

Exploration Of Perceptions And Emotional Challenges Experienced By Pastors' Children: A Case Of The Church Of The Nazarene In Nairobi, Kenya

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Abstract

Many studies have been done with a keen interest in pastors' children as they were always in the public display. This study aimed to explore emotional experiences of the pastors' children on the expectations of the congregation and the emotional challenges experienced, a case of the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi, Kenya. The objectives of the study were to: establish perceptions of the pastors' children on the expectation of the congregation and identify emotional challenges experienced by pastors' children. The study employed a qualitative research method and a purposive sampling method. In-depth Interviews were employed for data collection. Participants were drawn from Ongata Rongai First Church of the Nazarene and Africa Nazarene Church. The population of the study consisted of 18 participants. Data collection was done using audio recording. Transcribing was done using an App: Live Transcribe and Notification. The research findings confirmed that the congregation had high expectations from pastors' children than their peers in the church. Pastors' children were expected to be perfect and be role models. While the expectation posed anxiety and resentments from most of the participants, some felt that this expectation helped them to learn some leadership roles at an early stage. This study recommended that the church leadership develop comprehensive educational programmes for the congregation to help them understand that pastors' children need to be allowed to go through the developmental stages like other children.

Keywords: Expectation, Perception, Pastors' Children, High-Profile

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I. Introduction

People who hold high-profile status live under much scrutiny as they are always in the public eye (Jorge & Maropa, 2016). When one thinks about high-profile people, tend to think of royalty, politicians, celebrities, athletes, successful entrepreneurs, socialites, religious leaders, and acclaimed intellectuals. (McRobbie, 2021). These individuals are typically role models, and they are admired in society (even idolized Pastors' children seem to experience the same. Something that goes overlooked when discussing individuals with high-profile jobs, accolades and fame are the ramifications and implications for their children (Jorge & Maropa, 2016), as they too are absorbed into the reputation of their parent(s)/guardian(s). The children of high-profile parent(s)/guardian(s) are unnaturally exposed to public opinion. The children of celebrities are announced and introduced to the public the day they are born and subsequently, their lives are tracked. Being a pastor's child in a demanding community is not at the same level as some celebrities but the expectation and intensity within their society is just as intense. Pastors' children are expected to live a life that is different from other children and the congregation. Some of these expectations may include holiness, moral uprightness, high achieving, talented, exemplary to their peers and active members of the church. Any deviation from the perceived expectations is frowned upon and deemed a disappointment (even failure) (Laura, 2023; Smith, 2023). The diverging expectations pastors' children may have in comparison the congregation puts a lot of pressure on them. When they are not able to live as expected by the congregation and society, the children may feel frustrated, stressed, and lonely, and possibly with no one to disclose their true feelings to (Adams, 2023; Hays, 2023; Wright, 2023). It is possible that these feelings may lead them to depression and forming unhealthy associations (Wright, 2023).

Being a pastor's child in a demanding community is not at the same level as some celebrities but the expectation and intensity within their society is just as intense. Pastors' children are expected to live a life that is different from other children and the congregation. Some of these expectations may include holiness, moral uprightness, high achieving, talented, exemplary to their peers and active members of the church. Any deviation from the perceived expectations is frowned upon and deemed a disappointment (even failure) (Laura, 2023; Smith, 2023). The diverging expectations pastors' children may have in comparison the congregation puts a lot of pressure on them. When they are not able to live as expected by the congregation and society, the children may feel frustrated, stressed, and lonely, and possibly with no one to disclose their true feelings to (Adams, 2023;

Hays, 2023; Wright, 2023). It is possible that these feelings may lead them to depression and forming unhealthy associations (Wright, 2023).

Oliver (2017) pointed out that pastoring as a profession also falls under the scrutiny of public display as celebrities and followed up on several pastors' children. She highlighted that they have no privacy, and this caused a stressful life which has no boundaries.

A report (*An investigation into the causes and cures of pastoral burnout within the Church of the Nazarene in the Western Cape District*) conducted by the Church of the Nazarene, highlighted that many of pastors' children were struggling with mental health issues such as alcohol, drug use and abuse (Wright, 2023). The pastors' female children who fell pregnant outside wedlock were stigmatized. Owing to shame and guilt, some ran away not only from the church but from their homes as a way of escaping emotional abuse and the judgmental attitude shown by some members of the church. Pastors' work encompasses more of the pastor's time, which other times involves working during family time that robs and compromises their quality time. This can be a source of family unsettlement and resentment among pastors' families, especially among their children (Maina, 2018). Pastors' children are important members of the pastor's family. Reports showed that the number of pastors' children's emotional issues are escalating even though they are supposed to live better lives than other children whose parents are not pastors (Miles & Preschool, 2012). This study attempts to explore the perceptions and emotional challenges of pastors' children. The studies that have been previously done have had several gaps, these gaps include, lack of specific and concrete approach to the most affected group of people. Some of the studies did not give a measure and empirical value to the group affected.

Perception is the capability to visualize process by which a human person selects, organizes, and interprets information and experiences. This is the capacity to see, hear or be aware of something by using one's senses Erin & Maharani, (2018). Perception can refer to neurophysiological methods, involving memory by which an organism becomes aware of and interprets external stimuli (Amodu, 2014).

According to Kuhn (2017), pastors' children perceived that the duties of their parents were persuaded in the name of the Lord. They felt that the love of the congregation and the sense of their calling took precedence over them. Some pastors' children perceived that the church members had unrealistic expectations towards them compared to their peers who were not pastors' children. It was reported that 48% of the pastor's children felt that there were a lot of expectations thrust upon them and by their agetates and congregants. Some people forget that pastors' children are just members of a church and not paid staff. This constant perceived judgment played a vital role when it comes to their struggle with faith (Kinnaman 2013). It was further reported that the pastor's children attested that they were being stereotyped by some of the church members and their peers. At times, they are called the "holy thieves", and "our tithe consumers". Also, a section of the congregation has an opinion of how pastors' children should carry themselves in such a way that they dress, act, talk, and interact on social media and behave in school (Kuhn, 2017). In USA, research was done by Sedlacek (2014) on family stressors, then strategies for lessening stressors in pastors' households. It was submitted that pastors, pastors' spouses, and their adult children concur that they face emotional challenges in their spiritual lives that are directly connected to their pastor-family roles. It shows that the ministerial role of being a pastor or being a pastor's child inherently provides a context in which the lives of the children face challenges. Due to emotional hiccups among pastors' children, the striking finding is that in the very homes and families where it is hoped that spirituality and high morality would be strongest, these family members reported significant challenges and difficulties. Findings revealed that 56% of pastors' children and 49% of pastors struggled with anxiety and depression. In one of the pastors' children's emotional coping strategies, the pastors' children do share in a focused group therapy that when high expectations were not met, the children reported feeling a certain amount of resentment towards the church.

In the Netherlands, a study conducted by Stoffels (2004) among 2,086 pastors' children, revealed that the impression of being observed frequently must have annoyed cohorts of pastor's children. One of the participants in the survey sufficiently defined this as one of 'public property'. Rebelling against this role model and the struggle for a personal identity has pushed many pastors' children to stray far from home. "Preachers' children are the worst", is the saying in America. In the same way, a negative Dutch expression runs as follows: "pastors' children are devil's children." Rebellious behaviour in the teenage years frequently was a cry for attention. It was indicated that 52.5% of the pastors' children always felt that the outside world was watching them too much. Pastors' children always felt that they had strict rules to comply with expectations. It was reported that the church congregation expected pastors' children to live a holy and worthy life as their father. Any contrary lifestyle among the pastors and their children would be seen as scandalous and not worthy of church leadership (Stoffels, 2004).

A study by Abafi (2020) in Nigeria, on the effects of pastors' lifestyle on church members: a case study of Gyel local church council of evangelical church. It was reported that the congregants can become insensitively judgmental of the pastor's children during their crisis. A worldwide problem faced by preachers' children is that the church members expect them to live like angels. Pastor's children are expected to be perfect children. The public expects the pastors, and their children to reflect higher standards than those of other children. Pastors and

their children are expected to live lives that are beyond reproach. Different behaviours than the norms are certainly expected to role model the congregation.

In Kenya, Pamba (2019) claimed that well-run families boost the confidence, self-image, and esteem of the children. This is the result of positive spiritual leadership. This is a strong “expectation of influence” the congregants and the secular society have on the pastors and their children. Their children should be able to live up to high moral and spiritual influence on others, especially among their peers in the church.

Pamba (2019) carried out a study among 128 participants on the implications of ministerial work on the concept of self of the clergy’s teenage children: a case of the New Testament Church of God, Nairobi. The findings of the research indicated a strong and positive correlation between familial workings, pastors’ work devotion, parenting approaches and the self-concept of pastors’ children. Regression analysis demonstrated that parenting styles, and family functioning significantly and positively impact the pastors’ children’s self-concept. Qualitative results emerged from an interview conducted among pastors’ children and Church members, and it was found that the children of pastors were expected to conduct themselves like adults, whereas they are just normal children like their peers. Pastors’ children were not expected to be found in clubs or night clubs, with boys or girls”. Six of the children who were interviewed said that they were expected to act more maturely. One of the pastor’s kids said, "We are expected to follow the homily, be orderly in church, take notes, and remember just as the adults would remember."

The studies that have been previously done have had several gaps, these gaps include, lack of specific and concrete approach to the most affected group of people. Some of the studies did not give a measure and empirical value to the group affected. The most recent reports on the emerging patterns associated with the pastors like the report from the church of the Nazarene don’t indicate the factors that may be associated or contributing to such controversies. Hence, this study seeks to explore the perceptions and emotional experiences of pastors’ children in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County, Kenya. It is upon this justification the researcher hopes to fill these gaps. This study aimed to mitigate the fast growing, unseen and marginalized group of young people in the church society facing immense pressure causing them mental health, resolving this would enables an environment where every young person from the pastor’s family feels a sense of belonging and important part of the congregation not but perspective or expectation.

The study also aims to establish an explanation to the report of the church of Nazarene, thereby finding the possible factors that may lead to certain new raising cultures in the church society.

II. Methodology

This study followed a phenomenology design. Phenomenology explores the shared characteristics of phenomena in detail, using in-depth interviews for data collection. Hence, the researcher better understood the phenomenon by exploring perceptions and emotional experiences of the pastors’ children: A case of the Church of the Nazarene Nairobi County, Kenya. the target population for this particular study is the pastors’ children from the church of Nazarene. Total population sampling technique was used to sample the participants since the population was very small.

The research findings could be generalized to the larger population. The population of pastors’ children consisted of 18 individuals, thereby letting the researcher have a sample size of 18 participants.

III. Results

The results were analyzed as follows: The distribution of the demographic variables were analyzed before presenting the findings of the study. The analysis was done on the five demographic variables: age, education level, gender

Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Descriptive statistical analysis on unpaired grouped data was conducted to find out the demographic information of the research participants. Data was gathered under the following demographics; age, gender, educational level,

Table 1
Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Age, Gender and Education level

Participant Number	Gender	Age	Level of Education
P1	F	22	Bachelor’s Degree
P2	F	30	Master’s Degree
P3	F	30	Bachelor’s Degree
P4	F	31	Master’s Degree
P5	M	30	Bachelor’s Degree
P6	M	21	Diploma
P7	F	22	Diploma

P8	F	19	Master's Degree
P9	M	26	Bachelor's Degree
P10	M	31	Bachelor's Degree
P11	M	30	Bachelor's Degree
P12	F	30	Bachelor's Degree
P13	F	31	Diploma
P14	M	25	Master's Degree
P15	M	30	Master's Degree
P16	M	30	Master's Degree
P17	M	31	High School
P18	M	22	Diploma

Findings in Table 1 There were 10 male and 8 female participants. The study is normally distributed and there is no gender biased, the female makes 45% of the study population. Most of the participants were from 30 years and above. From the statistics this accounted for 61% of the study population, hence the researcher was able to get meaningful insight on the actual problem that the study aims to solve since the participant has lived through this long enough to understand the situation and give meaningful feedback. On the level of education, participants with master's and bachelor's degrees were high. This means that these participants were well informed and were aware of what is going on in their environment, thereby meeting the researcher expectation on the alignment of the study objectives.

Perception of the Pastors' Children on the Expectations of the Congregation

The first objective of the study was to establish perceptions of the pastors' children on the expectations of the congregation in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County, Kenya. When the participants were asked what their perceived perceptions from their congregations where they responded in the following ways:

"They want us to be like, Jesus Christ from Heaven. We're not given opportunities to be like, other children to learn like other children. They want us to be perfect, because even as we live, there are watchful eyes on us. They forget that we too as children can make too many mistakes outside. Yes, we can". (P3, 25 years old, Female).

In fact, me growing up. As a young girl, we couldn't take care of our nails or air or wear short dresses since there is the expectation of holiness. So that is why. Now, as an adult, I feel.... Now, I have my own decision. Now, I'm able to decide and do my nails, my hair wear short dresses, and I feel proud because this is a decision that my dad couldn't allow. So, it is usually a challenge and a thin line between us wanting to be who we are and having to follow in the footsteps of our parents, who are pastors, considering that we are not the ones who are called (P4, 28 years, Female).

I, I experienced a lot of stuff and one of that is my parents, you know, the expectations from their parents that they expect you to be perfect and holy. And you cannot go and tell them about your situation or whatever you encounter as a teenager. So, one day we never used to have these talks of you know I have a girlfriend, or I have a heartbreak. Oh, maybe I started downloading... You cannot go even to your own sisters or even my siblings. We were, you can't tell your sibling that you know, I have a girlfriend. Or she tells you like I have a boyfriend or something? We never used to all those kinds of discussion (P10, 20 years old, Male).

Despite the pastors' children perceived expectations from the congregants of the Church, they revealed some feelings pertaining their perceived expectations. Most participants recounted being expected to participate in all church activities, even when these conflicted with other personal commitments. Some of the participants submitted how they felt:

*Growing up, I always felt like I had to be **the 'perfect' child**. The congregants would constantly remind me that my actions reflected on my father. There was this immense pressure to be involved in every church event, and sometimes I had to miss out on activities I really enjoyed outside of church (P1, 24 years, Female).*

For me, missing church activities was never an option. My parents and the congregants expected me to set an example for the other kids, which often felt like a heavy burden (P2, 29 years, Female).

If I ever made a mistake, it wasn't just a personal failing; it was seen as a reflection of my family's values and my father's ministry (P.12, 22 years, Female).

Sometimes, I felt isolated. I could not confide in church members about my struggles because I worried it would somehow get back to my parents or be judged harshly. It was hard to find someone who understood what it was like (P.13, 31 years old).

These responses illustrated a recurring sentiment among pastor's children of feeling a constant need to conform to higher standards and the struggle to balance personal interests with the demands and expectations of the church. This often led to a sense of pressure, isolation, and a complex relationship with their personal identity, family and church expectations.

Being a role model is one of the crucial expectations based on the perception of the pastors' children. A role model is worthy of imitation, and one of the important functions of the role model is to have exemplary

attitudes, values, and behaviors that others may imitate. The moral behaviors are highly expected of pastors' children, from the strong standpoint of the members of the congregation. Below are the themes highlighted:

The pressure to conform and be like their peers. Unsettlement for being themselves as pastors' children was a burden. The burden of role model status. Lack of personal freedom. Struggle for individuality. Lack of support and isolation as they had no one to openly share their struggles.

One of the participants held the view that...

"The congregation expects that we are the kings and the queens in the Lords, you know, family. So, we are supposed to be the best. So, if you were not being the best both in school and in the church, they like asking why you are not getting the best. And you serve God, and your parents are serving God fervently. You are not supposed to go partying, you are not supposed to drink nor smoke. I was supposed to show exemplary behavior to other children both within and outside the church". (P.16, 30 years, Male).

Being a role model is not an absence of perfection as observed by one of the participants. However, the church members expected the pastors' child to be a role model even both the other children and the adults. Some of the participants contended:

There was always this underlying pressure to be a model of perfect behavior. I remember once being scolded for wearing casual clothes to a church event because it didn't reflect well on my family. Every little thing I did was watched and judged by the congregation (P.9, 30 years, Male).

Other participants also added that...

People would comment on my friendships, my choice of hobbies, even the way I spoke. It was exhausting trying to meet everyone's expectations and being a role model to them". (P6, 27 years, Male).

Emotional Challenges Experienced by Pastors' Children

The general response to these expectations was a mixture of stress, frustration, and sometimes resentment. Many participants described feeling overwhelmed and burdened by the constant scrutiny. Some avoided church activities to escape the pressure, while others complied but at the expense of their own mental health and personal interests. The emotional toll was significant, with feelings of isolation and frustration being common. Some of the Participants quoted: Chronic stress and anxiety,

Conflict between personal and congregational expectations
Judgement and scrutiny

"The emotional burden was heavy. I often felt isolated because I couldn't share my struggles with anyone. People just assumed I had it all together because of who my parents were". (P9, 26 years, Male).

"Even though I attended all the church events and fulfilled my duties, it was really draining. I was constantly stressed". (P 11, 30 years, Female).

The researcher sought to find out what the experiences of the pastors' children were like. The experiences shared by the participants often highlighted a sense of pressure and conflict. Many felt overwhelmed by the need to balance church and congregants' expectations with personal responsibilities. One participant highlighted the scrutiny she faced, feeling as though her every action was monitored and judged by the congregation.

Some of the participants quoted:

"There was always this underlying pressure to be a model of perfect behavior. I remember once being scolded for wearing casual clothes to a church event because it didn't reflect well on my family. Every little thing I did was watched and judged by the congregation." (P9, 26 years).

"People would comment on my friendships, my choice of hobbies, even the way I spoke. It was exhausting trying to meet everyone's expectations." (P6, 21 years, Male).

The researcher sought to find out the personal feelings and experiences of the participants towards congregational treatment as pastors' children. The feelings towards the congregation were mixed but leaned towards a sense of frustration and resentment. Participants expressed that the congregation's treatment made them feel like they were losing their individual identity, being seen more as extensions of their pastor parents. They often felt isolated and unsupported, with one participant noting a sense of exploitation as their personal needs were secondary to the church's demands. There were also instances of special treatment and privileges afforded to them as pastors' children. Some participants acknowledged that they received certain benefits and recognition within the church community due to their familial connection to the pastor. Despite these advantages, the overall sentiment leaned more towards the negative aspects of their experiences, highlighting the complex and often challenging dynamics they faced. Some of the Participants quoted:

"Any mistake I made was amplified because of who my parents were, and it felt like there was no room for me to be imperfect." (P 10, 31 years, Male)).

"There were times when I felt exploited. My personal needs and desires were often overlooked because the church's demands always came first. I always had to perform almost all duties in the church". (P11, 31 years, Male).

IV. Discussion

Based on the research objective one, the study aimed at exploring the perceptions of pastors' children towards the congregation and their emotional experiences. The study found that pastors' children perceived that the congregation had high expectations towards them. One of the most resounding perceived expectations was to be perfect and to be role models amongst their peers, both at church and society. Whilst this was devastating amongst most of the pastors' children, some reported that it had a positive effect on them as they got to step into leadership role at a young age. However, the current study findings disagree with the study of by Stoffels (2004) in the Netherlands. Findings showed that pastors' children were seen as "public property". Rebelling against this role model and the struggle for a personal identity pushed many pastors' children to stray far from home. "Preachers' children are the worst", is the saying in America. In the same way, a negative Dutch expression runs as follows: "pastors' children are devil's children." Rebellious behaviour in the teenage years frequently was a cry for attention.

Also, the study findings of the current study agreed with the study by Abafi (2020) in Nigeria, whose study was on the effects of pastors' lifestyle on church members. Findings showed that the congregants can become insensitively judgmental of the pastor's children during their crisis. A worldwide problem faced by preachers' children is that the church members expect them to live like angels. Pastor's children were expected to be perfect children. The public expects the pastors, and their children to reflect higher standards than those of other children. Pastors and their children are expected to live lives that are beyond reproach. Different behaviours than the norms are certainly expected to role model the congregation.

Similar findings were observed in research conducted by Pamba (2019) in Nairobi Kenya that focused on the implications of ministerial work on the concept of self of the clergy teenage children. The study found that the congregation expected the pastor's children to behave like adults, the pastor's children also reported that they had the impression that they needed to act as matured adults. Pastors' children frequently felt that they were held to higher moral and behavioural standards than their peers, leading to a sense of being constantly watched and judged.

Hence, this study's findings revealed the perceptions of lofty expectations from the congregation, which can lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety. Kuhn's (2017) holds that perception is a reality among pastors' children, that they perceive that the congregants have unrealistic expectations towards them. It is these expectations that sometimes result in pastors' children struggling with their faith. This aligns with the initial objective of understanding the perceptions of pastors' children towards the congregation. This current study revealed that pastors' children in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County generally hold mixed perceptions towards their congregations. On one hand, they appreciated the support and respect they received from the congregants, which often translates into a sense of community and belonging.

Further, the congregation recognizes the congregation's role in upholding their families and providing a social network that fosters their spiritual and personal growth. However, these positive perceptions are often overshadowed by feelings of undue scrutiny and unrealistic expectations placed upon them. As seen in Stoffels's (2004) research found that pastors' children had the impression of being seen as public property and that they had to comply with strict rules and live a holy life akin to their fathers to meet the congregation's expectations.

This dichotomy of support versus scrutiny creates a complex relational dynamic that significantly influences their perception of the congregation. Findings indicate that these challenges increase the risk of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation among pastors' children.

The study aimed at investigating the emotional challenges faced by pastors' children. The findings revealed that these children face various emotional challenges, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. This aligns with the initial objective of understanding the emotional experiences of pastors' children.

The findings of this present study are similar with the findings by McBride (2013) in the USA, which found that pastors' children perceived spiritual abuse at 17.4%, emotional abuse and verbal abuse at 25% due to the behavioural expectations from the congregation and community and experiences of depression. McBride (2013) found that pastor's children had a deeper concern for the demands of congregational expectations, and this in turn subjected the pastor's children to mental illnesses due to the stress of congregational expectations.

These findings of the present study are like the findings by Ajibade (2016) in Nigeria, that the emotional weight and the pressures that pastor's children are under have led them to rebel against their Christian values and morals that reflect a lifestyle related to ministry, and that pastors' children had experienced anxiety and depression.

Nkongwe (2020) in Kenya, also shared similar findings. The study reported that pastors' children were emotionally strained and depressed due to the extreme involvement of their fathers in the Church ministerial

work. The dynamics of pastoral obligations harmed their children. In addition, several pastors' children perceived emotional hurt and stigma from the congregation and the larger society.

Thus, perceived abuse is believed to have further subjected the pastor's children to mental issues leading to anxiety, depression, addiction, gambling.

Pastors' children in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County face a myriad of emotional challenges, deeply intertwined with their unique position within the church community. The primary challenge identified is the pressure to conform to the elevated expectations of exemplary behaviour, which often results in anxiety and stress. These findings are mirrored the sentiments of Miner (2007), that pastors' families undergo tremendous stress due to congregational demands and that pastor's children tend to be more strained by congregational pressures. These children struggle with maintaining a façade of perfection, which can lead to feelings of isolation and internal conflict. Additionally, the need for constant vigilance to avoid actions that might reflect poorly on their parents exacerbates their emotional burden.

The current study highlighted instances of identity struggles, where pastors' children grapple with distinguishing their own beliefs and values from those imposed by the church environment. This internal dissonance often manifests as confusion, resentment, and a feeling of being misunderstood or misrepresented within the congregation.

The study aimed to explore the coping mechanisms used by pastors' children. The findings indicate that these children use social support networks, such as confiding in peers and prayer and meditation, to cope with their emotional challenges. This aligns with the initial objective of understanding the coping mechanisms used by pastors' children.

In response to the emotional challenges they face, pastors' children in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County employ a variety of coping mechanisms. A significant number of them turn to prayer and spiritual practices as a source of comfort and strength, seeking solace in their faith and religious teachings.

These findings are echoed in a study by Tshoma (2014) in the USA, who found that some coped with the pressures of being a pastor's child by reading the Bible, engaging in prayer, taking nature walks etc, these mechanisms helped increase their consolation in Christ.

These findings of the present study are akin to the findings by Sedlacek (2014) in the USA. Based on the findings of the study, some of the pastors' children acknowledged positive coping behaviours which are: having a strong personal relationship with God, going on a vacation, courageously reaching out to others for support from parents, counsellors, friends, and externalizing pressure, and as well developing hobbies (music and art).

The findings of the current study are akin to that of Prinsloo (2014), whose study was on the sources and remedies of pastoral burnout within the Church of the Nazarene in the Western Cape District of South Africa. Some pastors' children shared their emotional struggles with their mothers and some with their intimate friends. Through this personal effort of sharing, they derived consolations to push on with their lives.

The findings of the current study corroborated that of Marambi (2022) conducted research among 40 pastors on mechanisms for emotional restoration among Adventist pastors in Central Kenya. It was reported that when pastors' children were in emotional challenge, prayer, good relationships, forgiveness, and counselling support, meditating on word of God are some of the coping strategies on their emotional challenges.

This is also seen in Kuhn (2015) work where it is argued that the Bible offers various ways to cope with difficult situations by allowing one to seek God's help, expressing grief and frustration in a constructive manner, and adopting a theology of endurance. Engaging in church activities and community service also serves as a distraction and a means to channel their energy positively. Additionally, many pastors' children rely on close-knit relationships with family members and trusted friends outside the church environment, where they can express their true feelings without fear of judgment.

Based on this current study, it is likely that some of the pastors' children have developed robust personal boundaries, distinguishing between their individual identity and their role within the church, thus mitigating the impact of external pressures. Furthermore, the use of hobbies and extracurricular activities outside the church context provides an essential outlet for relaxation and self-expression. These coping strategies collectively help pastors' children navigate their complex emotional landscape, fostering resilience and psychological well-being.

V. Conclusions

This study found that most of the participants (61.11%) were within the ages of 30 years and above, 22.22% of the participants were between 21-24 years, 11.11% of the participants were between 25 - 28 years, while 5.56% were between the ages of 18 – 20 years. It was further found that most of the participants (55.56%) were males, while 44.44% of the participants were females. Based on the educational levels, results demonstrated that (33.6%) of the participants had attained university education, 33.6% had master's degree, 27.78% of the participants had their Diploma, 5.56% of the participants were in high school. Findings on objective one, indicated that the pastors' children were expected to be a role model to others, morally upright, being perfect and

holy. Findings on objective two, revealed that the pastors' children faced various emotional challenges such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. Findings of the third objective, showed that the pastors' children use social support networks, such as confiding to peers, going on a vacation, prayer and meditation.

This study concluded that pastors' children in the Church of the Nazarene in Nairobi County perceived high expectations from the congregation. The children are faced with significant emotional challenges, including feelings of isolation, anxiety, and depression. This study underscored the importance of social support networks in mitigating the challenges that pastors' children experience and thus, promote positive mental health outcomes.

VI. Recommendations

The Church Leadership

The church leadership, should develop comprehensive educational programs for congregations to foster understanding and realistic expectations towards pastors' children, emphasizing empathy and support. The Church leadership may implement regular feedback sessions between church leadership, pastors' children, and congregation members to address concerns and enhance mutual understanding.

Counseling Psychology Practitioners

The Church should set up counselling stations / departments to offer effective counselling services to pastors' children. The counseling psychologists could organize seminars on psychological topics connected to coping strategies in dealing with emotional challenges.

Pastors' Children

Pastors' children need to take responsibility to ensure that they are transparent and share their concerns and frustrations with their parents.

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