Research Article

Psychological Wellbeing of Pastors in the Three Adventist Divisions in Sub-Sahara Africa

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About Article

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the Pastor's Psychological Well-being (PWB) 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. The self-constructed PWB scale demonstrated poor internal consistency and reliability, as indicated by its low Cronbach's alpha of .543, which falls below the commonly accepted minimum threshold of .70 to .80 for a reliable scale, making it an unreliable inference about PWB. The pastors in the three Divisions (ECD, WAD, SID) exhibited a high level of psychological well-being. Regardless of age, territory, and current workstation, pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological functioning in ministry. The pastors have a high level of positive relations with others, a high level of autonomy, a high level of self-acceptance, and a high level of personal growth. The pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa have healthy optimum psychological functioning and take ministry as an opportunity to develop their potential. Despite the workload, pastors can have optimum psychological functioning. However, they have a low level of environmental mastery. The study confirmed the applicability of the new tools of PWB in the ministry. Future research would study the level of PWB among ministerial spouses.

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1. INTRODUCTION
1.1. Psychological wellbeing

Psychological well-being (PWB) is a multidimensional concept that includes an individual's overall happiness, life satisfaction, and mental and emotional health. According to literature (Hendriks *et al.*, 2018; Nava *et al.* (2018), positive emotions, autonomy, positive connections, low levels of negative emotions, a sense of purpose in life, life satisfaction, and personal progress are all essential components. It is a state of mind in which a person may maximize their potential, work efficiently, and deal with the typical challenges of life. It is critical for holistic health and happiness and has been associated with greater mental health, better physical health, and longer life expectancy (Hendriks *et al.*, 2018).

Nava *et al.* (2018) asserted that while the Eastern civilizations believed that transcendence and enlightenment came from an optimal experience on a spiritual journey including others, the Western cultures emphasized optimal functioning occurring intra-psychically. Besides, the Westerners' desire for a better life on Earth coincided with the Eastern desire for spiritual transcendence. This position stems from the Athenian ideas of Plato and Aristotle, who outlined eleven moral virtues: bravery, temperance, generosity, magnificence, generosity, truthfulness, wit, justice, and friendship. Judeo-Christian virtues such as gratitude, joy, forgiveness, faith, hope, and love all support psychological health. Moreover, in non-Western nations, positive psychology has become more popular. The concept of PWB is not new (Nava *et al.*, 2018). Leslie *et al.* (2017) investigated PWB of a sample among clergy of the Church of England and suggested the development of an intervention. It is envisioned that pastors with higher levels of PWB will have optimal psychological functioning of individuals in terms of self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth. The study utilized all the five variables.

The concept of psychological well-being, or PWB, is not new. Nava *et al.* (2018) demonstrated that the origins of PWB may be found in the classical philosophical writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus, who centered their entire works on the concept of well-being. The sense of happiness and contentment with life was universal, notwithstanding differences in happiness and satisfaction among countries and cultures. Kardas *et al.* (2019) proposed that among the three scientific disciplines philosophy, sociology, and psychology psychology was the more recent arrival and has helped many by providing answers to issues related to happiness and fulfilling existence. Literature traced the history and noted that, before World War II, research was replete with tales of the disease mode, negative life portrayals, the dark side of human behavior, and negative experiences like melancholy, anxiety, depression, and trauma. It also examined the detrimental mental effects of physical illness, abuse, and isolation, and it focused more on diagnosing and treating the problematic aspects of people than on their strengths, growth, and mastery. Additionally, Kardas *et al.* confirmed that the founding principles of positive psychology were established by Martin Seligman's 1999 speech as president of the American Psychological Association.

The emergence of a new positive paradigm (Carr, 2013) in psychology emphasizes the good aspects of people and their inherent abilities. It aimed to comprehend things like well-being and happiness, appealing traits and pursuits that demand full attention, and significant, fulfilling relationships. Sheldon *et al.* (2019) claimed that the good aspects of life and people's well-being are at the center of this strategy. Subjective and psychological well-being are the two separate components of well-being, and they are discussed in Eudaimonia and Hedonic philosophy. Proponents of the Eudaimonic tradition include Alan Waterman and Carol Ryff, while those of the Hedonic tradition include Kahneman, Diener, and Schwarz. Gao and McLellan (2018) identify eudaimonism as one of the two philosophical pillars of psychological well-being. Besides, hedonism was based on the concept of subjective well-being (SWB) and indicated how someone felt and thought about their lives. In addition, the eudemonic tradition emphasized the realization of human potential, placed a strong emphasis on psychological well-being, and offered examples of a meaningful and contented existence. More information about what causes people to feel happier, more productive, and more connected was shared by Hendriks and associates (Hendricks *et al.*, 2020).

1.2. Psychological well-being of pastors

Although mental health has been a subject of study in the Christian denominations, the perspective has been skewed. According to Betty (2015), in consonance with Innamorati *et al.* (2019) and Iotchev and Van Schie (2017), the Christian church has historically viewed mental health as a state of sin or demonic possession rather than a medical condition that requires investigation and understanding from a more compassionate and less judgmental perspective.Yet, the clergy suffer from mental health.

In an earlier study, Exantus (2011) observed that more work, issues, and stress are faced by pastors today than any other point in the history of the church. A startling 80% of seminary and Bible school graduates who enter the ministry quit within the first five years (Barna, 2022; Moore, 2022), and 80% of pastors feel unqualified and frustrated in their positions. Furthermore, 90% of the pastors said their training at Bible schools or seminaries did not fully prepare them for the demands of pastoral service. The discrepancy is believed to result from pastoral training that places too much emphasis on biblical knowledge and too little on leadership practices that promote self-care or burnout prevention. Because of this, discussions regarding the mental health of pastors are taboo, frequently postponed, and mostly limited to academic publications. Yet suicide and work-related pressures have increased over time (Branson-Potts, 2018).

In this study on the psychological well-being of clergy serving in the Church of England, Hayfron (2022), found that 36% of the pastors showed indicators of psychological distress, 51% showed signs of psychosomatic diseases, and 29% to 51% of the clergy showed some evidence of poor work-related mental health. A survey (n = 523) on US Protestant pastors found that many pastors suffered from loneliness, isolation, emotional, and mental tiredness. 73% of them frequently experienced emotional and mental tiredness, 55% felt isolated from others, and 59% felt lonely, while 15% of pastors reported having suicidal or self-harming thoughts in 2022 (Moody, 2024).

Lee and Fung (2023) investigated the relationships between work-family conflict, psychological distress, and well-being among Taiwanese clergy. On age, they discovered that younger, female, or single clergy, as well as clergy who work alone or earn less than the median income, reported higher levels of psychological distress and lower levels of well-being than their counterparts. They proposed practical implications for safeguarding and developing clergy mental health.

According to Leslie *et al.* (2017), poor work-related psychological health and professional burnout continue to be major concerns for all caring professions and among clergy from all denominations and cultures. Pastors endangered not only themselves but also the members, necessitating an intervention and strategic prevention. On gender, they found that clergymen recorded significantly higher scores than clergywomen in terms of emotional exhaustion, psychological distress, and thoughts of leaving the ministry, while clergywomen recorded higher scores than clergymen in terms of satisfaction in ministry. There are no gender disparities in terms of psychosomatic disorders.

On interventions, several studies made suggestions. Amankwa (2023) used a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effects of work-life balance on the psychological and physical well-being of pastors in the United States and discovered that pastors struggled with psychological and physical well-being. Setting limits, engaging in self-care, and creating positive environments inside religious groups were among the strategies used. The study recommended the development of treatments and institutions to improve pastors' work-life balance and overall well-being.

In a study comparing the effects of interventions targeting psychological well-being (hedonism or eudemonia) or a combination of the two on adult nonclinical populations, Koydemir *et al.* (2021) discovered that positive psychological interventions did indeed improve well-being. The five pathways that Hendriks *et al.* (2020) identified for the expression of PPIs are as follows: 1) savoring (intensifying and prolonging fleeting pleasures), 2) expressing gratitude (through reflection and expressive activities), 3) performing deeds of kindness, 4) fostering positive relationships, and 5) fostering meaning and purpose.

Mental health has historically been a taboo subject in the Christian church, particularly among the church leaders, as noted by Branson-Potts (2018). How do the Adventist clergy in Africa measure up in matters of psychological well-being? Thus, the study

The researcher employed a modified version of this open-access PWB framework and self-created instruments with five latent variables—self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, and a sense of personal growth—that are linked to optimal psychological functioning.

Self-Acceptance. The first facet of psychological well-being is this. The cornerstone of mental health, self-actualization, healthy functioning, and maturity are all characterized by self-acceptance. According to Nava *et al.* (2018), depending on the writers that discuss the topic, the construct of well-being is frequently associated with the conceptions of quality of life, personal happiness, or life purpose. Furthermore, the core of

hedonism was happiness defined as the lack of inconveniences and the satisfying fulfillment of both a spiritual and bodily nature.

Social acceptance, which includes accepting others for who they are, appreciating others, and generally accepting individuals despite their complexity, is referred to as social well-being. Positive affect is the term used to describe emotional well-being that conveys excitement, zeal, and contentment with life regardless of accomplishments (Barenbaum & Smith, 2016). Sun *et al.* (2019) discovered a relationship between perceived stress and self-acceptance. Additionally, self-acceptance reduced perceived stress, which may contribute to burnout, and enabled people to maintain an optimistic outlook throughout challenging situations.

A report on the calling and confidence of 413 Protestant pastors in the United States was released by David Kinnaman, CEO of Barna Group (2024). According to this research, 33% of pastors in September 2023, 42% of pastors in March 2022, and 67% of pastors in January and October 2021 stated they had seriously considered leaving the ministry in the preceding year. A further query was, "Have you personally experienced a period during your ministry tenure when you significantly doubted your calling as a minister?" According to their answers, 51% of them were unsure in 2020, 55% in 2022, and 60% in 2023. Song et al. (2019) discovered that the main determinants of happiness and life satisfaction with accomplishments were affection and self-acceptance. Higher levels of perceived personal prejudice were linked to lower levels of self-acceptance, according to research on immigrants from Romania. Moreover, there was a mediatory effect between psychological wellness and perceived prejudice when seeking social help.

Chen and Murphy (2019) claimed that among Thai Buddhists and American Christians, self-acceptance of handicaps was essential to fostering resilience, confidence, and psychological well-being. The results demonstrated that compared to Buddhist participants, Christian participants were more accepting of their impairment. The relationship between religion and sex was not very different. When participants' levels of self-acceptance of their disabilities were compared to their educational attainment, those with less than a high school diploma were shown to be less accepting of their handicap than those with a college degree. In terms of self-acceptance, age matters; as one age, they become more accepting of themselves. Gao and McLellan (2018) posited that happiness was and is central to well-being.

Positive relations with others. As said at the beginning, this is the capacity for love, warmth, and dependable interpersonal relationships. According to Hanson *et al.* (2016), an individual with high levels of positive relations possessed warm, fulfilling, and trustworthy relationships with others; they also had affection and intimacy, understood the reciprocity of human relationships, and care deeply for the welfare of others. Furthermore, this attribute is a fundamental part of mental health, presented as a maturity standard, and consistently stressed in these notions of psychological well-being.

Regarding relationships and assistance, 610 Protestant pastors in the US were surveyed to find out how frequently they got spiritual or personal help from a mentor or peer network. The

results showed that pastors had a considerably lower likelihood of getting one-on-one spiritual assistance from mentors or peers, according to Moody (2024)

Arslan and Allen (2021) investigated the relationships between warmth, positive regard, and social acceptance in Turkey to improve teenagers' psychological functioning. Life satisfaction and positive affect were favorably correlated with social acceptance, whereas a negative correlation was found with negative affect. Higher levels of subjective well-being were reported by people who experienced greater social acceptance. When combined, social acceptability and social connectivity functioned as a resilience factor, mitigating the detrimental effects of psychological abuse on teenagers' subjective well-being.

Work-life balance is negatively impacted by any unsupportive relationship, according to Mckew (2017). Pastors' morale is lowered by their unsupportive professional connections, which push them to prioritize their personal lives more. When Akram (2019) looked at the psychological well-being (PWB) of private university professors in Pakistan, he discovered that overall, male and female university teachers felt about the same amount of psychological well-being. Compared to male teachers, female teachers showed more reciprocity with others and a greater sense of acceptance of themselves. Additionally, single teachers felt that their lives had greater meaning and opportunities for personal development than married instructors, and married teachers felt that their lives had greater liberty. Additionally, when compared to their male counterparts, female teachers cultivated more good relationships with their colleagues.

In their investigation of the mediating function of personality in adult attachment and psychological well-being, Marrero-Quevedo *et al.* (2019) discovered that while avoidant and anxious attachment were adversely correlated with PWB, secure attachment showed favorable associations with PWB characteristics. Positive relationships with others, which demonstrated both direct and indirect effects of attachment orientations on PWB dimensions through personality traits, were the main contribution of attachment. A significant moderator in all the associations between PWB and attachment was self-esteem.

Autonomy. Being self-reliant, self-regulated, able to withstand social demands, and autonomous are characteristics of this aspect of psychological wellness. Emotional and social wellness are not interchangeable concepts. At first, Ryff (1989) proposed that autonomy was the same as internal locus of control, which Lamberton *et al.* (2019), characterized as the sense of where people feel in control of the things that happen to them. Besides, people with autonomy developed confidence, and evaluated themselves by personal standards, and independence in decision-making without looking to others for approval.

There are two different kinds of loci of control: internal and external (Galvin *et al.*, 2018). People who feel they do not influence the events in their lives are said to have an external locus of control, whereas those who feel they have power over their own lives are said to have an internal locus of control. Strong internal locus of control individuals no longer adheres to societal stigmas and stereotypes and freely express their opinions and beliefs in defiance of popular regulations.

Individuals who enjoy autonomy are better able to maintain the habits they developed while incarcerated.

According to a recent study, pastors' control over their lives is crucial, and losing it might lead to a disproportion between work and life. Amankwah (2023) made this observation. They were seen to be under pressure from their families, tasks, and fellow congregants. They frequently experienced unmanageable workloads and insecurities because of them. Stress levels have gone up. For pastors, control would entail striking a balance between their personal and professional lives as well as dealing with children's problems, sicknesses, and tests. Control also entails handling other social obligations and personal matters with care, both at work and at home.

Researchers Yu *et al.* (2018) discovered that people with poor autonomy did not feel a sense of connection to their work, which left them with less energy and excitement for their work factors that contributed to stress and sadness. Furthermore, when people's autonomy needs were met, their activities were self-congruent, voluntary, and beneficial to their overall well-being. The people voiced their thoughts and would have an impact on others. This is a crucial psychological requirement for both general well-being and optimal functioning. It has to do with a person's morality, motives, and ideals that direct their conduct independently of other people. It has to do with a blend of independence and self-governance (Aldawsari *et al.*, 2018).

The literature (Kazeni & McNaught, 2020) on autonomy in autonomy-supportive English language instruction discovered that it was a very successful method for instructing students in different study programs and levels. Additionally, the students' motivation was of a higher caliber, they shared their progress with greater confidence, their classroom involvement increased dramatically, and as a result, their incentive to study was also increased.

Higher scores indicated that the students had controlled their conduct both internally, as seen by Ryan and Deci (2022), and, more crucially, externally, by evaluating their performance by criteria that were in keeping with societal norms. Besides, autonomy was a special quality that enabled someone to be forceful in the face of conflict and was directly related to people's natural integrative tendencies.

Environmental mastery. According to Ryff (1989), it is the maturity to select or construct appropriate settings, to engage in meaningful activities outside of oneself, and is regarded as an essential element of mental health and an integrated framework of optimal psychological functioning. The extent to which a person feels equipped to handle the demands of various circumstances is known as their environmental mastery. An individual was not overcome by stress since they possessed the means and abilities to manage and adapt to various situations. Social integration, as it is known in the field of social welfare, is the process of feeling a part of a group that fosters a sense of support, belonging, and sharing. Happiness, or the overall sense of pleasure, contentment, and joy, is the term used to describe emotional wellness.

1.3. Research questions

The study aimed to determine the extent of Pastor's Woundedness in the three Adventist Divisions in Sub-Sahara

Africa. Specifically, the study sought to address the following questions:

i. What is the level of psychological well-being of the respondents in terms of:
- self-acceptance,
- positive relationships,
- autonomy,
- environmental mastery
- personal growth

ii. Is there a significant difference in the level of Pastors' Psychological Well-being when personal profiles in terms of age, and territory are considered?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

A study on the mental health of 523 Protestant pastors in the US found that most pastors suffered from emotional, mental, and loneliness exhaustion. Of them, 55% reported feeling alone and isolated from others, and 59% reported feeling emotionally and mentally exhausted regularly. It was shown that in 2022, 15% of the pastors reported having considered suicide or self-harm (Moody, 2024).

Aldawsari *et al.* (2018) looked at how social support and cross-cultural competency affected the psychological adjustment of international students. They discovered that autonomy and environment mastery were the two aspects of adjustment that seemed to be especially important to well-being. People with higher degrees of adjustment frequently had a higher sense of well-being than people with lower levels of adjustment. They also held command over a wide range of intricate outside activities. Additionally, they took advantage of the chances that were presented to them and selected or created environments that reflected their values and unique requirements. Furthermore, they were able to handle and complete daily tasks stress-free thanks to their mastery.

The trait was found to be a buffer against trauma from exposure to terrorism and harsh environments by Mohamed and Thomas (2017) who examined factors within the environment and individual characteristics that enhanced psychological well-being construct among the refugees in Afghanistan, Albania, Congo, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Somalia, and Uganda.

According to Uzoezi (2019), environmental mastery enables people to build a fulfilling existence out of nothing. Despite the chaos, a person tried to improve and planned their life to take charge of a wide range of challenging outside activities. Additionally, they were able to choose or construct contexts that suited their own needs and values, as well as effectively utilize the opportunities that were available to them.

Personal growth. This component of psychological well-being Ryff (1989) originally proposed that to perform at one's best, one must not only acquire the previously mentioned traits but also continue to have the potential to grow and expand as a person). The application stated that one essential aspect of a completely functional individual for prisoners was their openness to new experiences. Additionally, life span theories explicitly emphasize the importance of ongoing development and taking on new tasks or challenges at various stages of life. Pastors need to have the right abilities to handle the challenge of juggling their personal and professional lives, according

to Amankwah (2023). In addition, they need effective communication and listening skills to increase their chances of completing their professional assignments and returning to their personal lives on schedule. Pastors need to have a strong sense of self-awareness to handle their personal life more effectively. It guarantees that pastors are aware of how to manage their feelings and attitudes regarding their personal and professional lives. Taking this action will help to ensure a healthy work-life balance (Mckew, 2017).

Uzoezi (2019) conducted descriptive research on prisoners in Nigeria and discovered that when prisoners developed a sense of self-actualization, they viewed themselves as reforming and growing, and they were receptive to both new experiences and the realization of their potential. Higher scorers would gradually strive for behavioral and routine improvements and would make the most of the facility's offerings to expand their personal growth. The prisoners experienced shifts that demonstrated increased efficacy and self-awareness.

Positive psychology interventions (PPIs) are deliberate actions aimed at enhancing hedonic or eudaimonic well-being, as demonstrated by Pawelski (2020). Positive psychology also provides an alternative perspective, highlighting the positive aspects of humanity and our surroundings, suggests methods for preserving these resources, and encourages the use of psychological domains in future studies. Psychological well-being is employed as a variable in this investigation. It is believed that the five aspects of good psychological functioning having positive self-perceptions, having positive relationships with others, and having the capacity to control one's surroundings will significantly lessen woundedness and ministry burnout.

Although mental health has been a subject of study in the Christian denominations and among the clergy (Betty, 2015; Innamorati *et al.*, 2019; Iotchev and Van Schie, 2017), it has been spiritualized rather viewing it as a medical condition that requires investigation and understanding from a more compassionate and less judgmental perspective. Seminaries and Bible schools place an accent mark on biblical knowledge and too little on leadership practices that promote self-care or burnout prevention. Branson-Potts (2018) pointed out that mental health has been a taboo topic within the Christian church, especially among the church leadership. How do the Adventist clergy in Africa measure up in matters of psychological well-being?

In response to the population and knowledge gaps, the study purposed to assess the extent of the level of optimum functioning among Adventist pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa using a quantitative descriptive design.

2.1. Hypotheses

The study will test the following null hypothesis. There is no significant difference in the level of psychological well-being when personal profiles in terms of age, and territory are considered.

3. METHODOLOGY

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

3.1. 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.

3.2. 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 will utilize 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.

$$n_0 = Z^2 pq / e^2$$

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 - α equals the desired confidence level, e.g., 95%)1, 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.

$$n_0 = Z^2 pq / e^2 = ((1.96)^2(.5)(.5) / (.05)^2) = 385$$

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

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

n = 385 divided by (1 + (385 − 1) over N

385 divided by ((1 +(384 over 7585))

385 divided by (1+0.0506) = 385 divided by 1.0506)

n = 385 over 1.0506

n = 366 was the targeted sample size

Purposive sampling was used to get this sample from all the existing email addresses or WhatsApp groups from the Conferences, Fields, or missions. There was a shift from the calculated sample size of 366 to a final sample of 304 pastors who responded to the online questionnaire on Google Forms. A consent form and necessary permits were attached.

3.3. 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).

3.4. Instrumentation
Self-constructed questionnaire on psychological well-being 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.

3.5. Theoretical framework
Psychological Wellbeing scale. Psychological well-being (PWB) is the optimum psychological functioning identified in individuals who exhibit high scores in self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth. PWB had 5 sub-variables with 5 items each making a total of 25 items. The self-constructed PWB scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .543. With a low Cronbach's alpha, below the generally acknowledged minimum threshold of .70 to .80 for a trustworthy scale, this self-constructed PWB scale showed poor internal consistency and reliability. It must be acknowledged that this scale is a major limitation in this study. By implication, this scale gives PWB an unreliable inference.

3.6. 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.

4. RESULT 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.

4.1. The pastors' level of psychological wellbeing
The following are the findings of the question: What is the level of psychological well-being of the pastors in terms of self-acceptance, positive relationships, autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth?

Table 2. The pastor's level of psychological wellbeing

Items	M	SD	Scaled Response	Verbal Interpretation
Self-acceptance	2.807	.418	Agree	High
Positive Relations with Others	2.557	.422	Agree	High
Autonomy	2.707	.395	Agree	High
Environmental Mastery	2.105	.444	Disagree	Low
Personal Growth	3.060	.453	Agree	High
Level of PWB of Pastors	2.647	.230	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.

Even though PWB's 5 sub-variables had a Cronbach's alpha of .543 - a poor internal consistency and reliability - the results bespeak that the pastors had a high level of PWB (M = 2.65, SD = .23). This means that the pastors in the three Divisions

have optimum psychological functioning. In descending order, the results indicated that pastors had a high level of personal growth (M = 3.06, SD = .45). This means that pastors with a high capacity realize one's potential for personal development. The pastors have come to appreciate that ministry requires a continuous learning process and that they can grow despite the challenges in ministry. This implies that optimum functioning in life requires maximizing every opportunity, and people can learn in situations less ideal. The pastors are open to new skills to be used upon release.

The results agree with the literature (Farber, 2017; Hildmann *et al.*, 2020) which stated that personal growth enabled individuals to obtain a personal remedy to unemployment, a higher sense of self-efficacy, upgraded their education leading to personal responsibility and civic engagement. Optimal psychological functioning requires having interest in activities beyond the horizon for personal growth and expansion.

The pastors have a high level of self-acceptance (M = 2.65, SD = .23). This means that pastors held a high positive regard for and accepting oneself. The implication is that intrinsic feelings of well-being transcended external factors associated with ministerial workload. The results were in concinnity with the literature (Nava *et al.*, 2018; Song & Zuo, 2019; Uzoezi 2019) found that individuals with high levels of self-acceptance had happiness, life satisfaction, and enhanced positive attitude during stressful events. Self-acceptance was the central characteristic of self-actualization, optimal functioning, and maturity. The results show that pastors had a high level of autonomy (M = 2.71, SD = .39). This means that pastors had a high sense of personal control in thought and action and were confident in their beliefs even when the views were contrary to conventions. The implication is that the respondents can retain individuality. The results are in agreement with the literature (Aldawsari *et al.*, 2018; Assor, 2017; Kazeni & McNaught, 2020; Lamberton *et al.*, 2019; Phithakmethakun & Chinokul, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Yu *et al.*, 2018) which affirmed that autonomy, a combination of self-directedness and self-government, governed lead people to be free from the influence of others, felt having control over events that happened to them.

On Positive Relations with Others, the results denote that the pastors had generally a high level (M = 2.56, SD = .42). This means that the pastors had quality connections with others. This result is congruent with the literature. On feelings of loneliness, 69.4% disagreed they felt lonely during the past three months. On collegial support, 75% agreed they felt supported by colleagues at the office (Krejcir, 2016). By implication, the pastors have a high-quality connection and show generosity that knows no bounds. This implies that love, care, receiving warm regard from others, and having a sense of belonging are transcending human needs regardless of place.

On environmental mastery, the results show that pastors had a low level (M = 2.11, SD = .44). This means that pastors cannot efficiently manage their lives and surroundings, as well as to pick and build one's environment. The implication points to the inability to adapt and survive despite the transfers and election fever. The results are contrary to the literature (Aldawsari

et al., 2018; Mohamed & Thomas, 2017) which posited that high levels of environmental mastery enabled individuals to come up with lifestyles from rubble despite the confusion and exposure to harsh environments. Uzoezi (2019) observed that with environmental mastery, people strove for something better, organized life to have control of the complex array of external activities, and made effective use of the surrounding opportunities, and were able to choose or create contexts suitable to their personal needs and values. Pastors seem to be low on this value.

In summary, the results of the level of psychological well-being demonstrate that the pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological functioning. In ascending order, the pastors have a low level of environmental mastery (M = 2.11, SD = .44), high level of positive relations with others (M = 2.56, SD = .42), high level of autonomy (M = 2.707, SD= .395), high level of self-acceptance (M = 2.81, SD = .42), and high level of personal growth (M = 3.06, SD = .45). The pastors in Sub-Sahara Africa have healthy optimum psychological functioning and take ministry as the opportunity to develop their potential. Despite the workload, pastors can have optimum psychological functioning.

4.2. The Differences in PWB when personal profile – Age - is considered

The table presented in this part answers the research question: Is there a significant difference in the level of PWB when personal profile is considered? Specifically, there was an investigation on Pastors' level of PWB and personal profile in terms of in terms of age.

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the level of PWB for pastors aged Below 39 years and Above 40 years old. There was no significant difference t(302), = .391, p = .696) in the scores with the mean score for ages Below 39 years (M = 2.654, SD =.239) higher than Above 40 years (M = 2.643, SD = .226). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean difference = .010, 95% CI: -.043 to .656) was not significant. Hence, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of PWB of pastors when age is considered is supported. This means that regardless of age, pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological while in ministry.

This agrees with the literature (Nava *et al.*, 2018) which asserted that PWB was closely related to concepts such as material and personal resources, pleasure, the notion of success, power, wealth, satisfaction, gladness, and tranquility of the past. The physical pleasures like momentary pleasures, and persistent pleasures like joy, comfort, merriness, and enthusiasm express feelings about the present. On the other hand, optimism, hope, and confidence expressed positive feelings about the future.

4.3. The Differences in Levels of PWB when personal profile – Territory - is considered.

The purpose is to investigate if PWB differs in the personal profiles in terms of territory- namely East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID).

Table 3. T-test results comparing ages below 39 years and above 40 years old on the level of PWB

| | | | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | | | |
| | | Mean | SD | F | Sig. | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) | Mean Difference | Std. Error Difference | 95% Confidence Interval of the Difference | | |
												Lower	Upper
PWB	Below 39 years old	2.654	.239	.117	.733	.391	302	.696	.0108	.027		-.043	.065
	Above 40 years old	2.643	.226										

F(df) = 302 (304); NS =Not Significant

The results show that the pastors in ECD had slightly higher PWB (M = 2.676, SD = .254) while WAD had (M = 2.643, SD = .224) and SID (M = 2.613, SD = .199). The ANOVA results suggest that PWB across the Divisions differ significantly ($F_{2,301}$ = 2.129, 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 = 2.676, SD = .254) was not significantly different from Pastors of WAD (M = 2.643, SD = .224) as well as pastors in SID (M = 2.613, SD = .199). The mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 level. The hypothesis that there is no significant difference in the level of PWB considering territory is supported. This means that the religiosity of the pastors is a buffer against psychological malfunctioning.

Table 4. One-Way ANOVA Results on PWB Considering Territory

Territory	M	SD	F	Sig.	VI
East-Central Africa Division	2.676	.254	2.129	.121	NS
Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Division	2.613	.199			
West-Central Africa Division	2.643	.224			
Total	2.647	.230			

On Psychological well-being, 40.8% said that they had personally gone through a period when significantly they doubted their calling as a minister while 30.9% seriously considered quitting the ministry. Concerning exhaustion, 53.9% felt emotionally exhausted, 30.3% felt isolated from others and 30.6% felt lonely during the past three months. 49.3% struggled to balance ministerial tasks and family, 48.7% did not go by their itineraries and 49% experienced increasing stress levels. 30.6% of the pastors said they deserved a better workstation than the current one. All in all, 82.6% said they felt satisfied in ministry. The pastors in the three Divisions (ECD, WAD, SID) exhibited a high level of psychological well-being, CPE awareness, as well as woundedness. There was no difference in the level of PWB based on territory – whether they are working in (East-Central Africa, West-Central Africa, or Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions.

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.

4.4. Summary of findings

The results of the level of psychological well-being demonstrate that the pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological functioning. In ascending order, the Pastors have a low level of environmental mastery but high levels of positive relations with others, autonomy, self-acceptance, and personal growth. Therefore, the pastors in Sub-Sahara Africa have healthy optimum psychological functioning and take ministry as the opportunity to develop their potential. Despite the workload, pastors can have optimum psychological functioning.

Moreover, 40.8% said that they had personally gone through a period when significantly they doubted their calling as a minister while 30.9% have seriously considered quitting the ministry. Concerning exhaustion, 53.9% felt emotionally exhausted, 30.3% felt isolated from others and 30.6% felt lonely during the past three months. 49.3% struggled to balance ministerial tasks and family, 48.7% did not go by their itineraries and 49% experienced increasing stress levels. 30.6% of the pastors said they deserved a better workstation than the current one. All in all, 82.6% said they felt satisfied in ministry.

The investigation to establish if PWB differs across the different territories in Sub-Sahara Africa namely East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID) found out that the pastors in Sub-Sahara Africa have high psychological functioning in ministry. While the ANOVA results were significant, the Levene Statistic is not significant, and the mean differences were not significant at the 0.05 level. The hypothesis was supported.

Moreover, regardless of age, pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological (PWB) despite the challenges in ministry. In general, the investigation as to whether PWB differed across the Ages Below 39 years and Above 40 years old demonstrated that there was no difference in the level of PWB based on age.

Concerning the utility of the theoretical framework, the new model affirms the use of positive psychology domains. Unlike previous research, positive psychology accentuates positive aspects of human strengths. PWB 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.

5. CONCLUSION

Even though PWB's 5 sub-variables had a Cronbach's alpha of .543 - a poor internal consistency and reliability, the pastors across the different territories in Sub-Saharan Africa namely East-Central Africa (ECD), West-Central Africa (WAD), and Southern Africa-Indian Ocean Divisions (SID) have high psychological functioning in ministry. Regardless of age, territory, and current workstation, pastors exhibited a high level of optimum psychological while in ministry.

RECOMMENDATIONS.

Given that the Pastors had a high level of PWB, I recommend that pastors start reflecting on mental health issues. Regular seminars and workshops to be held to support pastors in Sub-Saharan Africa who are struggling with psychological matters. For future research – the study recommends a study on the psychological well-being of pastoral spouses. The PWB tool needs validation among the pastors using a larger sample.

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