



## INFLUENCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS ON EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION AMONG MINISTERS OF GOD IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*Emotional exhaustion occurs when there is intense demand in workplace. The rate at which Ministers of God exhibit emotional exhaustion has been on the increased over the years. This study investigates the influence of personality traits, church-related stress, gender and age on emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos, Nigeria. The study adopted ex-post facto research design using three instruments: Big Five Personality Scale, Church-related Stress Scale, and Emotional Exhaustion Scale to conveniently sample 202 (Males 167, Female 35) Ministers of God. Three hypotheses were tested using standard multiple regressions and t-test of independent sample mean at  $p < 0.5$  level of significance. The result revealed that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress jointly predicted emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos [ $F(6, 195) = 15.44, R^2 = .32, p < .05$ ]. Also, agreeableness ( $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ), neuroticism ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ ) and church-related stress ( $\beta = .38, p < .05$ ) independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God. However, gender [ $t(200) = -0.79, p > .05$ ] and age [ $t(200) = -1.52, p > .05$ ] did not influence emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God. The study concludes that personality traits and church-related stress are excellent predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the study population. It is recommended that Ministers of God should develop effective coping and problem solving techniques so as to manage both marital affairs and church activities to reduce emotional exhaustion.*

**Key words:** Personality traits, Church-related stress, Emotional exhaustion, Minister of God, Lagos/Nigeria

## Introduction

As a country develops and urbanizes, life becomes more complex, and problems related to social, cultural, and economic changes arise. Today, job stress and emotional exhaustion have become global phenomena. The Webster's dictionary defines emotional exhaustion as anything that "causes to fail, wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive demands on energy, strength, or resources" on a person. Khan et al. (2020) describe emotional exhaustion as the extent to which people feel they have depleted their emotional resources to manage their interpersonal stressors. The major symptoms of emotional exhaustion include physical exhaustion, deficiency in energy level, family problems and inability to sleep (Khan et al., 2020). Also, people who are emotionally exhausted cannot stay in the same place for a long time. Emotional exhaustion is recognized as a modern disease among professionals such as counsellors, nurses, physicians and social workers (US Surgeon General, 2022) who help other people as they are frequently called to work with individuals in stressful situations. Ministers of God are not exception.

Maslach and Jackson (1981) conceptualized emotional exhaustion as a subcomponent of burnout which takes different forms in different people. Maslach et al. (1996) define burnout "as that which results from the stress of interpersonal contact, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishments that occurs among individuals who work with people". Therefore, burnout is a syndrome of emotional exhaustion.

One factor considered as likely to influence emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God is personality trait describes as a relatively permanent characteristic that distinguishes one individual from another (McAdams, 1992). It is the behaviour an individual exhibit that provides reasonable explanations for that individual's actions or attitudes (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Personality traits have been organized into the Big Five Factors: extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Extraversion represents the tendency to be sociable, assertive, expressive, and active (Costa & McCrae, 1992). A highly extraverted Minister of God tends to be more sociable. Mellor et al. (2008) further indicated that introversion which is the extreme of extraversion is associated with high emotional exhaustion. Agreeableness represents the tendency of an individual to be likable, nurturing, adaptable and cooperative (Costa & McCrae, 1992). An agreeable Minister of God tends to be adaptable and cooperative with members of the ministry. The third component, conscientiousness refers to the traits of achievement, organization, task focus, and dependability (Costa & McCrae, 1992), meaning a conscientious Minister of God is dependable and achievement oriented. Neuroticism (sometimes referred to as emotional stability) is the tendency to be secured, emotionally adjusted and calmed (Costa & McCrae, 1992) implying that Ministers of God who are secured and emotionally stable are less likely to be emotionally exhausted or stressful. Finally, openness to experience is the

disposition to be imaginative, artistic, non-conforming and autonomous (Costa & McCrae, 1992) meaning Ministers of God who are imaginative will always think of how to relieve emotional stress by delegating work and seeking recreation when necessary. All these dimensions of personality traits describe the thought, intention and behaviour of the Ministers of God. Therefore, the level of emotional exhaustion experienced by the Ministers of God tends to be related to their personality traits.

The second factor considered as likely predictor of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God is church-related stress describes as a pattern of reactions that occurs when Ministers of God are presented with ministerial demands that do not matched their knowledge, skills or abilities thereby challenging their coping ability (Ekpo, 2013). These demands may be related to time, pressure or the amount of work (quantitative demands), the difficulty of the pastoral activities (cognitive demands), the empathy required (emotional demands), and the inability to show one's emotions (Lockwood, 2020). When Ministers of God receives an imbalance between demands and environmental or personal resources, causes a number of possible reactions including physiological responses (e.g., increase in heart rate, blood pressure, hyperventilation), emotional responses (e.g. feeling nervous or irritated), cognitive responses (e.g. reduced attention and perception, forgetfulness), and behavioural reactions (e.g., aggressive, impulse behaviour, making mistakes) [Astvik et al., 2013]. When individuals are in a state of stress, they often feel concerned, less vigilant and less efficient in performing tasks

including ministerial duties (Astvik et al., 2013).

Some demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, etc.) have also been identified to influence emotional exhaustion. Anastasiou and Belios (2020) found that younger, single and divorced workers had higher chance of emotional exhaustion than older workers who were married. Also, female workers were found to be more environmentally stressed and had greater level of emotional exhaustion than male workers (Anastasiou & Belios, 2020). Adekola (2010) examined gender differences as a factor in the experience of emotional exhaustion among university staff. The study collected data from 1, 040 participants (549 males; 491 females) using the Maslach Burnout Inventory to assess the level of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced personal accomplishment of both genders. The results indicated no significant difference in the levels of emotional exhaustion between male and female participants in the study.

The personality of Ministers of God will contribute to their emotional exhaustion phenomenon. Ministers of God who are empathetic, idealistic, altruistic, and over-committed in the social services or spiritual matters of their members will have tendency to emotional exhaustion than those who do not possess these attributes or personality traits (Khan et al., 2020). The former group of the Ministers of God tend to be less concerned to their own needs and always face the detriments of them. Besides, their over-identification with their job may cause emotional exhaustion. When Ministers of God use their jobs to substitute for their

personal life, they are susceptible to emotional exhaustion (Khan et al., 2020). Also, people with neurotic anxiety are vulnerable to stress and emotional exhaustion as they tend to set unrealistically high goals and were self-punished after failure. They are impulsive, lack perseverance, over sensitive about others' comments; therefore, they seemed to be emotionally unstable and portrayed above average fearfulness and apprehension in new situations (Pines et al., 1981).

Therefore, it is germane to investigate influence of psychological and demographic factors on emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God using one widely established, concentrated in term of locations and vibrant denomination: The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria.

The main objective of the study was to investigate influence of psycho-demographic factors on emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos. The specific objectives were: (1) to examine whether personality factors (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism, and conscientiousness) and church-related stress will jointly and independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos, (2) to determine whether gender will differentiate emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos, and (3) to explore whether age will influence emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos.

The results of this study will contribute to knowledge and expand the existing literature on predictors of Ministers of God's

emotional exhaustion in the Nigerian context. Also, the results of this study could be used to identify psycho-social predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God. Finally, the result from this study could help to promote understanding of church-related stress management technique and personality dimensions on mental health among Ministers of God in the local churches.

Three hypotheses were tested:

- (i) Personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress will jointly and independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) in Lagos, Nigeria.
- (ii) Female Ministers of God will significantly report higher emotional exhaustion than male Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria.
- (iii) Older Ministers of God will significantly report higher emotional exhaustion than younger Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria.

## Method

**Design:** This study adopted cross-sectional survey design where data were collected using validated questionnaires. The independent variables in the study were personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress while the dependent variable was emotional exhaustion.

**Setting:** The study was carried out at five branches of the Redeemed Christian Church

of God (RCCG) located in Lagos State, Nigeria. The choice of the RCCG was based on proximity of churches, the multi-cultural nature of Lagos, and the vibrant lifestyles among Ministers of God in Lagos State.

**Sample and Sampling Technique:** The study used purposive sampling technique to select five branches of RCCG and convenience sampling technique to select 202 participants from the population of Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos State, Nigeria. Exclusion criterion in this study was that Ministers of God who did not give their consents to participate in the study were excluded.

### Participants

The participants include 167 (82.7%) male and 35 (17.3%) female Ministers of God. One hundred and eighty-seven (92.6%) of the participants were married and 15 (7.4%) were singles. In term of educational qualifications, 8 (4%) participants had primary qualification, 46(22.8%) secondary qualification, 105(52%) tertiary qualification and 43 (21.3%) professional qualification. Fifty-one (25.2%) of the participants were deacons/deaconess, 2(1%) evangelists, 125 (61.9%) pastors, and 24 (11.9%) had other titles. The participants' ages ranged from 27 years to 70 years (*Mean* = 46.13, *SD* = 8.34). The minimum year of the participants in the ministry was one year with the maximum of 45 years (*Mean* = 14.70, *SD* = 8.34).

### Instruments

Three instruments were used for data collection.

### Big Five Personality Traits

This was measured using the Big Five Personality Scale developed by Gosling et al. (2003). The scale contains 10 items measuring openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, neuroticism and agreeableness. The scale is presented on a 5-point Likert's response format ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The scale reliability coefficients reported were: Extraversion trait = 0.87, Agreeableness = 0.74, Conscientiousness = 0.84, Neuroticism = 0.88 and Openness to experience = 0.79. Sample items include: "I see myself as someone who is reserved" and "I see myself as someone who tends to be lazy". The scoring procedure of the scale indicates that the higher the score, the higher the individual trait on particular personality trait and vice-versa. In this study, the scale has a overall Cronbach's alpha of 0.75.

**Church-related Stress:** This was measured using the scale developed by Oladunjoye (2012) to access church-related stress among Ministers of God. It is a 14-item scale presented on 5-point Likert's format that ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Example of items are: "In most cases I experience one or all of the following symptoms: Indigestion, constant tiredness, shoulder aches and loss of appetite" and "I hardly find myself absent because of sickness or omit to do any of the church activities". High score on this scale indicates higher church-related stress, while low score indicates lower church-related stress. The authors reported the scale Cronbach's alpha of 0.72. In this study, the scale has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.69.

**Emotional Exhaustion:** This was measured using a subscale of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981). The scale has 9-item presented on 5-point Likert’s response format ranges from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Sample items include: “I feel emotionally drained from my work” and “I feel burn out from my work”. High score indicates higher emotional exhaustion, while low score indicates lower emotional exhaustion. The author reported the scale Cronbach’s alpha of 0.89. In this study, the scale has a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.77.

**Procedure:** Prior to the questionnaire administration, approval was sought from the Ministers regarding the study. After obtaining verbal informed consent from the potential participants, the researchers briefly explained the purpose of the study to them. Also, they were told participation in the study was voluntary and that they can refuse to participate at any time. The researchers then distributed the questionnaire to each participant. It took less than 15 minutes to complete it. In the process, 209

questionnaires were administered and were retrieved after completion. However, 7 questionnaires were incompletely filled and were discarded while the remaining 202 questionnaires were used for the analysis.

**Statistical analysis:** Data were analyzed using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 version. Demographic variables were summarized using descriptive statistic, standard multiple regressions analysis was used to test hypothesis 1 while hypotheses 2 and 3 were tested using t-test of independent sample mean. All hypotheses were accepted at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance.

**Results**

Hypothesis one states that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress will jointly and independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria. The hypothesis was tested using standard multiple regressions and the result is presented in Table 1.

**Table1: Standard multiple regression analysis showing personality traits and church-related stress as joint and independent predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria**

Predictors variables	$\beta$	t	p	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
Extraversion	-.07	-1.17	>.05	.57	.32	15.44	<.05
Agreeableness	-.19	-3.10	<.05				
Conscientiousness	-.05	-0.74	>.05				
Neuroticism	.19	3.19	<.05				
Openness	-.05	-0.83	>.05				
Church-related stress	.38	6.05	<.05				

Table 1 results indicated that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress jointly predicted emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos ( $F(6,195) = 15.44, R^2 = .32, p < .05$ ). This result implies that personality traits and church-related stress jointly accounted for 32% of variance in emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the RCCG, Lagos. Furthermore, the result revealed that agreeableness ( $\beta = -.19, p < .05$ ), neuroticism ( $\beta = .19, p < .05$ ), and church-related stress ( $\beta = .38, p < .05$ ) independently predicted emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos.

However, extraversion ( $\beta = -.07, p > .05$ ), openness ( $\beta = -.05, p > .05$ ), and conscientiousness ( $\beta = .38, p < .05$ ) did not independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos. The stated hypothesis was partially confirmed.

Hypothesis two states that female Ministers of God will significantly report higher emotional exhaustion than male Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos. The hypothesis was tested using t-test for independent samples and the result is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2: T-test of independent sample means showing genders difference in emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria**

Criterion	Predictor	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
	<b>Gender</b>						
Emotional exhaustion	Male	167	19.16	6.40	200	-0.79	>.05
	Female	35	20.09	5.71			

Table 2 showed that genders of Ministers of God has no significant influence on their levels of emotional exhaustion [ $t(200) = -0.79, p > .05$ ]. However, further analysis revealed that female Ministers of God ( $M = 20.09$ ) marginally experienced more emotional exhaustion than the male Ministers of God ( $M = 19.16$ ). Therefore, the hypothesis that female Ministers of God will

report higher emotional exhaustion than male Ministers of God was partially supported.

Hypothesis three states that older Ministers of God will significantly report higher emotional exhaustion than younger Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos. The hypothesis was tested using t-test for independent sample means and the result is represented in Table 3.

**Table 3: T-test for independent sample means showing age difference in emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in the RCCG in Lagos, Nigeria**

Criterion	Predictor	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p
	<b>Age</b>						
Emotional exhaustion	Old	102	18.66	6.70	200	-1.12	>.05
	Young	100	20.00	5.78			

Table 3 showed that ages of Ministers of God have no significant influence on their levels of emotional exhaustion ( $t(200) = -1.52, p >.05$ ). However, further analysis indicated that younger Ministers of God reported more emotional exhaustion ( $M=20.00, SD= 5.75$ ) than older Ministers of God ( $M=18.66, SD= 6.70$ ). The hypothesis was partially accepted.

### Discussion

This study was aimed to examine personality traits and church-related stress as predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos, Nigeria. Four hypotheses were generated and tested. The hypothesis that personality traits (extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness) and church-related stress will jointly and independently predict emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in Lagos was partially confirmed. The finding indicated that personality traits and church-related stress predicted emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos accounting for 32% of variance in emotional exhaustion. Specifically, agreeableness, neuroticism and church-related stress were independent predictors of emotional exhaustion. This result implies that the more agreeable the Ministers of God are, the less likely they experienced emotional exhaustion. The result further shows that the less Ministers of God

experienced neuroticism, the less they experience emotional exhaustion. Finally, the result demonstrates that the less Ministers of God experienced church-related stress, the less they experience emotional exhaustion (stress). Ministers of God who experienced less of church-related stress are more likely to report less emotional exhaustion. This result confirmed Khalil et al. (2017) finding that personality traits, psychological well-being, and emotional exhaustion played important roles in determining effectiveness amidst stressful activities among teachers. The result that shows Ministers who experienced low church-related stress reported significantly lower emotional exhaustion than those who experienced high church-related stress. The finding affirmed the result that accumulated stress leads to emotional exhaustion (Frederick et al., 2021)

The second hypothesis that female Ministers will report higher emotional exhaustion than male Ministers of God in Lagos was not supported in this study. There was no significant difference in levels of emotional exhaustion experienced by male and female Ministers of God. In other words, female Ministers of God were not different in experiencing emotional exhaustion from male Ministers of God. The present finding supported the result obtained by Adekola (2010) that no difference in the levels of



emotional exhaustion between male and female workers among the study participants. However, this finding contradicts the result by Anastasiou and Belios (2020) that male Ministers of God reported higher emotional exhaustion than their female counterparts. Also, the current study does not support the finding that female workers were more church-related stressed with greater level of emotional exhaustion than male counterparts (Siegel et al, 2001).

The third hypothesis that older Ministers of God will significantly report higher emotional exhaustion than younger Ministers of God was not supported in this study. The finding suggested that age did not influence level of emotional exhaustion among the Ministers of God in Lagos. The present finding is in line with Kolachev and Novikov's (2020) finding that age and some demographics are not associated with emotional exhaustion including that of Ministers of God. Also, the present study supported the finding by Randall (2007) that age is not associated with emotional exhaustion among clergy in England and Wales. This tends to say, the longer a person works in a stressful people-related profession, the more they come to terms with its demands and develop strategies and behavioural patterns that reduce the likelihood of emotional exhaustion (Randall, 2007).

### **Implications and recommendations**

The finding that no gender difference in experience of emotional exhaustion implies that biological factor of gender may not be a reasonable starting point for understanding

and explaining emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos State. Therefore, it is recommended that women should be assisted by their husbands to share household works and family responsibilities to support their callings. This will assist them to cope better with emotional exhaustion in the long run.

Also, Ministers of God should endeavour to develop effective coping strategies and problem solving techniques so as to be able to combine family and marital affairs with church activities. This will enhance their ability to function effectively amidst optimum subjective and psychological well-being free from stress and emotional exhaustion syndromes. Finally, there is an urgent need to tackle the issue of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos State by ensuring that Ministers of God have opportunities to have their annual leaves to rest and have a break from their church activities for a change.

### **Limitations and suggestions for further studies**

The study has some limitations that should be addressed in further studies. First, the study used structured-questionnaires for data collection which cannot be free from response bias. Further studies should include interviews, case studies, and observations to explore personality traits and church-related stress predicting emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God. Second, only personality traits and church-related stress were investigated in the present study. Further studies should include perceived quality of life, psychological well-being and

coping strategies as predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God. Finally, the study used only one denomination in Lagos State with the sample size of 202 Ministers of God. Further studies should include other denominations and increase sample size to allow for generalizations of findings.

### Conclusion

This study has empirically confirmed that personality traits of extraversion, agreeableness, openness, neuroticism and conscientiousness, and church-related stress tend to be good predictors of emotional exhaustion among Ministers of God in RCCG in Lagos State, Nigeria. Also, the study confirmed as in previous studies, that age and gender may not be good predictors of emotional exhaustion including those of Ministers of God.

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