



CLERGY VARIABLES AS DETERMINATES OF JOB STRESS AMONG CLERGYMEN IN ONDO AND EKITI STATES, NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This study investigated clergy variables as determinants of job stress among clergymen in Ondo and Ekiti States, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for the study. The study population was 2,350 stipendiary clergy in Ondo and Ekiti States. The sample is made up of 612 respondents selected through Multi stage sampling technique. Two research questions and three hypotheses were raised to guide the study. Data were analyzed using ANOVA, statistics at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that transfer and relocation is the job stress experienced by most clergymen. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in job stress experienced among clergymen based on their marital status. The study advised the Clergy to always seek counselling interventions.

Keywords:

Clergy, Anglican, Job Stress, Ondo Province.



INTRODUCTION:

Counselling is as odd as the society, people came around in groups to share their dreams and experiences in order for individuals to learn from themselves; and also to be guided through other people's experience. This could be considered as an earlier form of counselling.

Counselling may be applied to individuals, couples, families or groups and may be used in widely differing contexts and settings. Among Clergymen, counselling is needed at times of crisis or changes which could involve problem of adjustment, job stress, marital difficulties, broken relationship, bereavement, aging and choice of vocation for clergy children. Tatama (2022) viewed counselling as a learning-oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which a counsellor who often is a professional, competed in the field seeks to assist a client using different methods which are appropriate in identifying, analyzing, diagnosing, and offering solutions as an individual seeks to learn more about himself, accept himself in a bid to use such understanding to becoming a happier and more productive member of his society. In a nutshell, counselling is a help given to a client to understand himself better.

A peep into the day to day activities of Clergymen seems to suggest that most often they are idle with nothing to show that they are working, busy and stressed out. To some laymen, the work schedule of Clerics is only limited to the Sunday service(s) which they preside over and some make shifts meetings which they attend. However, a detailed examination of clergymen work schedule reveal otherwise. It appears that they are not living in affluence; rather, their work schedule is stress-prone, challenging and highly demanding. It seems that they spend their time ministering to people, providing direct counselling intervention and care services, help and support to both the healthy and the emotionally distressed. Their work schedule often involves taking care of the sick, anointing the faithful, the dying, burying the dead, counselling the depressed and bereaved, providing emotional and social support for people's numerous distressing issues and problems. Their days are interfaced with the rigours of daily sermon preparation which takes at least seven hours to be prepared but delivered in about less an hour. Fia, Fosu-Ayarkwah & Kusi (2022) also found out that clergy are stressed and frustrated due to lack of resources, multiple tasks and delays in achieving their targets.

The home front of the clergy also multiple chaos and difficulties, the vicarage of the clergy which is presumed to be a quiet and serene abode are daily besieged by people presenting one agonizing problem or the other leaving the clergymen with little or no time for rest, leisure, or privacy. Experience has shown that clergymen often do not have time for their immediate family. This infringement on the privacy of the Clergymen appears to be the basis for quarrels, misunderstanding and guilt feelings between the clergymen and their wives today. Lee and Balswick in Wilson & Darling (2003) found out that the Children of Clergy as part of the family also live within a complex family context that has been identified as having distinct needs based on the social environment in which they live.

Rassieur (1982) in Akintoye (2021) identified the clergy as risk takers: who risk being close, risk being loving and who risk telling the truth. Okpala (2014) stressed that Clergy-hood is a state of life to which some men are called by a special vocation from God; and hence generally acknowledged to be inherently stressful given the intensive people helping component of the work (Arumugam, 2003). Akintoye (2021) also submits that the clergy work does not have work boundaries or specifics; clergymen are all things to the people: consultants, prayer warriors, counsellors, advisers, intermediaries during disputes, pastors, consolers in period of grief, community leaders, health educators, surety for unemployed church members and the community, breakers of

news of bereavement to those bereaved among others, managerial responsibilities, inability to say no to transfers, work overload, attendance at meetings, uncertainty about role, lack of defined and achievable objectives, difficulty of arranging for day offs, conflicting job tasks and role demands and dealing with troubled people who need constant help. This is supported by McHugh and Scanlon in Laryea (2016) who found out that clergymen are faced with 15 clergy variables in the course of their vocation as clerics.

In Paul and Whetham's (2007) study of male clergy in Australia, they found issues of blurred boundaries between work and private life's and the lack of clarity in the work place as sources of stress for clergymen. They assert the pastor to be engaged 24 hours in a day. Citing the orthodox churches in their submission, Paul and Whetham said the priests usually live on the parish grounds and hence are seen as being available at any time – seven times a week. This does not allow a demarcation between work time and leisure time, or work space from private space; thus serving as basis for clergy stressors today. Frame and Shehan (1994) in a study identified transfers and relocation as another source of stress to the clergy. To them, relocation affects the accommodation, the schooling of the clergy's children as well as the employment of the wives of the clergy.

Ola (2003) reported that other strains that arise due to relocation and transfer includes altered financial status, the loss of close relationship, educational needs of the children, and the pressure to succeed in the new station. Irvine (1997) submits that only 43% of clergy reported having close friends in a community. Irvine further asserts that when the clergy are seen in public, 82% reported that the people expected them to play the role of being clergymen and not being able to develop longer and lasting relationship.

Statement of problem: While clergymen play significant roles in the society, and coupled with the job stressors that they are often faced with there appears to be a lack of empirical research investigating the specific clergy variables that contribute to the job stress among the clergymen.

Purpose of the study: This includes to:

- a) Determine the job stress experienced by the clergy;
- b) Investigate the causes of the job stress experienced by the clergy;
- c) Determine the influence of location, marital status and age on the job stress experienced by the clergy.

Significance of the study:

The research focuses on the need for counselling intervention among the clergy. The purpose of this study was to investigate whether Anglican clergy experience job stress. The study investigated the causes of the stressors to the clergymen.

Research Questions: Two research questions were raised for the study:

1. Do you experience any form of job stress as a clergyman in the performance of your pastoral work?
2. What are the causes of job stress experienced by clergymen?

Research Hypotheses: Three null research hypotheses were postulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant locational difference in job stress experience among clergymen.

2. There is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their marital status.
3. There is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their age.

Delimitation of the study: The study is delimited to the investigation of the variables of age, marital status and location as determinants of job stress among clergymen.

Methodology

Research design: The Research employed in this study was the descriptive research design of the survey type. Data were collected with the aim of describing and interpreting existing state of affairs concerning the clergy and their job roles as clergymen.

Population: The population of the study consisted of 2,350 Anglican stipendiary (full time) clergy in the Anglican Diocese(s) located in Ekiti and Ondo States in Ondo Ecclesiastical Province of the Church of Nigeria – Anglican Communion.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The Sample consisted of 612 Anglican clergymen in Ondo and Ekiti states using multi-stage sampling procedure. In stage one five Anglican Dioceses were selected from the Province (Ondo Province) out of twelve Diocese.

At the second stage, stratified random sampling technique was used to select respondents who were given more questionnaires to complete as against those with fewer priests: 220 from Diocese of Ekiti, 152 from Akure Diocese, 60 from Ilaje and Irele Ese-Odo Dioceses, 60 from Diocese of Ile Oluji, and 120 from the Diocese of Ekiti West to make up the total of 612 respondents.

Research Instrument: The research instrument used was a self-constructed questionnaire titled Clergy Job Stress Questionnaire (CJSQ) that solicited the opinion of the Clergy on the job roles which they considered stressful. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: A,B and C. Section A was designed to collect information on the respondent's demographic variables such as age, marital status and church location. Section B has a question which seeks to know whether the respondent has experienced on or more forms of job stress as a clergy. Section C contained 36 items to illicit information on clergy job stress.

Reliability of the instrument: Test –retest method was used. The instrument was administered twice to 30 clergy who were not part of the study sample at the interval of two weeks. The two sets of scores were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and reliability co-efficient of 0.81 was obtained for the instrument, which was adjudged to be reliable enough to be used for the study.

Validity of the Instrument: Face and content validity were ensured with the assistance of specialists in Guidance and Counselling and senior Anglican clergymen.

Administration of the Research instrument: The research instrument was administered by the researcher during a clergy conference which involved the respondents. Two research assistants who also were clergymen and experts in test and measurements were used to assist in the administration of the instrument. All 612 questionnaires were returned by the respondents.

Analysis of Data: Data generated were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS:

Research Question 1: Do you experience any form of job stress as a clergyman in the performance of your pastoral work?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of clergymen experiencing job stress

S/N	Do you experience any form of job stress as a clergyman in the performance of your pastoral work?	N	Percentage
1	Yes	612	100.0
2	No	0	0.0
	Total	612	100.0

Table 1 presents the percentages of clergy who had experienced at least one or more forms of stress. All 612 respondents in the sample reported to have experienced at least one or two forms of stress. This implies that Clergymen do experience stress.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of job stress experienced by clergymen?

Table 2 shows the causes of stress to the clergy?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of job stress experienced by clergymen

S/N	Job Stress	N	Mean	S D.	Rank
1	Role Conflicts	612	15.10	2.28	4 th
2	Work Overload	612	11.78	3.21	5 th
3	Clergy Personality	612	15.62	2.05	2 nd
4	Family Stress	612	15.33	1.75	3 rd
5	Transfer or Relocation	612	16.22	1.85	1 st
6	Inadequate Finance	612	11.03	2.57	6 th
	Total		85.08		

The table shows that transfer and relocation with a mean score of 16.22 is the job stress experienced by most clergymen closely followed by clergy personality with a mean mark of 15.62. Family stress with a mean mark of 15.33 is the third job stress mostly experienced by clergymen while role conflicts (15.10), work overload (11.78) and inadequate finance (11.03) are the fourth, fifth and sixth job stress mostly experienced by clergymen.

Figure I further revealed the type of job stress experienced by clergymen.

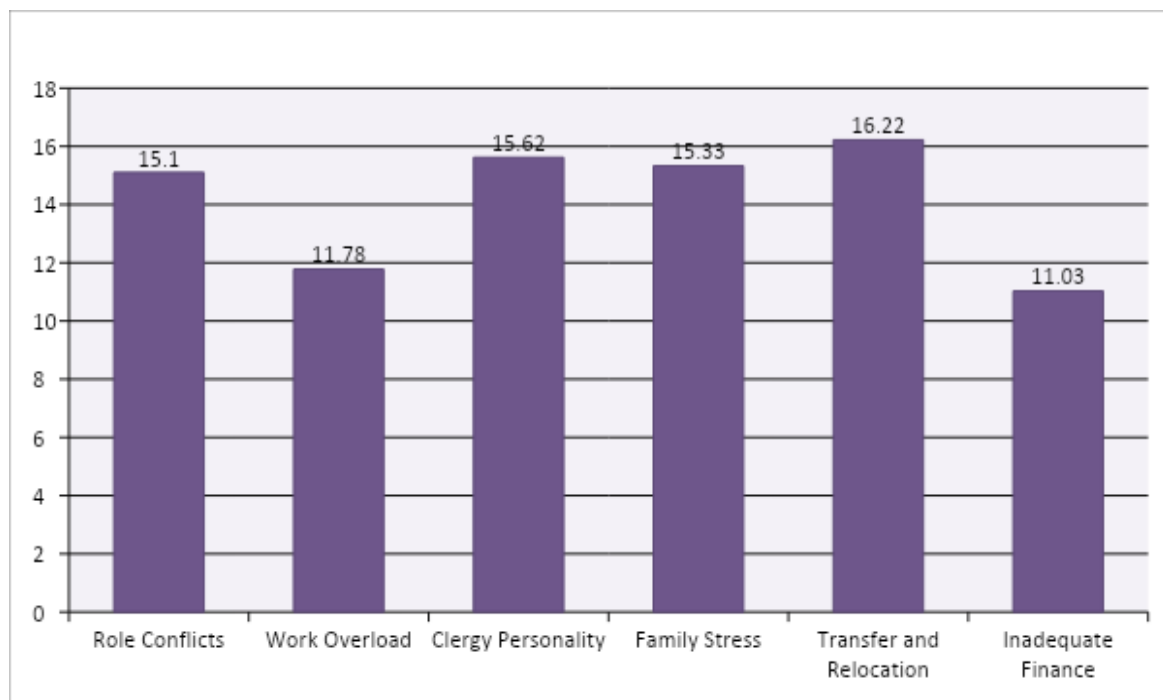


Figure i: Bar Chart Showing Type of Job Stress experienced by Clergymen.

Testing of Hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on location.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores relating to job stress and location (rural or urban) were subjected to t-test analyses at 0.05 level of significance.

The result is presented in table 3.

Table 3: t-test analysis of location difference in job stress experience

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	P
Rural	336	84.85	7.25	610	0.797	0.426
Urban	276	85.36	8.59			

$P > 0.05$

The table shows that the t-cal value of 0.797 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P-value (0.426) > 0.05 . The null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant location difference in job stress experience among clergymen, they all experienced job stressors whether working in the rural or urban areas.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in job stress experience by clergymen based on their marital status.

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their marital status

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	29.289	2	14.644	0.235	0.790
Within Groups	37877.254	9	62.196		
Total	37906.542	11			

P > 0.05

The result presented in table 4 shows that F-cal value of 0.235 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P value (0.790) > 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their marital status. They all experienced stress notwithstanding their marital status whether single or married.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their age

Table 5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their age

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	433.938	3	144.646	2.347	.072
Within Groups	37472.604	08	61.633		
Total	37906.542	1			

P > 0.05

The result presented in table 5 shows that F-cal value of 2.347 is not significant at 0.05 level of significance because the P value (0.072) > 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there is no significant difference in job stress experience among clergymen based on their age.

Discussion

The findings showed that transfer and relocation is the main causes of job stress experienced by most clergymen. This agrees with the submission of Frame and Shehan (1994) who identified transfers and relocation as a source of stress to clergymen and their family. The study found relocation and transfer as a major source of stress today among Anglican Clergymen in Nigeria as against the findings in several studies outside Nigeria which revealed that clergymen were mostly affected by work and work overload.

The findings further revealed that there is significant strain on the clergy wives who are more saddled with the rigours of packing and moving tasks to new pastorates, facilitating the adjustments of the children to new schools, homes and environments. Relocation and transfers most often cause

disruption in the employment of spouses of the clergy as they are either left with no option but to resign from the jobs or faced with the challenge of keeping two homes; which also has a strain on the finances of the family as the clergy and their spouses are faced with the rigours of intra and inter travelling between their place of work and their matrimonial homes.

The possible explanation for this could be due to the frequency of transfers in Nigeria among clergymen by the Bishops. Attention are not being given to the education of the children who are forced to change schools, buy new books and school uniforms; make new friends and as well adjust to the new environment they are transferred to.

It was also revealed that there was no significant locational difference in job stress experience among clergymen. The result is supported by Frame & Shame, 1994 that Stressors associated with relocation and transfers are a loss of close relationships and other social support that have been developed over time resulting in isolation and loneliness for the clergy family.

The study revealed that there was no significant difference in job stress experience by clergymen based on marital status. The spouses of the clergy are also caught up in the stress web based on the demands of the ministry on their husbands; the clergy are in a 'fix of choice' between their homes and their spouses. This is in agreement with the findings of Ola (2003) who found out that other strains suffered by the clergy spouses to include altered financial status and the pressure to succeed in the new station where they are being posted to.

Experience has shown that the clergy most often seems to be carried away by the demands of their jobs to the detriment of their family; as they seldom have time for them; they are hooked down with the rigours of sermon preparation, visitation, counselling, meetings and other church related activities. Thus, over-functioning of the clergy in the church and under functioning at home could lead to marital conflicts in the vicarage.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, Clergy are stressed due to their work roles. Also that, no matter the location of the clergy whether in the rural or urban areas of the Diocese they all experienced one or more forms of job stressors. In addition, whether married or single, they all experienced stressors in the performance of their job roles.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Church leaders should organize seminars to educate the clergy on stressors such as transfer and relocation, role conflicts, family stress, inadequate finance with the view of offering psychological assistance to the clergymen.

Secondly the church should review its policies on clergy health care. Clergy should be counseled on how to better manage their job stressors by professionally by trained counsellors as against what is obtainable today, where there is no known counselling service in place.

Thirdly, stress audits should be conducted frequently by counsellors and psychologist to determine whether stress levels are getting out of control; this if unchecked could lead to chronic stress which could affect employees' performance negatively.

Furthermore, Churches should know that their clergy experienced stress, hence; the church should have and should develop stress management programmes for their priests, such as: holidays, workshops, work free days for rest, workshops on stress management.

Moreover, Clergy are advised to visit counselling clinics and that such clinics, manned by trained counsellors should be established in the Diocesan headquarters to cater for the psychological needs of the clergy.

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