

## **Influence of Occupational Stress on Quality Family Relationships among Clergy: A Case of Christ is the Answer Ministries, Kenya**

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### **Abstract**

The role of clergy can be demanding, as they are tasked with providing spiritual guidance and support to their congregation. This responsibility can result in occupational stress, which can affect the clergy and their family relationships. This study investigated the influence of occupational stress on quality family relationships among clergy in Christ Is The Answer Ministries, Kenya (CITAM). A pragmatist lens which informs the adoption of mixed methods research design was used. Out of a sample size of 135, 115 respondents comprising of 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 which were all done online. Quantitative data was analyzed using the linear regression technique in SPSS Version 28 and presented through tables. The qualitative data was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis approach with identification of key themes. Findings showed that the clergy

families have high quality family relationships ( $\bar{x}=3.4635$ ,  $\sigma_x = .37655$ ). Thematic analysis revealed that having intentionality and maintaining clear boundaries between work and personal life would help clergy improve the quality of their family relationships. The study recommended that churches should collaborate with family therapists to offer therapy session to all members of the clergy.

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**Keywords:** Occupational Stress, Family Relationships, Self-Care, Clergy

## Introduction

Over the past few decades, research has validated that the work of a clergy is a stressful profession (Clarke et al., 2022). It has also been demonstrated that occupational stress can occur due to pastoral work that places substantial demands on clergy (Lee & Rosales, 2020). A study that was conducted by Repetti and Wang (2017) revealed that because of their call to ministry, clergy who perform several roles in the church are prone to occupational stress. There are unrealistic expectations on clergy from the congregations, church officials like deacons, elders, head of departments and ministry workers that have contributed to the levels of stress experienced by clergy (Webb & Chase, 2019). Despite their work with Christian congregations, clergy are not immune to stress related to their job (Ruiz-Prada et al., 2021; Suleman et al., 2018). If a clergy member is highly stressed when leaving work, they may carry that stress with them into their home environment (Hamm, & Eagle, 2021). The interaction with the spouse and the children will depend on how well the clergy is able to handle the effects of that stress. Conversely, if a person does not experience work-related stress, it may have a positive effect on their family relationships (Hayes, 2020; Lockwood, 2020). Occupational stress can diminish a person's sense of personal achievement, affecting both their work quality and their relationships with loved ones. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how occupational stress impacts the family relationships of clergy members, as they are just as susceptible to its effects as any other worker (Lee & Fung, 2023).

Quite a number of studies that focused on marital relationships of the clergy and their partners have been conducted (Adams et al., 2017; Madukwe et al., 2019) while others have mainly targeted the clergy alone with little emphasis on the spouse and children (Guzman & Teh, 2016; Maina et al., 2018). Most of the studies have been inclined on the effectiveness of coping strategies and management of the stressors tormenting the clergy (Chan & Wong, 2018) with a few studies on the impact on children. At the same time, much of the earlier research with clergy families was done with samples drawn from denominations in the western world and did not include

reports from spouses and children. This study drew samples from the Kenyan context in one denomination and included spouses and children in the research.

### **Quality of Clergy Family Relationships**

Quality family relationships has been defined as the degree to which the interaction within the family fulfils the member's need for support, affection and warmth and contributes to positive functioning in life (Robertson et al., 2018; Verrastro et al., 2020; Woods & Priest, 2020). This definition is shared by Goldberg-Looney et al. (2015) and Martin-Storey et al. (2021) who surmise that quality family relationships is depicted in family bonding and other progressive family dynamics. The definition, conceptualization and measurement of quality family relationships has been the subject of a growing body of literature (Robertson et al., 2018; Verrastro et al., 2020; Woods & Priest, 2020). Martin-Storey et al. (2021). Kim et al. (2021) dimensionalised quality family relationships into three facets: family contentment, family conflict and family support. The study by Kim et al. (2021) defined family conflicts as disagreements or disputes that arise among family members due to a variety of reasons, including differences in values, beliefs, opinions, and behaviors. Family conflict was indicated by frequent arguments, feelings of irritation, insulting one another, and disputing over family chores. Family conflicts can have a significant impact on everyone involved, and they can be challenging to resolve. They can lead to feelings of anger, frustration, sadness, and resentment, and can even result in estrangement between family members.

Wajanathawornchai and Blauw (2018) approached the assessment of the quality of family relationships based on the perspective of satisfaction. This involved evaluating different aspects of the family according to one's own standards and assessing how well those standards were met. It also involved considering whether the evaluator wanted to maintain the current state of the family, whether they felt content with the family, and whether they perceived the family relationships conditions as outstanding. Indicators of togetherness include helping and supporting each other, spending time doing things together, feeling of togetherness, pride in being part of the family, and getting along with family members (Grevenstein et al., 2019 & Murray et al., 2021). Expressiveness is indicated by talking openly at home, sharing personal problems and beginning discussions with ease around one another (Dunbar et al., 2020).

Samau and Schoeffel (2015) identified that the relationship between clergy and their children are among the most adversely affected by clergy occupational stress. One of the explanations provided for this is that these children are frequently brought up in residences owned by the church, which

are situated within the church premises (Sielaff et al., 2021). Consequently, they are frequently involved in church-related chores and activities that potentially rob them of their natural development as children (Prince, 2019; Wilson & Darling, 2017). Aulthouse (2013) noted that children whose parents are clergy are usually treated differently from their peers, leading to their alienation. This has been associated with their rebellion when they reach teenage and afterwards (Nkonge, 2020; Samau & Schoeffel, 2015).

### **Family Contentment on Quality Family Relationships**

Family contentment was indicated by a sense of satisfaction, happiness, and fulfilment that members of a family experience when they are living together in a harmonious and loving environment (Young & Casey, 2019). It involves having positive relationships with one another, communicating effectively, showing respect and understanding, and supporting each other in times of need. Potts (2020) further postulated that family contentment is essential for creating a healthy and supportive home environment, where children can grow and develop to their full potential, and where adults can find comfort, solace, and joy. It helps to promote a sense of belonging and identity, and provides a foundation for building strong social connections and support networks (Clarke, 2021). Lee (2017) conducted a phenomenological research on the topic of the quality of family relationships of male clergy and its association with family support and satisfaction. Family contentment was conceptualized in the study as a function of clergy roles and boundaries, work and family stress (Joynt, 2018; Potts, 2020). Similar findings were reported by Fee (2018) who found out that maintaining healthy support systems plays a part in family contentment. Further, Jones (2021) postulated that contentment has salient factors namely genuine family interactions, family boundaries and healthy support system as key antecedents.

Similar findings were reported by Fee (2018) who found out that maintaining healthy support systems plays a part in family contentment. Further, Jones (2021) found out that contentment has salient factors namely genuine family interactions, family boundaries and healthy support system as key antecedents. The study utilized a very small sample, hence raising concerns about the reliability of empirical evidence. Whereas concerns over sample adequacy is secondary in qualitative studies (Young & Casey, 2019), there is need to utilize large samples so as to ensure that findings are closer to reality. In this study, mixed methods design was utilized to estimate the predictive power of occupational stressors on quality family relationships.

### **Family Conflict on Quality Family Relationships**

In family studies, there is a dominant conflict perspective that focuses on a range of factors such as marital conflicts, communication patterns, parent-child disagreements, sibling relationships, inheritance disputes, conflict management, counseling, use of coercion, obstacles faced by women, relationships and stress (Joynt, 2018). Many social researchers concur that various social phenomena occur within families, and one of them is conflicts (Simpson, 2022). Family conflicts are defined as disagreements, arguments, or discord between members of a family. It can arise due to a variety of reasons such as differences in values, beliefs, personalities, lifestyle choices, financial issues, or power struggles. Family conflicts can cause emotional distress and have a negative impact on relationships, communication, and overall family dynamics. Misunderstandings and jumping to conclusions can sometimes lead to conflicts between individuals. If these conflicts are not resolved through peaceful means, they can escalate into arguments and resentment. It is natural for people to have disagreements and conflicts, especially in family settings. However, when conflicts persist and become a recurring issue, it can negatively impact relationships, leading to stress, depression, anxiety, and resentment.

Obrenovic et al. (2020) observed that conflicts in relationships arise due to various reasons such as the existence of intense negative emotions, misunderstandings or prejudices, ineffective communication or misunderstandings, or repeated unfavorable actions. Clergy encounter various forms of conflict such as discontent with the congregation, the magnitude and density of their work and disputes with authorities (Simpson, 2022). These sentiments were echoed by French et al. (2018) who in a study named family conflict and stress found that interest conflicts occurred when there is competition for needs that are perceived as incompatible. When one or more parties believe that meeting their own needs requires sacrificing the needs and interests of others, this leads to conflicts of interest. Clergy who encounter occupational stress and have little time for the family could have a clash that may affect the ability to act impartially or objectively as far as the quality time that is spent with the family (Pascucci et al., 2022).

The clergy often face a dilemma where they are pulled between the growing expectations of their families in their roles as spouses and parents to their children, and the rising demands of their employers to perform at their best in their job roles and to go beyond their official duties. The various roles that individuals have to fulfill often lead to family conflict (Speight & Speight, 2017). due to the conflicting demands placed on them. The demands of one role often make it difficult to fulfill the demands of another role, resulting in an incongruence of expectations.

## **Family Support on Quality Family Relationships**

Studies conducted in many countries around the world (Berry, 2022; Bloom, 2019; Clarke et al., 2021; Eagle et al., 2019) have found that positive, caring and nurturing relationships are among the most important conditions for family wellbeing. The presence of strong family support can affect the relationships among members of a family. Family support pertains to the various ways in which family members offer emotional, financial, and practical aid to each other. It also refers to the emotional bond, unity, and sense of togetherness among family members (Clarke, 2021). The unity and support of family members is crucial because the welfare of families affects the overall welfare of society. According to Kim (2021), family support also refers to the level of emotional connectedness or separation among family members. It is characterized by mutual support, open communication, shared values and beliefs, and a strong sense of commitment to the family unit.

Noh and Ross (2020) concur that high levels of family support are associated with positive outcomes such as better mental health, greater life satisfaction, and stronger resilience in the face of challenges. The above definitions point to the importance of family support in fostering cordial interactions between and amongst the members of a given family structure for there to be quality family relationships (Kim et al., 2021). The clergy frequently feel a calling to assist others, but this enthusiasm is challenging to maintain due to the chronic and traumatic stress that come with their job (Butler et al., 2019). Due to the distinct stressors that come with being a professional minister, the clergy requires specialized support that addresses both systemic and personal factors to develop resilience (Sielaff et al., 2021).

In a study to determine the support that family members have towards one another and its association with quality family relationships, Noh and Ross (2020) found out that the society places great importance on unity, social structure, and peaceful relationships among family members. Similarly, Choi et al. (2020) agreed that shared values and beliefs are commonly held by family members as they offer support and play a significant role in shaping how individuals behave and interact with one another. Shared values and beliefs can be related to religion, culture and they help to create a sense of unity and common purpose among members. By spending time together, families have more chances to communicate, address any occupational stress that they encounter and express their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, which results in a greater dedication to the family relationships as a whole (Lee & Fung, 2023).

Similarly, in a study conducted by Zeng et al. (2021), family support was measured by the support dimension of the family adaptability and showed that family support can promote internal resources like resilience which is vital to coping with stress (Olson et al., 2019; Maleki et al., 2023). Eagle et al. (2019) believed that family members should demonstrate



empathy towards each other, particularly by considering each other's feelings as a way of support. They noted that caring for each other can be shown by taking an interest in what every family member says or does, and making an effort to understand each other (Muzenda, 2020). The main-effect model of family support (Fosco et al., 2020) suggests that having positive relationships with family members can offer individuals under stress with support and aid in promoting quality family relationships. Findings of this study concur with the suggestions made by Francis and DLitt (2018) that clergy, like any other human being, need to be supported emotionally and socially so that they can make friends and have fun.

Consistently, family support has been identified as a crucial factor affecting the outcomes of family relationships. Studies have indicated that a lack of family support is a significant factor in predicting (Currier et al., 2019; Edwards et al., 2020) and perpetuating (Hough et al., 2018) occupational stress. Different theories have tried to clarify the connection between family support, stress, and overall well-being, proposing that family support acts as a shield against the negative effects of occupational stress on family relationships (Pietkiewicz & Bachryj, 2016). According to Shaw et al. (2021), a perceived absence of family support could be a significant contributor to the prevalence of occupational stress among clergy members. Studies have indicated that clergy often feel socially disconnected (Potts, 2021) and may not seek support from their families or external sources, as suggested by a study conducted by Büssing et al. (2017). Using a standardized psychometric assessment, the studies (Currier et al., 2019; Edwards et al., 2020; Hough et al., 2018; Pietkiewicz & Bachryj, 2016) examined the symptoms of occupational stress experienced by active Christian clergy who held leadership positions in a religious congregation.

## **Methodology**

### **Research Design**

The study employed 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 (Sileyew, 2019). Asenahabi et al. (2019) indicates that a mixed-methods design can integrate and synergize multiple data sources which can assist to study 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 enabling her to view a phenomenon from different perspectives and research lenses. The research adopted the convergent mixed methods (Creswell, 2018; 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).

### **Sampling and Data Collection Methods**

This study adopted purposive sampling as a non-probability sampling technique, where the researcher selected individuals who met specific criteria relevant to the research question and objectives (Casteel & Bridier, 2021). Primary data constituted the data type for this research and entailed the collection of original data direct from the participants to achieve the purpose of the study (Paterson & Leung, 2016). In the quantitative front, a structured questionnaire was administered to the participants. The questionnaires were administered through Kobo Toolbox software platform through email addresses and WhatsApp numbers that the researcher had obtained from the senior pastors of the selected assemblies. Quantitative data facilitated the determination of effect sizes through inferential analysis of numeric data whereas qualitative analysis enabled the clarification of inferences drawn through establishment of the salient themes from non-numeric data (Flick, 2017). Two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were conducted through Zoom, a cloud-based video conferencing platform that allowed the participants to communicate with each other remotely. One discussion group was held for the clergy with 6 participants and one for the spouses with 7 participants. The participants were selected using both purposive and convenient sampling methods.

### **Data Analysis**

Quantitative data were entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 28.0) software where numeric data were analyzed. The data was subjected to a process of cleaning by checking and appropriately treating missing values, investigating outliers, and weeding out inconsistent responses (Chai, 2020). Data analysis was performed on the dataset using descriptive statistical techniques summarization and visualization through computation of percentage scores, mean scores, and standard deviations. Data was then presented through tables (Sharma, 2018). A composite index was generated to represent the extent to which the various constructs manifested in the sample. Accordingly, data transformation facilitated the determination of a composite score for clergy quality family relationships. The discussions from the focus group were recorded and transcribed using Zoom online software system (Hennink et al., 2019). The recording from Zoom was transcribed verbatim using the Maxqda program 2022 Verbi Software. The data generated from the focus groups was subjected to a qualitative data analysis process using thematic technique (Roller, 2019) and were presented in narrative or verbatim form. This



entailed reporting quantitative findings and discussing them in light of the qualitative themes obtained (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

### **Ethical Considerations**

The researcher adhered to institutional requirements of research by obtaining ethical clearance from the University's Ethics Review Committee, research license from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and a letter from CITAM headquarters giving permission to carry out the research among the clergy. The participants were given an informed consent form which they voluntarily signed before their involvement in the study. The researcher made every effort to respect the privacy of research participants and safeguard their identity throughout the process.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **Descriptive Analysis of Quality of Clergy Family Relationships: Contentment**

Table 1 shows the minimum and maximum values, plus the means and the standard deviations of the responses posed by the respondents to the quality of clergy family well-being measures. It shows that the quality of clergy family life was measured using a 5-point scale on which the clergy or their spouses or children who are part of the respondents recorded how they felt about the different measures of well-being as was posed in the measure statements.

**Table 1.** Descriptive Statistics for Family Contentment

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our family we spend a lot of time doing things together at home	115	1	5	3.82	.908
I am proud to be a part of our family	115	1	5	4.75	.635
In our family we really get along well with each other	115	1	5	4.30	.775
In our family we begin discussions easily	115	1	5	4.09	.793

On average most of the respondents agreed with the supposition of the statement, "In our family, we spend a lot of time doing things together at home," ( $\bar{x}=3.82$ ,  $\sigma_x=.908$ ,  $N=115$ ). The results showed that more than average of the respondents agreed that they have time to spend together as they do things at home and as a family. This finding supposes that the clergy often and regularly have time to spend with their families. Spending time together improves the quality of family and improves their congruence and improves the psychological well-being of the clergy (Hricová, 2020).

On average, most of the respondents depicted a high level of contentment in their families and this was evident in how they reacted to the statement, “In our family we really get along well with each other,” ( $\bar{x}=4.30$ ,  $\sigma_x=.775$ ,  $N=115$ ). The result findings indicate that there is a high level of family contentment and possibly overall quality of clergy family relationships in CITAM, Kenya.

Regarding the statement “In our family, we begin discussions easily”, on average most of the respondents agreed that they easily began conversations with one another ( $\bar{x}=4.09$ ,  $\sigma_x=.793$ ,  $N=115$ ). The analysis strongly suggests high levels of family contentment among the clergy in CITAM, Kenya. This finding concurs with the findings by Lyte (2021) which showed openness and ease of talking and interacting while maintaining a healthy support system indicated the levels of contentment in the family

Respondents confirmed that as being part of clergy families they received other as follow:

*“Sometimes as well, there are times when congregants will decide to treat you out, whether to take you out for a cup of coffee or something” FGD/005/P*

*“Other times, there are some material support here and there, yeah” FGD/006/S*

***Descriptive Statistics for Family Contentment Composite Score.***

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the family contentment composite score. It shows the maximum and minimum values, means and intervals and confidence levels.

**TABLE 2.** *Descriptive Statistics for Family Contentment Composite Score*

		Statistic	Std. Error	
Family Contentment Composite Score	Mean	4.2368	.05632	
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.1253	
		Upper Bound	4.3484	
	5% Trimmed Mean	4.2924		
	Median	4.2500		
	Variance	.362		
	Std. Deviation	.60129		
	Minimum	1.00		
	Maximum	5.00		
	Range	4.00		
	Interquartile Range	.75		
	Skewness	-2.042	.226	
	Kurtosis	7.106	.449	

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the family contentment composite score. The table shows that on average, most of the respondents from CITAM, Kenya have high levels of family contentment ( $\bar{x}=4.2368$ ,  $\sigma_x$

= .60129). Potts (2020) held that some of the factors in the family which can be used to determine family contentment include clergy roles and boundaries, work, and family stress (Dunbar et al., 2020).

### **Descriptive Statistics for the Quality of Clergy Family Relationships: Family Conflict**

Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values for the different responses.

**TABLE 3.** *Descriptive Statistics for Family Conflict*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our family, we argue a lot	115	1	5	2.63	1.155
In our family we are really mad at each other a lot	115	1	5	2.04	1.068
In our family we lose our tempers a lot	115	1	5	2.22	1.143
In our family we often put down each other	115	1	5	1.73	1.009
My family members sometimes are violent	115	1	5	1.38	.866
In our family we raise our voice when we are mad	115	1	5	2.25	1.203
In our family we can talk openly in our home	115	1	5	4.25	.955

As shown in Table 3, regarding the statement, “In our family, we argue a lot,” on average most clients agreed that they argue a lot in the family which points to the possibility of instability and squabbles in the clergy families which suggests low quality of the clergy family life ( $\bar{x}=2.63$ ,  $\sigma_x=1.155$ ,  $N=115$ ). In their study on the effect of pastor’s church ministry on their family stability in Nairobi County, Maina et al., (2018) included constant argument and raising of voice as some of the indicators of conflict in the family. Majority of the respondents expressed disagreement with the given statement, “In our family, we are really mad at each other a lot,” ( $\bar{x}=2.04$ ,  $\sigma_x=1.068$ ,  $N=115$ ). Regarding the statement, “In our family we lose our tempers a lot,” most of the respondents on average disagreed with the statement ( $\bar{x}=2.22$ ,  $\sigma_x=1.143$ ,  $N=115$ ), which indicates that they do not lose their tempers a lot in their families. This means that the families are showing low levels of conflict and high levels of togetherness.

Most of the respondents, on average, held that they almost never put each other down, as suggested by the statement, “In our family, we often put down each other.” ( $\bar{x}=1.73$ ,  $\sigma_x=1.009$ ,  $N=115$ ). The findings imply that instances of putting each other down within the families of the respondents are infrequent, indicating that most of them rarely engage in such behavior

towards each other. In response to the statement, “My family members sometimes are violent,” most of the respondents on average disagreed that there was physical violence in their families. This showed that most of them opposed the presence of violence in their families as proposed in the statement ( $\bar{x}=1.38$ ,  $\sigma_x=.866$ ,  $N=115$ ). Maina et al. (2018) held that violence among family members is a valid measure of conflict in the family. Again, Omungo et al. (2020) agreed that the presence of conflicts in the family suggests poor quality of family relationships. Hence, the study findings suggest that the majority of respondents tended to reject the existence of violence in their families, implying that such families are likely to have low or negligible levels of violence.

### Descriptive Statistics for Family Conflict Composite Score

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the family conflict composite score. It shows the skewness, means and standard deviations and confidence levels of the data in the composite score.

**TABLE 4.** *Descriptive Statistics for Family Conflict Composite Score*

			Statistic	Std. Error
Family Conflict Composite Score	Mean		3.9998	.06511
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.8708	
		Upper Bound	4.1288	
	5% Trimmed Mean		4.0454	
	Median		4.1429	
	Variance		.483	
	Std. Deviation		.69514	
	Minimum		1.71	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		3.29	
	Interquartile Range		.86	
	Skewness		-.949	.226
	Kurtosis		.705	.449

Table 4 shows the descriptive statistics for the family conflict composite score. The table shows that on average, most of the respondents and their families are strongly coherent with one another ( $\bar{x}=3.9998$ ,  $\sigma_x=.69514$ ). Butler et al. (2019) argued that when studying the effects of occupational stress on quality family relationships, it is inadequate to solely examine the clergy themselves while neglecting their families. This is because the negative effects of occupational stress experienced by clergy can also extend to their family members.

### Descriptive Statistics for the Quality of Clergy Family Relationships: Family Support

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics for the quality of clergy-family relationships, focusing on the aspect of family support. The table shows the means, standard deviations, and minimum and maximum values for the respective responses given by the respondents.

**TABLE 5.** *Descriptive Statistics for Family Support*

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our family we really help and support each other	115	1	5	4.55	.694
In our family we work hard at what we do in our home	115	1	5	4.46	.813
In our family there is a feeling of togetherness	115	1	5	4.72	.739
In our family we sometimes tell each other about our personal problems	115	1	5	4.17	.921
My family members really support each other	115	1	5	4.36	.926

As shown in Table 5, on average, most of the respondents agreed with the statement, “In our family, we really help and support each other,” ( $\bar{x}=4.55$ ,  $\sigma_x=.694$ ,  $N=115$ ). In other words, the families of the clergy recognized the importance of providing mutual support and assistance to each other, including the clergy, whenever any member of their family required help and support. On average most of the respondents agreed that they worked hard as a family in everything that they did at home. This is evident in how they responded to the statement, “In our family, we work hard at what we do in our home,” ( $\bar{x}=4.46$ ,  $\sigma_x=.813$ ,  $N=115$ ). Moreover, on average, most of the respondents felt that their families had great feelings of togetherness. This was evident in the way they responded to the statement, “In our family, there is a feeling of togetherness,” ( $\bar{x}=4.42$ ,  $\sigma_x=.739$ ,  $N=115$ ). The respondents believed that from the way they lived and interacted with one another had a sense of family togetherness which according to Kim et al. (2021) can be measured using aspects such as spending time with each other, getting along together, discussion with family before making important decisions, talking together about family rules, and spending holidays together.

The expectations placed on the clergy member by their congregation or religious organization can also impact family togetherness as confirmed by the respondents as follows:

*“The congregation is annoying, sometimes there are congregants that you have trusted and pastored for many years, really sacrificed for them but they can betray you. And when you have that kind of a*

wound or that kind of anger within you, you realize that you can project that to your family without knowing. Whereby you get at home you are somehow in deep thought, perhaps your spouse is asking you what's happening, you don't feel like you want to talk about it, and you sometimes even can respond awkwardly."FGD/003/P

"As a pastor I help him and because the work is so much, both of us are tired and overwhelmed. And when we get back home there are other things I have to attend to. And then the last one is that the members of the congregation whenever they have a need in their home, they will look for the pastor even if it is on Monday when you are resting you just get a knock on your door and you will have to sort them out." FGD/005/S

On average, most of the respondents showed a high level of family togetherness and family support in the way they reacted to the statement, "In our family, we sometimes tell each other about our personal problems," ( $\bar{x}$ =4.17,  $\sigma_x$ =.921, N=115). The ability to share the intricate personal details of one's life with the family was confirmed by Dunbar et al. (2020), as part of the strong indicators that the families are closely knit and highly expressive to one another, which is a sign of family togetherness and fewer conflicts in the family, which points to a better quality of clergy family relationships.

***Descriptive Statistics for the Family Support Composite Score***

Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics for the family support composite score. It shows the confidence, levels, error margin, minimum and maximum values and the mean and standard deviation of the responses.

**TABLE 6.** Descriptive Statistics for the Family Support Composite Score

			Statistic	Std. Error
Family Support Composite Score	Mean		4.3912	.05821
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	4.2759	
		Upper Bound	4.5065	
	5% Trimmed Mean		4.4593	
	Median		4.5500	
	Variance		.386	
	Std. Deviation		.62149	
	Minimum		1.20	
	Maximum		5.00	
	Range		3.80	
	Interquartile Range		.80	
	Skewness		-2.048	.226
	Kurtosis		6.892	.449



Table 6 shows the descriptive statistics for the family support composite score. The table shows that on average, most of the respondents had very supportive clergy families ( $\bar{x}=4.3912$ ,  $\sigma_x=.62149$ ). The findings concur with the findings by Kyere (2019) in Ghana which revealed most of the clergy find support from their spouses and their children who know the level of difficulty of their work and do all they can to make sure that they are doing great in their family and jobs.

**Descriptive Statistics for The Quality of Clergy Family Relationship Composite Index**

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistical analysis of the quality of clergy family relationships composite score.

**Table 7.** *Descriptive statistics for Quality of Clergy Family Relationships Composite Score*

			Statistic	Std. Error
Quality of Clergy Family Relationships Composite Score	Mean		3.4635	.03527
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	3.3936	
		Upper Bound	3.5333	
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.4757	
	Median		3.4375	
	Variance		.142	
	Std. Deviation		.37655	
	Minimum		2.13	
	Maximum		4.19	
	Range		2.06	
	Interquartile Range		.46	
	Skewness		-.537	.226
	Kurtosis		1.126	.449

Table 7 shows the descriptive statistical analysis of the quality of the clergy family relationships. The table helps in exploring the different aspects of the quality of clergy family relationships including the aspects such as family support, family conflict and family contentment. The descriptive statistical analysis shows that on average most of the respondents had better quality clergy family relationships ( $\bar{x}=3.4635$ ,  $\sigma_x = .37655$ ).

Qualitative data revealed two salient themes regarding the quality of clergy family relationships and the themes are discussed to further explore the quality of clergy family relationships at CITAM, Kenya.

**Theme 1: Spiritual Calling**

A salient theme especially among the pastors is spiritual calling. The theme manifested through subthemes such as gratitude, well-being, spirituality, comfort and security. The respondents at CITAM, Kenya hold their clergy work with such a high regard that even if there is nothing they gain from the calling, the calling alone means a lot to them because many of

them consider the calling itself a blessing, assuming the repercussions which come with their calling. Cases which emphasizes the weight with which the respondents hold their calling are comments from the respondents when asked about the blessing they have received from being in a pastor's family:

*"It's been a blessing in the sense that we have an opportunity to minister as pastors. It is the calling that God placed in me. Yeah, besides that, it is spiritual and I see it as blessing me and my family. There is also friendship that comes, yes, that fulfilment friendship and provision."* FGD/004/P

Another response on the spiritual calling experienced by being part of a clergy family in CITAM, Kenya:

*"For me to be a part of a pastor's family, has been a blessing in so many ways that I am not even able to quantify, but one of them is that I have been exposed to a lot of Godly support and growth in terms of my spiritual walk because I have had to be intentional and as a family we are very intentional in how we grow in our spiritual life."* FGD/002/S

## **Theme 2: Support**

Another salient theme, especially among the pastors' spouses was support. The theme manifested through sub-themes such as emotional support, prayer, social support, financial and material support. Chan and Chen (2019) held that congregational needs which come from handling congregational needs and expectation are some of the major sources, among rigid work schedules, bureaucracy, denominational frameworks, conflicts between personal and congregational interests of clergy occupational stress. The following verbatim respondents' excerpts prove the presence of support to the clergy families from the congregants and the Church fraternity. This was in response to the discussion on the blessings of being a member of clergy family;

*"About the connections getting to meet people that otherwise you would not have met. And having some of the different congregations that you get to serve in, you also get friends and they become your family friends, your personal friends. And so that has been one of the blessings."* FGD/006/S

*"We receive different favours because of God from the people that we serve. We do not ask for it but because working as a pastor is a higher calling, members support us. The support that we receive from the congregation is significant."* FGD/001/P

From the foregoing verbatim excerpt, the respondents recognize that being a member of the family of a clergy comes with high expectations but nonetheless, the support which comes in many forms, including the financial outweigh the expectations.

The spiritual support specifically mainly comes from the spouses who are pastors who ensure that the teachings of the Bible and the spiritual disciplines are applied and followed in their own houses before taking care of the spiritual needs of the members of the congregation as confirmed by two respondents.

*“And personally, I have been intentional not to take up any fulltime job. I would rather do things that make me more available so that I can do simple things like just picking the children and dropping them to school, reading Bible stories and teaching them songs. My husband is not available and cannot even commit to pick the children from school because his work is very unpredictable. A lot of times, he comes home when the children are asleep. I help him here.”*  
FGD/002S

The descriptive statistical analysis revealed that on average, the clergy CITAM, Kenya had a moderately high quality of clergy family relationships. The seventeen-item, 5-point scale revealed that the most of the respondents had high quality of clergy family relationships. Examining the composite scores yielded that the respondents had high levels of family contentment ( $\bar{x}=4.2368$ ,  $\sigma_x = .60129$ ), low levels of family conflict ( $\bar{x}=3.9998$ ,  $\sigma_x=.69514$ ), and high levels of family support ( $\bar{x}=4.3912$ ,  $\sigma_x=.62149$ ). The respondents score above average in the 5-point scale showing that they have high quality of family relationships.

## **Conclusion**

This research study has contributed to the body of knowledge by investigating the influence of occupational stress on the quality of clergy family relationships at CITAM, Kenya. It has also investigated the effects family contentment, family conflict and family support on the quality of clergy family relationships. The main conclusion which can be drawn from the findings of the study is that even though occupational stress is high among the clergy and it adversely affects the quality of clergy family relationships, most of the respondents still showed high quality of clergy family relationships. In light of the findings of the study, recommendations were made as follows: (1) The Church should encourage and promote the activities and practices such as counseling and self-care which will improve the quality of clergy relationships so that the clergy are well-equipped to handle the needs and expectations of the members of the congregation. (2) It would be beneficial for the Church to work in partnership with marriage and

family therapists to provide education and support to their clergy on effectively managing occupational stress. This should include not only addressing overall stress reduction strategies, but also specifically targeting the different variables of occupational stress that may impact the clergy's well-being. (3) The Church should promote the clergy to actively and intentionally take good care of themselves so that they do not experience the burnout which is associated with serving the expectations of the members of the congregation.

### Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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