

Pastor's Woundedness in the Adventist Divisions in Sub-Saharan Africa

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Pastor's Woundedness using a quantitative descriptive design on a sample of 304 pastors in the East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID) of the Adventist Church. Data from the self-constructed questionnaire was analyzed using SPSS 27 and SmartPLS 4.0 for statistical treatment. Anchored on grit theory, the results show that the pastors exhibited a high level of woundedness. The pastors experienced hurt, emotional woundedness, betrayal, abuse of authority from superiors, have few supportive friends, and still feel the pain. Yet, 82.6% of pastors were satisfied in ministry. An independent sample t-test conducted to compare the level of Pastor's Woundedness aged Below 39 years and Above 40 years old found that although the older pastors had a higher level of woundedness, the magnitude of the difference was not significant. Pastors experienced hurt, and emotional abuse, betrayal, abuse of authority, and very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need. In terms of territories, the results show that the pastors in WAD have a higher level of the Pastor's Woundedness while ECD and SID do not differ significantly. Further research would study how woundedness affects spouses and children of pastors.

Keywords: Pastor's Woundedness. Stress. Emotional abuse. Adventists.

INTRODUCTION

Pastor's woundedness is serious emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even physical wounds that are sustained in the line of duty caused by a Church member or leader acting in a religious capacity. Because clergy bear the burden of God, religious wounds occurring within the Church family make Church wounds painful (DeMuth, 2019). While God has called the Church to be a place of healing, hope, and forgiveness rather than a place of hurt, McCloy (2018) observed that Church wounds are such a prevalent problem that they alarmingly afflict all denominations in the United States.

In two pastors' conferences conducted in Pasadena, California, a survey (Smedes, 2000) of 1050 pastors revealed that poor leadership, disagreements with important staff members, a lack of connection with the Church community, power struggles, the Church council's refusal to mediate disputes, opposition to their instruction, opposition to their style of leadership or vision, inadequate people skills, disregard for job requirements, improper relationships, or other transgressions were among the reasons given for the dismissal and wounds.

Statistics on pastors from denominations around the world demonstrate a similar trend. Over 8,150 ministers from the Evangelical and Reformed Churches participated in the study (Krejcir, 2016) which revealed that while 79% of the pastors were personally happier, 54% were overworked, 43% were overstressed, 53% felt that seminary had not adequately prepared them for the task, 35% battled depression, 12% were belittled, and 90% felt honored to be a pastor. Besides, the results showed that 34% of pastors regularly battled discouragement, 27% of pastors said they had no one to turn to in a crisis, and 22% of the pastor's wives said their families were put under unfair pressure by the ministry.

There was a connection between pastors' emotional distress and their intrapersonal issues. Currier et al. (2019) described how pastors experienced burnout and quit the ministry. Johnson (2019) in consonance with Stone (2010) discovered that the demands of their ministries caused African American pastors a great deal of stress.

Heck et al. (2018) found that Seventh-day Adventist pastors in North America reported high levels of financial stress, time and workload stress, and a lack of social support. In Kenya, Kamau (2018) asserted that Kenyan pastors of the Full Gospel Church experienced compassion fatigue, a condition frequently experienced by healthcare professionals because of prolonged exposure to suffering. In addition, these pastors saw roughly seven patients every day. According to the study, having adequate support can lessen the impact of trauma. The study recommended that crucial programs for theological education should be included so that pastors can learn how to debrief and take care of themselves.

The pastor's wounds have devastating effects on themselves, the immediate family, and the congregants. Pastors suffer from a multitude of effects from Church wounds. Turrel (2018) confirmed that pastors suffered from the resentment of strained relationships characterized by anger, rivalry, dissension, hatred, and strife, among other things. These brawls and their forms result in emotional brokenness, spiritual wounds, hurt, hatred, or psychological pain that requires emotional healing and, ultimately, healed relationships. Creech (2014) noted that those who are wounded by Church hurt endure excruciating agony and some speak of physical suffering. Besides, wounded pastors sometimes demonstrated the same traits as soldiers with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Burchett (2011) opined that most of the pastor's suffering was related to loss: losing identity, normalcy, relationships, trust, and value. Deep wounds are caused by these spiritually related wounds. These Church hurts brought to question the pastor's calling and character. Hunt (2013) claimed that rejection eroded confidence and damaged one's sense of self.

On family, Turrel (2018) opined that 84 percent of the pastors' spouses and 80 percent of the pastors. Broken trust, diminished faith, and vulnerability are all consequences of wounds. Without seeking forgiveness and reconciliation, many followers will keep drifting away from the faith. Besides, 24% of pastors' families were angry about the Church and how it affected their families while 58% of pastors felt their family was in a "glass house" and they feared they were not good enough to live up to expectations.

On the effects to congregants, Turrel (2018) affirmed that 37% of unchurched Americans claimed they avoided Churches because of past bad experiences with Churchgoers and unresolved conflict (Stone, 2010). McCloy (2018) observed that such issues lead to a decline in Church attendance, membership, and affiliation.

Njagi (2021) observed that in Kenya, about 15% of Kenyans are divorced each year, with 42% of divorces occurring within the first five years of marriage, 77% occurring between six and ten years, and 23% occurring after ten years, 20% of Kenyan pastors separate or get divorced. Pastors suffer wounds from divorce or separation not only by legal issues like child custody and property distribution but also receive a hostile attitude, rejection, and are seen as social misfits.

Of the Seventh-day Adventist pastors, Heck et al. (2018) found that although pastors in North America used coping mechanisms, their problems lacked social support. Among the Adventist pastors in Kenya, the wounds cause emotional damage. They are brought about by anger, ministerial stress, position-seeking, financial difficulties, personal influence, loneliness, distraction and conflict, and not being able to forgive or be forgiven (Marambi, 2022).

Although methods for preventing, treating, and recovering from Church trauma and hurt were put forth (McLaughlin et al., 2024; Krejcir, 2016), the pastors still experienced a lack of true friends and no one to turn to in times of need. This happens when there is betrayal, unintentional, spiritual neglect, abuse of authority, withholding privileges, and post-election wounds that directly impact the pastors. The wounds are incurred when the individual aspirations violate the laid down procedures of elections (Church Manual, 2022). Members politicize the event, aligning the prevailing leadership to camps, thus, making it difficult for a the event to free from emotional trauma. Heck et al. (2018) asserted that Seventh-day Adventist pastors in North America used coping mechanisms such as action-oriented coping, social/emotional coping, passive coping, and reflective growth/internal change. The writers alluded to a difficulty—a systemic issue that requires attention on a larger scale than a single pastor. It is a fact that many Adventist conferences are taking proactive

measures to provide opportunities for their pastors to routinely gather in large groups or small groups to discuss their problems after realizing the emotional challenges that their pastors confront.

The study on pastors' issues demonstrated gaps and the necessity for an intervention. Although Amankwa (2023) indicated methodological and population gaps, he proposed the development of intervention and support systems to promote pastors' overall well-being. Lee and Fung's (2023) study had population and empirical gaps and suggested the creation of a protective mechanism. Wambugu (2013) suggested a combination of spiritual and psychological treatment, and that pastors should have sufficient training in managing trauma and professional counseling skills. Leslie et al. (2017) investigated burnout in a sample of the Church of England clergy and suggested the development of an intervention.

Yet, literature on pastors has dealt with sundry foci, similar research designs such as documentary (Njagi, 2021), and geographical scopes, in America (Heck et al., 2018). There is a dearth of moderated mediation studies on the pastor's woundedness in Africa as well as an intervention to care for their mental health in general and help the pastor deal with woundedness in the line of duty. Besides, Joseph (2015) emphasized the importance of using positive psychology to assist people reach well-being. Furthermore, Hayes (2017) proposed a technique for social sciences that not only determines if X influences Y, but also how X exerts its effect on Y when it does and when it does not. Thus, the study.

In response to the population, methodological, and knowledge gaps, the study purposed to assess the extent of the pastor's woundedness and propose a sustainable ministry intervention among Adventist pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa using a quantitative descriptive design.

Research Questions

The study aimed to determine the extent of Pastor's Woundedness in the three Adventist Divisions in Sub-Saharan Africa. Specifically, the study sought to address the following questions:

1. What is the level of woundedness of the pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa?
2. Is there a significant difference in the level of the Pastor's woundedness when personal profiles in terms of age, and territory are considered?

Hypotheses

The study tested this null hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the level of PAWO when personal profile is considered.

METHODOLOGY

The section highlights the research design, population and sampling technique, personal profile, instrumentation, data gathering procedures, ethical considerations, and data analysis procedures.

Research Design

This study was a quantitative study specifically employing descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the relationships by applying the Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM-4.0). This research design attempts to understand the kind of relationships occurring naturally between variables (Hayes, 2018). In this study, the Pastor's Woundedness was sought and how it related to personal profiles in terms of age and territory of work.

Population and Samples and Sampling Techniques

This research involved pastors within the 3 Adventist Church divisions in Africa – East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean (SID) Divisions. According to the statistical Report from the Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (2024), ECD had 3,760, SID had 2,041 and WAD

had 1,784 ordained and licensed ministers spread across the 38 Unions. The sample taken involved clergy working as pastors in the district, local Church, Conference and Union department directors, and those working the chaplaincy facets (Schools, prisons, healthcare, and Disciplined forces).

Purposive sampling was used to select the Unions. The selection criteria for the Unions whose Conferences/Fields/ Missions to participate included the following: 1/ The entity must have more than 130 ordained pastors, 2/ must be using English as the major language to avoid translations, 3/ must have the number of ordained pastors greater than licensed ministers. These criteria utilized West Congo Union having 3 entities with 137 ordained pastors, the West Kenya Union Conference with 6 entities having 344 ordained pastors, and the East Kenya Conference having 11 Conferences/Fields/ Missions with 308 ordained pastors – all in ECD territory. SID territory will have the Indian Ocean Union with 10 Conferences/Fields/ Missions having 134 ordained pastors, the Malawi Union with 3 entities with 169 ordained pastors, and the Southern Africa Union with 8 entities having 202 pastors. WAD territory will have the Northern Ghana Union with 11 entities having 166 ordained ministers. Other Unions include the Eastern Nigeria Union with 16 entities having 155 ordained and the Southern Ghana Union with 12 Conferences/Fields/ Missions having 133 ordained pastors (Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research, 2024).

The formula for calculating a sample for proportions of populations according to Cochran (1963) who developed Equation 1 to yield a representative sample for proportions.

This is valid where n_0 is the sample size, Z_2 is the abscissa of the normal curve that cuts off an area α at the tails ($1 - \alpha$ equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95%), e is the desired level of precision, p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, and q is $1-p$. The value for Z is found in statistical tables which contain the area under the normal curve.

Given that the total number of ordained pastors is 3736 as of 2015, the sample size will be calculated thus,

$$n = \frac{385}{1 + \frac{(385 - 1)}{N}}$$

$$385 \text{ divided by } ((1 + (384 \text{ over } 7585)))$$

$$385 \text{ divided by } (1 + 0.0506) = 385 \text{ divided by } 1.0506$$

$$n = 385 \text{ over } 1.0506$$

$$n = 366 \text{ was the targeted sample size}$$

Convenience sampling was used to pick the pastors from the Conferences, Fields, or missions. With a consent form attached and necessary permits, whoever was willing to respond to an email or WhatsApp message participated. The participants responded to the online questionnaire on Google Forms. The study had a final sample size of 304 pastors. By signing, the researcher was mandated to publish the findings.

Personal profile.

This contained variables such as age, sex, and their current workstation.

Table 1 Demographic profile of the respondents

Profile	Variable	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	292	96.1
	Female	12	3.9
Age	Below 39 years	106	34.9
	Above 40 years	198	65.1
Division	East-Central Africa Division (ECD)	130	42.8
	West-Central Africa Division (WAD)	72	23.7
	Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division (SID)	102	33.6

Taken CPE	Yes	129	42.4
	No	175	57.6
Current Workstation	District/ Church Pastor	179	58.9
	Director Union/ Conference/ Field	73	24
	In a Chaplaincy Facet (School, Hospital, Prisons, Disciplined Forces)	52	17.1

The results indicated the following. In terms of age, the participants (n=304) distribution indicated that 65.1% were aged above 40 while 34.9% were below 39 years. In terms of sex, 96.1% were males while 3.9% were females. In terms of the Division of work, 23.7% are from WAD, 33.6% are SID, and 42.8% hailed from ECD.

In terms of training, 57.6% have not taken CPE while 42.4% have at least one unit of CPE. On CPE, this finding is contrary to existing data based on the number of pastors from the 3 Divisions (ECD, WAD, and SID) who have done CPE. ECD has 107 out of 3760 pastors, WAD has 115 out of 1784 pastors, while SID has 80 out of 2041 pastors that have done CPE. In general, out of 7,585 pastors on the continent of Africa, only 302 representing 3.98% have at least one Unit of CPE as of February 2025. Besides, it becomes more interesting since out of the participants, 42.4% indicated to have done while 57.6% of pastors have not done at least one Unit of CPE. This phenomenon could be explained by the fact that there's an ongoing emphasis on Clinical Pastoral Orientation training on the continent as well as the presence of CPE training at AUA and Babcock.

As for the current workstation, 58.9% are District/ Church Pastors, 24% are Directors at Union/ Conference/Field/Mission, and 17% are working in Chaplaincy Facets (School, Hospital, Prisons, Disciplined Forces).

Instrumentation

Self-constructed questionnaire or Pastor's Woundedness was based on literature. The questionnaires were subjected to external and internal validation by experts and statistical processes and had good statistical properties. The instruments' external validation was carried out by three specialists from the Adventist University of Africa. To verify internal consistency, the Cronbach alpha for each variable in the instrument was calculated. With SPSS, the Cronbach Alpha was computed. For coefficients to be acceptable, the Cronbach Alpha at or greater than 0.7 would indicate an acceptable reliability.

Pastor's Woundedness Scale. This refers to serious emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even physical wounds sustained while on duty. It can also be caused by a Church member or leader acting in a religious capacity, and it can include rejection, judgment, manipulation, or broken trust inflicted by religious institutions or members. This variable had 12 items and had a reliability of Cronbach's alpha of 0.850. This scale had a good internal consistency.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The Theory – Grit. To enhance human flourishing regarding daily living, health, and education Joseph (2015) promoted the idea that positive psychology must be used, now in pastoral ministry. Grit theory is used in the study. The grit trajectory travels to Angela Duckworth from the thoughts of Galton, Cox, and William James (Eskreis-Winkler et al., 2015a). Grit, credited to Angela Duckworth (Duckworth et al., 2007), is the ability to persevere and be passionate about long-term goals. Grit is non-cognitive skills or soft skills to economists (Bliss & Jacobson, 2020), personality traits to psychologists, and character traits to educators (Dweck et al., 2014). It's measured in terms of courage, conscientiousness, excellence, optimism, and resilience.

It is envisaged that the pastors will have the ability to grow amidst obstacles when circumstances are filled with failure and are less than ideal (Clark et al., 2019), show tenacity and personal (Duckworth, 2016b) development, continue to work despite temporary setbacks and maintain effort and interest over years despite failure, adversity, and plateaus in progress (Nemmi et al., 2016). Besides, they will dedicate effort to build skills and make them productive (Duckworth, 2016b; Sudina et al., 2021), strive to show excellent moral character (Dhiman, 2020; Perlis, 2013), and have a growth mindset (Braund et al., 2020; Tewell, 2020).

It has been Grit-S has been administered in education and the military (Duckworth, 2016b), medicine, science, and competitive sports (Maddi et al., 2012), to collegiate students (Muenks et al., 2017; Akos & Kretchmar, 2017), in sports (Crane et al., 2020) in engineering, healthcare (Hodge et al., 2018; Schimschal et al., 2020). In all tests, it has demonstrated internal consistency, test-retest stability, and convergent and discriminant validity (Duckworth & Quinn, 2009).

Ethical Considerations

Given that the respondents were from a homogenous population, approval from the University's Ethics Review Board was secured, and then from Kenya's National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). A consent form to request permission to participate in the study was embedded in the online Google Forms. It made clear to participants that this was a voluntary activity. They were guaranteed the freedom to exit after reading the consent form or whenever they so wanted. Confidentiality and anonymity of participants were ensured. A participant who experienced emotional disruptions during data collection was assured of online psychological first aid as well as free counseling sessions by the principal investigators who have CPE skills, being a Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the meaning and implications of the results of all the questions. The findings in the tables below foster a better understanding of the study.

Table 2 The Pastor's Level of Woundedness

Sub-variable	M	SD	Scaled Response	Verbal Interpretation
While on duty in my ministry,				
1. I have been hurt while in service	3.21	.875	Agree	High
2. I have been betrayed in my ministry	2.88	.950	Agree	High
3. I have been emotionally abused	2.90	.903	Agree	High
4. I have a problem receiving forgiveness	1.99	.747	Disagree	Low
5. I have suffered abuse of authority from my superiors	2.77	.978	Agree	High
6. I have been physically abused while on duty	2.01	.890	Disagree	Low
7. I have been the target of defamatory remarks during the Church election period	2.35	.977	Disagree	Low
8. I feel my pain has not been taken seriously by those who care	2.58	.890	Agree	High
9. I have very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need	2.76	.892	Agree	High
10. I need skills to deal with emotional woundedness	3.15	.787	Agree	High
11. Given choice, I would not serve my current Church position	1.97	.920	Disagree	Low

			e	
12. I have emotional baggage to offset	2.46	.816	Disagree	Low
Pastor's Woundedness	2.586	.5455	Agree	High

Scoring system: 4:00 – 3.50= Strongly Agree=Very High; 3.49 – 2.50= Agree=High; 2.49 -1.50=Disagree=Low; 1.49 – 1.00= Strongly Disagree=Very low.

The descriptive results indicate that while in ministry, 83.9% of the pastors have experienced woundedness, 69.4% have experienced betrayal, and 38.8% experienced defamatory remarks during the Church election period. Moreover, 65.4% of the pastors have very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need while 46.4% said had emotional baggage to offset. On dealing with woundedness, 84.2% acknowledged their need for skills to deal with their emotional woundedness. Despite the challenges, 78.3% said they would continue serving their current Church positions.

On Pastor's Woundedness, the results from participants (N=304), demonstrate that the pastors' level of woundedness was high. In descending order, the pastor's woundedness was high for 'I have been hurt while in service' (M = 3.21, SD = .875), 'I need skills to deal with emotional woundedness, (M = 3.15, SD = .787), 'I have been emotionally abused' (M = 2.90, SD = .903), 'I have been betrayed in my ministry' (M = 2.88, SD = .950), 'I have suffered abuse of authority from my superiors' (M = 2.77, SD = .978), 'I have very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need' (M = 2.76, SD = .892), 'I feel my pain has not been taken seriously by those who care' (M = 2.58, SD = .890). The results mean that pastors carry unresolved emotional woundedness, often linked to experiences of betrayal, hierarchical abuse, and insufficient social support.

The findings are in concinnity with the literature. Woundedness is such an alarming and prevalent problem that afflicts denominations not only in the United States (McCloy, 2018) but also Seventh-day Adventist pastors in North America (Heck et al., 2018) and in Kenya. The causes of emotional woundedness among Adventist pastors included anger, ministerial stress, position-seeking, loneliness, distraction, and conflict (Marambi, 2022). Besides, Turrel (2018) confirmed that pastors suffered from the resentment of strained relationships characterized by anger, rivalry, dissension, hatred, and strife, among other things. These brawls and their forms result in emotional brokenness, spiritual wounds, hurt, hatred, or psychological pain that require emotional healing and, ultimately, healed relationships. Creech (2014) noted that those who are wounded by church hurt endure excruciating agony and some speak of physical suffering.

Moreover, Johnson (2019) in consonance with Stone (2010) opined that the demands of their ministries caused African American pastors a great deal of stress with 84 percent of the pastors' spouses and 80 percent of the pastors themselves suffering from depression. Although methods for preventing, treating, and recovering from Church trauma and hurt were put forth by Aten and Annan (2024), the pastors still believed they had no true friends and no one to turn to in times of need especially when there is betrayal and post-election wounds that directly impact the pastors. 27 % of the Evangelical and Reformed Church pastors said they had no one to turn to in a crisis (Krejcir, 2016).

Differences in Pastor's Woundedness (PAWO) When Personal Profile is concerned

The table presented in this part answers the research question: Does the level of Pastors' Woundedness differ when the personal profile in terms of territory and age is concerned?

The Differences of Pastor's Woundedness When Territory is concerned

The table presents the results of PAWO across the different territories in Sub-Sahara Africa namely East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID). The results show that the pastors in WAD have higher PAWO (M =2.6644, SD = .4630) while ECD (M =2.5474,

SD = .5758) and SID (M = 2.5809, SD = .5588) did not differ significantly. In general, the pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa have a high level of woundedness in ministry.

Table 3 One-Way ANOVA Results on PAWO across the Territory

Territory		M	SD	F	Sig.
	East-Central Africa Division	2.6763	.2541	2.129	.121
	Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division	2.6137	.1991		
	West-Central Africa Division	2.6439	.2245		

The ANOVA results suggest that PAWO across the Divisions differ significantly ($F_{2,301} = 1.072$, $p > .05$). Since the Levene Statistic is not significant, equal variance was not assumed. To check for individual differences between groups, post-hoc comparisons using Dunnett's T3 was selected. The test indicated that the mean score for ECD pastors (M = 2.5474, SD = .5758) was not significantly different from Pastors of SID (M = 2.5809, SD = .5588). However, the pastors in WAD (M = 2.6644, SD = .4630) had a significant difference compared to other territories. The mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 level. The hypothesis that there is no difference in PAWO across the different territories in Sub-Saharan Africa (ECD, WAD, and SID) is supported.

The Differences in Pastor's Woundedness Considering Age

The table presents the results of the research question: Is there a significant difference in the level of Pastor's Woundedness personal profile in terms of age?

Table 4 T-test results Comparing Ages Below 39 years and Above 40 years old on Pastor's Woundedness

				Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
				F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		Mean	SD								Lower	Upper
Pastor's Woundedness	Below 39 years old	2.528	.535	.849	.358	-1.359	302	.175	-.0891	.0655	-.2181	.0399
	Above 40 years old	2.617	.549									

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of Pastor's Woundedness aged Below 39 years and Above 40 years old. There were no significant differences $t(302) = -1.359$, $p = .175$ in the scores with the mean score for ages Below 39 years (M = 2.528, SD = .535) lower than Above 40 years (M = 2.617,

SD = .549). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = -.0891, 95% CI: -.2181 to .0399) was not significant. Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of Pastor's Woundedness when age is considered is supported.

This means that regardless of age, pastors experienced serious emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even physical wounds sustained while on duty. It can also be caused by a Church member or leader acting in a religious capacity. Pastors experienced hurt, emotional abuse, betrayal, abuse of authority, and very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need.

Wambugu (2013) suggested that to combine spirituality and psychological treatment, pastors should have sufficient training in managing trauma and professional counseling skills. These have several effects on pastor education as well as administrative procedures, policies, and structures. A course that helps pastors with emotional catharsis and debriefing would be encouraging. Pastors would have the chance to voluntarily disclose their anxieties and emotional burdens in a clinical setting under supervision. Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) is the best choice.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section presents the meaning and implications of the results of all the questions. The findings in the tables below foster a better understanding of the study.

Summary of Findings. In general, the pastors in the three Divisions namely ECD, WAD, SID exhibited a high level of woundedness. While in ministry, 83.9% of the pastors have experienced woundedness, 69.4% have experienced betrayal, and 38.8% experienced defamatory remarks during the Church election period. Moreover, 65.4% of the pastors have very few supportive friends to lean on in times of need while 46.4% said had emotional baggage to offset. On dealing with woundedness, 84.2% acknowledged their need for skills to deal with their emotional woundedness.

The pastors experience hurt, emotional woundedness, betrayal, and suffer abuse of authority from superiors, have few supportive friends, and still feel the pain. Despite the challenges, 78.3% said they would continue serving their current Church positions. The results found that there was no significant difference in the level of Pastor's Woundedness when age is considered.

Concerning the utility of the theoretical framework, the new model affirms the use of positive psychology domains in curbing Woundedness. Unlike previous research, positive psychology accentuates positive aspects of human strengths. It is utilized in the three scientific disciplines—philosophy, sociology, and psychology—and emphasizes good aspects and people's well-being are at the center of this strategy.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results, the study concludes that the pastors in ECD, WAD, and SID experience serious emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even physical wounds that are sustained in the line of duty caused by a Church member or leader acting in a religious capacity. Besides, 8 out of 10 pastors have experienced emotional wounds, 6 out of 10 have experienced betrayal, 3 out of 10 have experienced defamatory remarks during the Church election, and 6 out of 10 do not have supportive friends to lean on in times of need. Four out of ten have emotional baggage to offset. Eight out of ten acknowledged the need for skills to deal with their emotional woundedness. Despite the challenges, 7 out of 10 are willing to continue serving their current Church positions.

Moreover, the study concludes that in terms of age, there is no significant difference in the level of woundedness. A pastor aged below 64 years and working either in ECD, WAD, or SID, predisposes them to high levels of pastor's woundedness.

Concerning the utility of the theoretical framework, the new model affirms the use of positive psychology domains in curbing Woundedness. Unlike previous research, positive psychology accentuates positive aspects

of human strengths. It is utilized in the three scientific disciplines—philosophy, sociology, and psychology—and emphasizes the good aspects and people's well-being are at the center of this strategy. The creation of a protective mechanism that combines spiritual and psychological treatment such as managing trauma and professional counseling skills should suffice for pastors.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that 8 out of 10 pastors have experienced emotional wounds, 6 out of 10 have experienced betrayal, 3 out of 10 have experienced defamatory remarks during the Church election, 6 out of 10 do not have supportive friends to lean on in times of need, and 4 out of 10 have emotional baggage to offset, and 8 out of 10 acknowledged the need for skills to deal with their emotional woundedness; and given that pastors exhibited a high level of awareness of Clinical Pastoral Education; the study recommends to the leadership that he pastors in the three Divisions namely ECD, WAD, and SID to undergo Clinical Pastoral Education training.

CPE as Panacea of Pastor's Woundedness.

CPE is an interfaith professional education program. Students engage with people who are experiencing a crisis under supervision as part of a practice-based learning program and professional theological education. Its history provided by Hirschmann et al. (2022) points to its founding to Rev. Anton Boisen, in June 1925 with the dual goals of providing improved patient care and supervising the clergyman's training.

Besides, CPE's textbook is the Living Human Document whose mantra as A Health Minister, Health Ministry makes the centerpiece of the training. Falk (2023) pointed out that CPE improves the ability to manage emotions. CPE promotes self-reflection, helps people become more conscious of their identities as ministers and how their beliefs, values, presumptions, strengths, and shortcomings affect the pastoral and spiritual care they provide.

According to Szilagyi et al. (2024), CPE develops confidence, reflective practice, listening and attending skills, diversity in chaplaincy care, and spiritual assessment. The gains of CPE include chaplaincy capabilities, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy. CPE model has numerous advantages and effectiveness.

According to Hirschmann et al. (2023), CPE employs the clinical way of learning - focusing on ideas, feelings, and internal processes to improve students' ability to be mindful. CPE's clinical method of learning—Action, Reflection, and New Action— as the foundation, enhances personal growth through self-awareness and self-reflection. It fosters an understanding of Pastoral Competence (function and skills, as well as knowledge of theology and behavioral sciences), Pastoral Formation (personal and pastoral identity issues), and Pastoral Specialization (specific area of competence and knowledge).

Given that the literature (Amankwa, 2023; Heck et al., 2018; Lee & Fung, 2023; McLaughlin et al., 2024; Wambugu, 2013) indicated the need for interventions, support systems, with a combination of spiritual and psychological for preventing and recovering from Church trauma and hurt of pastors, the study recommends Clinical Pastoral Education as the best buffer and panacea for pastor's woundedness.

Congregations can offer social support to the pastors. For leadership, invest in mentorship and coaching where pastors receive guidance from experienced mentors or professional coaches. Prioritize mental health issues of pastors and offer emotional intelligence and stress management techniques. The leadership to provide access to professional counselling services just as the medical check-ups for pastors. A budget for and connect pastors with confidential third-party licensed Christian counselors or therapists to offer specialized and unbiased support. Some pastors require forced and mandatory rest, annual leaves, and Sabbaticals by the conference administration that cares and is sensitive. During emotive meetings and Church elections, let the experts would be availed to deal with those who lose the elective positions, who become emotionally wounded.

Best of all, Clinical Pastoral Education is key. First let CPE be a must-do training for all seminarians in Sub-Saharan Africa. Secondly, Ministerial Secretaries at all Church levels to experience at least a Unit of CPE and further create and operationalize protective mechanisms that combine spiritual and psychological treatment to

deal with pastoral issues. Thirdly, let CPE be a requirement for ordination. Fourthly, ministerial credential and ministerial license pastors that have a chaplaincy facet in their areas of jurisdiction to experience a week-long Clinical Pastoral Orientation as an enhancement tool for ministry. Fifth, all ordained ministers transitioning from the local Church to any facet of chaplaincy require a unit of full-time CPE.

Fifth, a pastor transitioning from parish/district ministry or seminary to a chaplaincy facet to undergo a week-long orientation exercise as part of continuous professional development. Sixth, an ordained pastor transitioning from any Church entity – the local Church, a Conference, a Union, and even the Division – into a chaplaincy facet to have a Unit of CPE. Finally, Chaplaincy directors at these levels - Conference, Union, and even Division, and Chaplains working in Category C and G Universities and hospitals – to be Board Certified and ecclesiastically endorsed.

The paper has limitations. First, the educational level of the pastors was not considered. It would have brought new dimensions in the study. Secondly, the socio-political conditions of pastors inevitably shaped their lived experiences. Constant exposure to insecurity, traumatic community events, and chronic social stress could have influenced the emotional states of the pastors in the West Congo Union Mission and some parts of Nigeria. Thirdly, there is gender disparity. It should be known that the Adventist Church is generally male dominated. Fourthly, in terms of generalization, the study is context specific. However, the wounds are occupationally incurred. The pastors share the same socio-economic, political, and ethnic challenges. Often, the seminaries do not have adequate preparation to deal with emotional woundedness. The study's findings stem from the undervaluation of pastoral care in addressing pastor's personal emotional issues. Fifth, the self-reported data increases the risk of bias.

Future studies would integrate cultural, administrative, and geopolitical realities to better the interpretation of woundedness among the pastors. This can include leadership dynamics, social instability, and regional pressures – such as seen in DR Congo research – that contribute to emotional strain. The study recommends the incorporation of qualitative interviews to capture lived experiences around stigma, marital stress, and vulnerability. Moreover, recommended are culturally anchored mental-health interventions, pastoral support structures, and training programs designed to prevent long-term emotional and relational harm. Furthermore, it would be interesting to study how the pastor's family is affected by woundedness. Variables as Adverse Childhood Experiences, Psychological well-being, grit, emotional intelligence, and social intelligence would make another study using a moderated mediation model.

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