized beta coefficient ($\beta = -.235$) further suggests that church commitment exerted a weak negative influence on marital resilience. Although the relationship was statistically significant, the magnitude of the effect was relatively small, indicating that church commitment accounted for only a modest proportion of the variation in marital resilience. The negative association may reflect the unique demands of pastoral ministry, where increased involvement in church activities and ministry responsibilities can reduce the time and emotional resources available for nurturing marital relationships. Consequently, while church commitment may provide spiritual meaning and a sense of purpose, excessive ministry involvement may simultaneously contribute to role strain, emotional exhaustion, and challenges in maintaining resilience within marriage.

Table 4. Simple Linear Regression Predicting Marital Resilience from Church Commitment.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% C.I.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1 (Constant)	2.388	.313		7.621	.000	1.765	3.011
overall_rci	-.017	.008	-.235	-2.233	.028	-.032	-.002

a. Dependent Variable: overall_rri

DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County, Kenya. Contrary to the widely held assumption that stronger religious commitment invariably promotes healthier marital relationships, the findings revealed a statistically significant but weak negative relationship between church commitment and marital resilience. Specifically, higher levels of church commitment were associated with slightly lower levels of marital resilience among pastors' spouses. Although the strength of this relationship was modest, the findings suggest that the influence of church commitment on marital functioning is more complex than commonly portrayed in the literature and warrants consideration within the unique context of pastoral ministry.

The observed negative relationship may reflect the distinctive realities of ministry life, where church commitment extends beyond personal spirituality to encompass substantial institutional responsibilities, congregational expectations, and public accountability. Pastors' spouses frequently occupy multiple roles as ministry partners, counsellors, mentors, and role models while simultaneously fulfilling family responsibilities. As church commitment intensifies, these overlapping responsibilities may increase emotional labour, reduce opportunities for quality marital interaction, and create competing demands between ministry and family life. Consequently, although church commitment provides spiritual meaning and purpose, the accompanying obligations may inadvertently reduce the emotional and relational resources necessary to sustain resilient marriages. The present findings therefore suggest that church commitment should not be viewed solely as a protective factor but rather as a multidimensional construct whose influence depends on the context in which it is experienced.

These findings differ from a substantial body of literature reporting positive associations between religious commitment and marital functioning. Previous studies have consistently shown that shared religious beliefs, joint participation in worship, and common spiritual practices strengthen marital commitment by promoting shared values, mutual forgiveness, emotional support, and collective meaning-making (Olson et al., 2021). Religious involvement has similarly been associated with greater marital stability, improved communication, and stronger commitment among couples who actively integrate faith into their daily lives. Such findings have contributed to the prevailing view that religious commitment functions as an important protective resource for marital well-being.

The findings of the present study, however, align more closely with emerging evidence suggesting that religious involvement may also generate relational strain under certain circumstances. Mahoney (2020) argues that while

religion often strengthens family relationships, the demands associated with religious participation may also create tension when institutional expectations begin to compete with family priorities. Similarly, Lee (2022) observed that excessive ministry involvement may contribute to role overload, emotional exhaustion, and reduced marital satisfaction, particularly among clergy families whose personal and professional lives are closely intertwined. The weak negative association identified in the present study supports this perspective by suggesting that within pastoral households, increased church commitment may coincide with ministry obligations that gradually reduce the emotional energy available for maintaining resilient marital relationships. Rather than contradicting the value of faith itself, these findings highlight the importance of distinguishing between personal spirituality and the practical demands associated with active ministry participation.

The ministry context provides an important explanation for these findings. Unlike members of the general congregation, pastors' spouses often experience continuous expectations to participate in church activities, provide emotional support to congregants, and uphold exemplary Christian family standards. Such expectations frequently blur the boundaries between church and family life, making it difficult for couples to separate ministry responsibilities from their private relationships. Over time, persistent exposure to these demands may reduce opportunities for emotional intimacy, open communication, and mutual support, all of which are essential components of marital resilience. The present findings therefore suggest that it is not religious commitment itself that undermines marital resilience but rather the intensity and nature of ministry responsibilities that accompany high levels of church involvement.

The findings are further illuminated through the lens of Family Systems Theory. The theory conceptualizes the family as an interconnected emotional system in which external environments continuously influence internal family functioning (Walsh, 2026). Within pastoral families, the church represents a significant external system whose expectations, norms, and relational demands inevitably interact with the marital relationship. High levels of church commitment may strengthen spiritual identity and reinforce shared family values, but they may simultaneously increase role strain and emotional pressure when ministry responsibilities exceed the family's adaptive capacity. The negative relationship observed in this study is therefore consistent with the proposition that external institutional demands can shape communication patterns, emotional support, and relational functioning within families. From this perspective, marital resilience depends not only on individual faith but also on how effectively couples negotiate the interaction between ministry obligations and family life.

Stress and Coping Theory similarly provides a useful framework for interpreting these findings. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) propose that resilience depends not only on the presence of stressors but also on individuals' appraisal of those stressors and the coping resources available to manage them. Religious commitment has frequently been identified as an important coping resource because it offers meaning, hope, emotional comfort, and social support during adversity. However, the present findings suggest that religious commitment may simultaneously function as a source of stress when it involves extensive ministry responsibilities, unrealistic expectations, or prolonged emotional demands. Under such circumstances, the coping benefits of religious involvement may be partially offset by the additional pressures associated with sustained church engagement. The weak negative association observed in this study therefore illustrates the dual nature of religious commitment as both a protective resource and a potential source of relational strain depending on the broader ministry environment.

An equally important observation emerging from this study is that church commitment explained only a small proportion of the variation in marital resilience. The modest magnitude of the relationship suggests that marital resilience among pastors' spouses is influenced by numerous additional factors beyond religious commitment alone. Variables such as communication quality, emotional intimacy, marital satisfaction, personality characteristics, financial stability, social support, psychological well-being, and organizational support within the church may collectively exert stronger influences on marital resilience than church commitment itself. Consequently, religious commitment should be understood as one contributing factor within a broader network of personal, relational, and institutional influences shaping marital outcomes. Future studies should therefore adopt more comprehensive explanatory models that incorporate these additional variables to provide a fuller understanding of marital resilience among clergy families.

The findings also contribute important contextual evidence from the Kenyan Pentecostal setting, where empirical

studies examining pastors' spouses remain relatively limited. Much of the existing literature on religion and marriage has focused on general Christian populations or ordained clergy in Western contexts, with comparatively little attention given to pastors' spouses serving in rapidly growing urban Pentecostal churches in Africa. The present study extends this literature by demonstrating that the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience may differ within ministry families operating in environments characterized by high congregational expectations and extensive ministry involvement. These findings therefore underscore the importance of considering cultural, organizational, and ministry-specific factors when examining the relationship between religiosity and family functioning.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that churches should avoid assuming that high levels of religious commitment automatically translate into healthy and resilient marriages among pastoral families. While encouraging active ministry participation remains central to Pentecostal church life, equal attention should be directed toward protecting the emotional and relational well-being of pastors' spouses. Church leadership may therefore benefit from establishing structured programmes that promote healthy work-family boundaries, provide marital enrichment opportunities, strengthen peer support networks, and encourage access to counselling services when needed. Such initiatives would enable pastoral families to maintain strong spiritual commitment while simultaneously nurturing resilient marital relationships capable of withstanding the demands of ministry.

Overall, the present study demonstrates that the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience is nuanced and context dependent. Although church commitment remains a central feature of pastoral identity and provides important spiritual resources, it may also introduce additional responsibilities that challenge marital resilience when ministry demands become excessive. These findings contribute to a growing body of scholarship recognizing that religious involvement possesses both protective and demanding dimensions. Understanding this dual role is essential for developing church-based interventions that strengthen not only spiritual commitment but also the relational health and long-term well-being of pastors' spouses serving within contemporary Pentecostal ministry.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between church commitment and marital resilience among pastors' spouses serving in Pentecostal churches in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County. The findings revealed a statistically significant but weak negative relationship between church commitment and marital resilience, indicating that higher levels of church commitment were associated with slightly lower levels of marital resilience. Although church commitment remains an important source of spiritual identity, meaning, and support, the findings suggest that the demands associated with active ministry may also introduce emotional, relational, and time-related pressures that affect marital functioning. These results underscore the complexity of the relationship between religious commitment and marital resilience, highlighting that faith alone may not be sufficient to sustain resilient marriages in high-demand ministry contexts. The study therefore concludes that fostering healthy marital relationships among pastors' spouses requires not only spiritual commitment but also intentional efforts to promote work-family balance, emotional support, and relational well-being within church ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Strengthen support systems for pastors' spouses.** Pentecostal churches should establish structured support programmes, such as marital enrichment seminars, peer support groups, and professional counselling services, to help pastors' spouses effectively manage the emotional and relational demands associated with ministry while strengthening marital resilience.
2. **Promote healthy ministry-family balance.** Church leadership should encourage practices that foster a healthy balance between ministry responsibilities and family life by setting realistic expectations, promoting healthy boundaries, and creating opportunities for pastors and their spouses to prioritize quality family time without compromising their ministry commitments.
3. **Integrate family well-being into pastoral development.** Denominational leaders and church administrators should incorporate training on marital health, stress management, communication, and work-family balance into leadership development programmes for pastors and their spouses to enhance resilience within pastoral families.

4. **Recommendations for future research.** Future studies should employ longitudinal research designs to examine how church commitment influences marital resilience over time and to better understand the direction of the relationship between the variables. Qualitative studies involving in-depth interviews with pastors' spouses may provide richer insights into ministry-related demands, emotional experiences, coping strategies, family dynamics, and coping mechanisms that influence marital resilience. Researchers should also examine additional factors such as social support, ministry workload, leadership expectations, and psychological well-being that may contribute to marital resilience among pastoral families. Furthermore, studies involving pastors' spouses from different Christian denominations, geographical regions, and cultural settings are recommended to enhance the generalizability of findings and provide a broader understanding of marital resilience within pastoral ministry contexts.

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