

The Influence of Time Management Stress and Self-Care Moderator on Clergy Quality Family Relationships in Citam, Kenya

Veronica Kaari Makena ^{1*}, Anne Gathoni Wambugu ²,
and Nathan Hussein Chiroma ³

ABSTRACT

The clergy profession is a challenging one as they are expected to provide spiritual leadership by providing comfort and support to members of the congregation. If the clergy do not intentionally manage their time-management stress by exercising proper self-care, the quality of their family relationships can be impacted negatively by the stress. This study investigated the influence of time management stress with the self-care moderator on clergy-family relationships in Christ Is The Answer Ministries (CITAM). The total population was 204, and a total of 115 respondents, comprising 57 pastors, 40 spouses, and 18 children, participated in the study. Ethical considerations were adhered to by receiving the necessary approvals and licenses before commencing the study. Primary data was collected using questionnaires and focus group discussions. Quantitative data was analyzed using the linear regression technique and presented in tables, histograms, and box plots. The qualitative data was transcribed and analyzed using a thematic analysis approach to identify key themes. Findings showed that time-management stress had a negative effect on the quality of clergy-family relationships ($B = -0.224, p < 0.05$). Thematic analysis revealed that having intentionality about their self-care and maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life would help clergy reduce time-management stress and improve the quality of their family relationships. The study recommended that churches should collaborate with family therapists to offer therapy sessions to all members of the clergy. This would enable the clergy and their families to gain new insights and perspectives in dealing with time-management stress and thereby improve the quality of their family relationships.

Keywords: Clergy, family relationships, self-care, time-management stress.

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¹Department of Counseling Psychology, Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya.

²PhD, Department of Counseling Psychology, Pan Africa Christian University, Kenya.

³Professor, Africa College of Theology, Rwanda.

*Corresponding Author:

e-mail: Veronica.makena@pacuniversity.ac.ke

1. INTRODUCTION

Time management stress is a common problem that many people face. It is the feeling of being overwhelmed or anxious due to the perceived lack of time to accomplish tasks, meet deadlines, or balance work and personal responsibilities (White Smith, 2020). This could lead to feelings of anxiety, pressure, and frustration, which can negatively impact mental and physical well-being and lead to time-management stress (Gill *et al.*, 2018). Effective time management involves prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, and allocating time to complete them (White Smith, 2020). When individuals are not able to manage their time effectively, they may experience stress as a result of missed deadlines, uncompleted tasks, or a feeling of being constantly overwhelmed, and this can affect the quality of family relationships (Heck *et al.*, 2018). When a person is overwhelmed by responsibilities and struggles to manage time effectively, it can lead to feelings of stress and anxiety, which can spill over into relationships with family members (Brewer, 2016). When family members lack quality time due to stress and being overwhelmed, they may find themselves too tired or too preoccupied to spend quality time



with family members. This can lead to feelings of neglect or resentment and may damage relationships over time (Rogers, 2023).

In a study conducted by Eagle et al. (2019), findings showed that the clergy operate in a distinctive work setting that makes them more vulnerable to mental exhaustion. They are required to perform various duties, including preaching, conducting rituals, offering pastoral care, teaching, and managing administrative tasks (Faraji et al., 2019). In addition, clergy deal with conflicts, resource allocation, and information dissemination (Rogers, 2023), irrespective of the amount of time at their disposal. As noted by Ramos (2021), Proeschold-Bell and Byassee (2018), and Brewer (2016), the clergy are responsible for providing leadership within their organizations, overseeing both volunteers and staff members, and effectively responding to the ever-changing needs and expectations of congregants, church authorities, and the broader community (Lockwood, 2020). The family life of clergy members is affected by numerous stressors that come in various forms. These stressors include insufficient time for the family due to constant work demands, isolation resulting from a lack of support and close relationships that often lead to the clergy's own needs being neglected, and the difficulties of integrating with a congregation and managing challenging personalities (Martin-Storey et al., 2021).

It is important to note that the family system is constantly impacted by environmental factors that induce stress and influence the quality of family relationships (Obrenovic et al., 2020). While there are multiple factors responsible for causing work-related stress, this research examined the influence of time-management stress on quality family relationships among clergy with the moderator of self-care. It will be of great benefit to the family, the church, and the community to understand the risks posed by time-management stress on family relationships in order to formulate effective remedial measures on how to handle and manage time. The study provided new insights with respect to clergy and their families and how time-management stress impacts quality family relationships. This study was conducted among clergy, their spouses, and children in *Christ Is The Answer Ministries*, whose assemblies are spread throughout Kenya.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study employed a mixed methods design that was anchored on pragmatism philosophy. In keeping with mixed-methods research design, a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was adopted (Scherman et al., 2018). Asenahabi (2019) indicates that a mixed-methods design can integrate and synergize multiple data sources, which can assist in studying complex problems (Gibson, 2017; Kimmons, 2022). The application of mixed methods enabled purposive data consolidation, which allowed the researcher to seek a wide view of the study by allowing her to view a phenomenon from different perspectives and research lenses. The research adopted the convergent mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Leedy & Ormrod, 2019), in which the researcher merged quantitative and qualitative data in order to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem (Flick, 2018; Kelle et al., 2019). This study adopted purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique, where the researcher selected individuals who met specific criteria with respect to the ministry functions and objectives of the study (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Whereas all members of the clergy in CITAM share a common professional identity, they are usually assigned distinct roles and, thus, deal with unique population groups, which may portend time-management stress implications. This means that while all members of CITAM clergy share common time-management stress challenges, the sources and the nature of the stress may be different across sub-groups. Accordingly, the sampling criterion was based on the functional roles of the main pillars of marriage and family, children ministry, youth ministry, discipleship, social action and advocacy, and missions and outreach ministry. Through the meticulous selection of participants based on well-defined criteria of the ministry functions, the research decreased the chances of bias and enhanced the accuracy and validity of the findings (Elfil & Negida, 2017; Sharma, 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table I shows the descriptive statistics for the time management stress among the clergy in CITAM, Kenya. It also shows the mean, standard deviation, and minimum and maximum values for the responses.

Regarding the statement, "My work as a pastor always intrudes on family time and space," most of the respondents agreed that their work as a pastor often intrudes on their family and space ($\bar{X} = 3.68$, $\sigma_x = 0.986$, $N = 115$). This finding concurs with the findings of the study by Shaw et al. (2021), which revealed that there was a strong connection between the time the clergy spend at their workplace and the likelihood of them having higher levels of time management stress. Besides, Gill et al. (2018) also

TABLE I: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TIME MANAGEMENT STRESS

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. dev.
My work as a pastor always intrudes on family time and space	115	1	5	3.68	0.986
As clergy, we are always required to work longer hours	115	1	5	4.05	1.090

held that time spent in the workplace for the clergy is likely to affect the level at which they feel fatigued or the intensity of the effects of time management stress.

A prominent theme that emerged from the responses of pastors and their spouses in the study was the perceived lack of sufficient time to spend with their families. While the pastors acknowledged the noble calling of their profession and felt blessed to be engaged in such meaningful work, they expressed a general sentiment that their pastoral duties consumed a significant amount of their time, leaving them with limited or no opportunity to spend quality time with their families as confirmed by [White Smith \(2020\)](#). This sentiment was reflected in the confessions of many pastors, who expressed love and appreciation for their ministry work but also acknowledged that their roles as clergy members often constrained the time they could spend with their spouses and families. In addition, [Bonsu \(2016\)](#) recognized that despite valuing their calling, clergy have the challenge of balancing their pastoral responsibilities with family commitments. Limited clergy family time was especially evident in the comments of the spouse respondent, who reflected that:

“I feel there is very limited time when it comes to me and my husband. Like for example, when he comes back home, I need his attention, and my son needs his attention, and so because I can understand, he is forced to give my son the attention first. And having a very busy day at times, he is very tired. So, there are some things as a family we need to discuss, but since he’s tired, I am forced to hold on until maybe when another opportunity comes. Also, because of that, there are some family decisions that I am forced to make since I am the one who is a bit flexible. So, I feel, at times, he is so much into his work rather than the family. So that one really affects us.”

These sentiments were supported by a pastor respondent who commented that:

“I think it has affected the aspect of time in the sense that a pastor’s work is very demanding in terms of time. The amount of time that you are expected to be doing pastoral work and also being available for your family can be a bit stressful. Because if, for example, you have meetings throughout the evenings in a week, and those are the evenings that you are supposed to be spending time with your family, it can be a challenge. This definitely affects the way we relate.”

These respondents show that clergy work is heavily demanding of the clergy’s time, and they can barely find time to spend with their families. The findings are in line with the results of [Chavez’s \(2021\)](#) study, which demonstrated that the demands of clergy work can encroach upon family life, resulting in increased responsibilities and intrusion into family time. This can have negative implications for the quality of family relationships. [Ramos \(2021\)](#) concurs that while the clergy recognize the importance of their calling and the need to care for their families, they often find that the demands of their pastoral responsibilities, which are akin to a job, can intrude upon their time with their own families.

While the clergy in CITAM, Kenya, may not deliberately intend to harm their families or strain their familial relationships, their work commitments often prioritize the needs of the congregation over spending quality time with their own families. This finding was in line with a study conducted by [Martin-Storey et al. \(2021\)](#) that the busy clergy occupations may inadvertently limit the amount of time they can devote to their families. The effects of limited time with the family are felt not only among the pastors but also among their spouses and, consequently, the whole family. The results of this study support the findings of [Lee and Rosales \(2020\)](#), showing that job demands, such as time management stress, significantly affect the quality of family relationships among clergy members. The clergy in CITAM, Kenya, experience considerable stress related to time management due to the demands of their jobs. This stress has a significant impact not only on the clergy themselves but also on their families.

On average, most of the respondents depicted high levels of time management stress ($x = 3.049$, $\sigma_x = 0.961$), as indicated in [Table II](#). The analysis is consistent with the results of the study by [Bolliger et al. \(2022\)](#), which revealed that the work intensity and social environment were important determinants of the overall stress that the clergy suffer in their roles. The results also suggest that the increased

TABLE II: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR TIME MANAGEMENT STRESS COMPOSITE SCORE

	Statistic	Std. error
Mean	3.049	0.091
95% Confidence interval for mean	Lower bound Upper bound	2.869 3.229
5% Trimmed mean	3.102	
Median	3.000	
Variance	0.923	
Std. deviation	0.961	
Minimum	1.00	
Maximum	4.00	
Range	3.00	
Interquartile range	2.00	
Skewness	-0.460	0.228
Kurtosis	-1.167	0.453

time management should result in a corresponding deterioration in the quality of clergy family life (Bonsu, 2016). Faraji et al. (2019) argue that by prioritizing their time and delegating tasks where necessary, clergy can ensure that they have enough time for their families while still fulfilling their duties to the church. Good time-management skills can help them balance their work and have quality family relationships. In addition, Gill et al. (2018) found out that a church with policies in place can contribute to positive family relationships by allowing clergy members to manage their stress levels effectively and avoid burnout.

4. RESULTS

The descriptive statistics revealed that, on average, most of the respondents depicted moderate levels of time management stress ($x = 3.0491$, $\sigma_x = 0.961$). An examination of the regression coefficients revealed that time management stress ($B = -0.224$, $p < 0.05$) statistically had negative effects on the quality of clergy-family relationships. This means that increasing the time management stress by one unit decreases the quality of clergy-family relationships by 0.224. Time management stress also had a statistically significant explanatory power on the quality of clergy-family relationships ($R^2 = 0.152$, $F(1) = 19.94$, $p < 0.05$).

5. CONCLUSION

This study was limited by the deductions and opinions of the researcher and the volume of information and honesty provided by the participants. One of the limitations of this study included the fact that pastors' time management stress affects many areas of their lives, including job performance and their relationship with the congregation and other people, but this study only focused on how time management stress affects the pastor's family relationships. There might be other factors affecting pastors' family relationships, but this study only focused on pastors' time management stress.

The moderator analysis revealed that self-care can successfully treat the adverse effects of time management stress on the quality of clergy-family relationships. The Church should encourage the clergy to actively and intentionally take good care of themselves so that they do not experience the burnout that is associated with serving the expectations of the members of the congregation. This could be done by prioritizing rest and relaxation, engaging in physical activity, seeking support, and practicing self-compassion. The Church should plan for regular therapy for their clergy as part of their self-care because qualitative analysis revealed that the clergy profession is very fluid, bringing with it different demands and moods in different circumstances such as burials, graduation, and visitations. In collaboration with family therapists, the Church should offer therapy sessions to all members of the clergy and their spouses to improve the quality of their family relationships. More research is needed to thoroughly examine how other variables of time management stress may affect the overall impact on the quality of family relationships among clergy members.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that they do not have any conflict of interest.

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