



MODERATING ROLE OF COPING STRATEGIES IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN JOB STRESS AND FAMILY STRESS AMONG ANGLICAN CLERGYMEN IN ENUGU PROVINCE NIGERIA

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The study investigated the moderating role of coping strategies in the relationship between job stress and family stress among Anglican clergymen. The sample consisted of Seventy-three (73) clergymen aged 27 to 57 years ($M = 36.63$, $SD = 8.99$) drawn from Anglican Communion Enugu Province, Enugu State, Nigeria. The study employed cluster and purposive sampling technique. Three scales job stress scale, family stress scale and brief-cope scale were utilized for data collection. A correlation research design was adopted and moderated regression analysis using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 2) was used to test the hypotheses. The results revealed that job stress did not predict family stress. Also, problem-focused coping strategies did not predict family stress, while emotion-focused coping strategies positively predicted family stress. Finally, problem-focused coping strategies did not moderate job stress in family stress, but emotion-focused coping strategies negatively moderated job stress in the family stress of clergymen. Emotion-focused coping strategy was associated with higher family stress when considered directly; however, it equally negatively moderated job stress in family stress of clergymen, indicating its buffering effect. Considering that emotion-focused coping strategy buffers the impact of job stress on family stress, the study recommends that clergymen development and formation programs should incorporate training in emotional coping skills.

Keywords: Anglican clergymen, coping strategies, Enugu, family, Hayes' process macro, job stress

Abstract

Introduction

Family stress arises when family members face challenges that exceed their capacity to cope effectively, often resulting in emotional, psychological, and behavioural strains (Makena et al., 2023). Stress can emerge from cumulative events or a single intense occurrence, originating from internal family dynamics or external circumstances (Boateng, 2024; Lee et al., 2024). Clergymen, in particular, frequently encounter multiple daily responsibilities, including pastoral duties, administrative obligations, and community engagements, which can exacerbate both job-related and family-related stresses (Makena, 2024). Brown (2022) defines family stress as the strain experienced when stressors surpass the coping abilities of family members. Such stressors may include financial difficulties, illness, marital conflicts, or significant life events such as birth, death, or relocation. Importantly, even positive events for instance, the arrival of a new child or moving to a new home can generate stress as families adjust to changes in their routine work or responsibilities. Family stress can disrupt the equilibrium of the family system, whether originating from external events (e.g., unemployment, economic uncertainty, war) or internal events such as divorce or the death of a family member (Boss, 2014). Manifestations of stress may include interpersonal conflict, lapses in family responsibilities, reduced communication, and illness among family members (Brown, 2022). Several factors are consistently associated with heightened family stress. The number and age of children significantly influence parental role strain, as younger children demand greater attention and care (Lero, 1992; Anyaegbu et al., 2020). Parents may experience compounded stress when they are simultaneously responsible for caring for aging parents or other dependent relatives, creating what is commonly referred to as the “sandwich generation” effect (Duxbury & Higgins, 1998; Anyaegbu et al., 2020). Brown (2022) identifies common sources of family stress as including child discipline, marital discord, work-life balance challenges, and serious illness, care giving for family members, financial difficulties, and job-related pressures. How families

perceive these stressors, whether they view them as manageable challenges or insurmountable problems affects the intensity of stress experienced (Boss, 2014). Internal family contexts, such as communication patterns, shared beliefs, and problem-solving abilities, are generally more amenable to intervention than external stressors, highlighting the potential of targeted coping strategies (Boss, 2014). To this end, family stress most likely interacts with job stress, which requires adequate and adaptive coping strategies.

Job stress, also referred to as occupational stress or workplace stress occur when work demands exceed an individual’s knowledge, skills, and coping capacity (Harshana, 2018; Kanellakis et al., 2018). Job stress has significant implications for physical and mental health. High stress levels are associated with fatigue, sleep disturbances, decreased immune function, anxiety, depression, and reduced work performance (Dean, 2002). The cumulative impact of stress at work can also spill over into family life, contributing to family conflict, reduced quality of relationships, and diminished parental engagement. Studies show that clergy frequently report experiencing stress related to role overload, interpersonal conflicts within congregations, and high expectations from congregants (Nortey, 2019). Several factors contribute to job stress across professions, including interpersonal conflicts, unclear role expectations, task demands, organizational structure, leadership style, and work culture (Daniel, 2019). For clergy, stress may be exacerbated by additional profession-specific factors, such as conflicts between personal needs and congregational demands, rigid denominational structures, and high community expectations (Doolittle, 2010; Fia et al., 2022). Stress may also arise from poor time management, unclear job descriptions, feelings of inadequacy, ineffective communication, and complex or demanding tasks (Michac, 1997). These factors illustrate the unique vulnerabilities clergy face in balancing occupational demands with family responsibilities.

Coping refers to deliberate cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage stressful events, both internal and external, to reduce distress (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Coping strategies are generally categorized as proactive or reactive. Proactive

copers perform optimally in structured, stable environments and exhibit routine-based behaviours, while reactive copers excel in variable, unpredictable situations (Moghe & Pandey, 2023). Two widely recognized coping approaches are problem-focused and emotion-focused strategies (Crowe & Van Puymbroeck, 2019). Problem-focused coping involves efforts to address or eliminate the source of stress, particularly when individuals have some control over the situation (Caga et al., 2021). Emotion-focused coping, by contrast, seeks to manage emotional responses to stress such as avoidance, self-control, seeking social support, and acceptance (Boersma et al., 2019; Önder & Reyhan, 2018).

Effective coping reduces the negative impact of stress and promotes mental health, while ineffective or inappropriate coping strategies may exacerbate stress and associated problems (Thai et al., 2021). For clergy, coping strategies are crucial because their roles often involve both high job demands and substantial family responsibilities. Properly applied coping mechanisms can help clergymen navigate work-related pressures, manage family stress, and maintain overall well-being.

Coping strategies may moderate the relationship between job stress and family stress, particularly among clergy who face intersecting pressures from professional and personal spheres. Problem-focused strategies enable individuals to actively manage stressors, such as delegating tasks, restructuring schedules, or seeking support from colleagues and family members. Emotion-focused strategies help manage the emotional consequences of stress when the stressor cannot be changed, allowing clergy to maintain composure, resilience, and interpersonal harmony (Folkman & Lazarus, 1986; Thai et al., 2021).

Research suggests that clergy who employs a combination of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping is better equipped to manage the dual challenges of job and family stress (Crowe & Van Puymbroeck, 2019; Algorani & Gupta, 2021). Conversely, inadequate coping strategies can lead to burnout, mental health deterioration, and disrupted family functioning. Understanding the interaction between coping, job stress, and family stress is therefore essential in promoting clergy

well-being and sustaining effective family and occupational functioning.

People worldwide are increasingly confronted with stress, particularly in the course of their work (Tomic et al., 2004). Clergy, like other professionals, experience a range of psychosocial stressors inherent in their profession. Clergy are Christian men and women formally ordained as religious ministers, including pastors, reverend ministers, apostles, prophets, and moderators. Their duties extend beyond leading worship services and preparing weekly sermons or teachings; clergy also provide counselling to church members and assist during emergencies (Comello & Farman, 2016).

Several studies indicate that pastors often cannot live “normal” lives due to their holy calling, which may place them in challenging situations that they are reluctant to discuss or seek help for (Fia et al., 2022). Pastors are expected to prioritize the welfare of others above their own, while sometimes neglecting personal well-being. This self-sacrificing approach may significantly contribute to their experience of stress and distress.

Findings from such research can inform strategies to mitigate the effects of job stress, enabling clergy to perform their duties effectively. Furthermore, the outcomes can guide church authorities in developing policies or interventions to address both family and job stress among their clergy, ultimately promoting their well-being and sustainability in ministry. Hence, the following research questions:

1. Will job stress significantly predict family stress among Anglican clergymen?
2. Will coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) significantly predict family stress among Anglican clergymen?
3. Will coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) moderate the relationship between job stress and family stress among Anglican clergymen?

The job demand resources model is an occupational model that suggests that strain is a response to an imbalance between demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Conservation of resources theory posits that individuals are fundamentally motivated to obtain, retain, protect, and foster resources they value, including objects, personal

characteristics, conditions, and energies (Hobfoll, 1989). However, the authors anchored the study on the ABC-X Model of Family Stress, developed by Hill (1949; 1958) because it is one of the earliest and most influential theories for explaining how families experience and manage stress. It posits that whether a family enters a state of crisis (X) depends not solely on the stressor event (A) but also on the resources available to the family (B) and the family's perception of the stressor (C). This interactive framework is particularly valuable for understanding the stress experienced by clergymen and their families, where job-related demands often spill over into the home domain.

Applying the ABC-X model demonstrates that clergy family stress is not merely an outcome of job demands (A-factor). Instead, it arises from the complex interplay between these ministry demands, the available internal and external resources (B-factor), and the family's interpretation or meaning-making process regarding their situation (C-factor), ultimately producing a specific level of stress or crisis (X-factor).

Chan and Wong (2018) conducted a qualitative study to examine the experience of stress and coping strategies among 15 pastors' wives from a city in mainland China. Results indicated that nearly all interviewees experienced financial stress and loneliness. However, stress arising from role expectations among the spouses' congregations was low. Most of the interviewees coped with stress through family and social support, as well as through praying.

Rogers (2022) examined the relationship of Clergy Distress and spiritual well-being, stress management and irritation to life satisfaction among Black Pastors in the United States of America (USA). The study found that Clergy distress in Black Pastors did not differ based on gender or age but did differ by church size and denomination. Clergy distress possessed significant relationships with satisfaction with life as expected, but stress management and spiritual well-being in ministry did not, which was surprising. Notably, strong relationships existed between stress management and spiritual well-being in daily life, as well as between stress management and irritation. Conversely, Kim et al. (2025) argued that

occupational stress does not always translate into family stress when individuals possess strong boundary-management skills.

Abdou et al. (2024) explore the direct and indirect effects of work stress (assessed by role overload, ambiguity, and conflict) on psychological distress among frontline employees in 3- and 4-star Egyptian resorts while considering the mediating influence of work-family conflict (WFC). Based on the findings from 563 frontline employees who participated in this study, the results support the four hypotheses, affirming that work-related stressors significantly contribute to employees' psychological distress. Furthermore, the findings highlighted that these stressors significantly spill over into employees' family lives, resulting in conflicts between work and family roles. In addition, the results emphasised the significance of WFC as a contributing factor to employees' psychological distress. Some studies also found that adaptive emotion regulation can serve as a protective factor in maintaining relational well-being, especially in populations with high spiritual engagement (Pargament, 1997; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Hypotheses

1. Job stress will significantly predict family stress among Anglican clergymen.
2. Coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) will significantly predict family stress among Anglican clergymen.
3. Coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) will significantly moderate the relationship between job stress and family stress among Anglican clergymen.

Method

Participants

Seventy-three (73) clergymen with an age range of 27-57 years old, a mean age of 36.63, and a standard deviation of 8.99 were drawn as participants from the population of clergymen in Enugu province, Enugu State, using multi-stage (cluster and purposive) sampling techniques. The

Enugu province of the Anglican Communion comprises three dioceses: Nike Diocese (28), under Enugu Diocese (29), and Enugu North Diocese (16). The participants were male ordained Anglican clergymen in Enugu Province, whereas Church teachers and ordinands in the Anglican Communion of Enugu Province were excluded in the study.

Instruments

Three scales were used, namely Job Stress Scale (Parker & Decotiis, 1983), Family Stress Scale (Douglas & Omeje, 2025), and Brief-Cope Scale (Carver et al., 1989).

The first test used in this study was developed by Parker and Decotiis (1983). It includes a 13-item, 8 of which focus on time-related feelings of anxiety, while 5 items focus on job-related feelings of anxiety. Parker and Decotiis (1983) reported construct validity and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .86 and .74 for time-related feelings of anxiety and job-related feelings of anxiety, respectively. This instrument has a 5-point Likert-type response format ranging from (1) disagree strongly, (2) disagree moderately, (3) neither agree nor disagree, (4) agree moderately, (5) agree strongly. Pilot study carried out by the researchers with thirty (30) clergymen from the Anglican Communion in Anambra State, Nigeria, drawn with the aid of purposive sampling techniques, yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.89.

The second test used in this study is the Family Stress Scale, developed by Douglas and Omeje (2025). It is a 19-item instrument that employs a 5-point Likert response format, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scores for all items are summed to yield a total family stress score. Higher total scores indicate a greater perceived level of family stress. It has been developed to assess the level of stress experienced by individuals within the family context. Furthermore, the scale considers various factors that may contribute to this stress and consists of four dimensions that evaluate different elements that can provoke stress among individuals. In a reliability test carried out by the researchers, the Argument dimension had a Cronbach alpha of 0.915, the Family discord dimension with Cronbach alpha of 0.831, the health problems dimension with

Cronbach alpha of 0.858, the Difficulties outside the home dimension with Cronbach alpha of 0.706, and a general Cronbach alpha of .946. The convergent validity results obtained show that the Argument dimension has a strong correlation with the Family Discord dimension, with a correlation coefficient of $r = .943$. The Health Problems dimension shows a correlation of $r = .726$ with the Argument dimension. The Family Discord dimension also converges with the Health Problems dimension at $r = .819$ and with the Difficulties Outside the Home dimension at $r = .344$. Lastly, the Health problems dimension correlates $r = .324$ with the Difficulties outside the home dimension (Douglas & Omeje, 2025).

The third test used in this study is the Brief-Cope Scale developed as a short version of the original 60-item COPE scale (Carver et al., 1989). It is a 28-item self-report measure that assesses the effective and ineffective ways to cope with stressful life events. Items are rated on a 4-point response. These can be categorized into problem-focused and emotion-focused coping mechanisms, as identified in the literature (Folkman et al., 1986). Problem-Focused Coping reflects active engagement with the stressor, aiming to solve the problem or manage its consequences. Subscales typically included: Active coping, Planning, Instrumental support (seeking advice or assistance), Positive reframing. Scoring: Sum the scores of items corresponding to these subscales. Higher scores indicate more frequent use of problem-focused strategies. Emotion-Focused Coping reflects efforts to manage emotional responses to stress rather than directly addressing the stressor. Subscales typically included: Denial, Behavioural disengagement, Self-blame. Scoring: Sum the scores of items corresponding to these subscales. Higher scores indicate greater reliance on emotion-focused strategies.

Principal components analysis identified two dimensions in a modified version of the Brief COPE, demonstrating appropriate construct validity and a high level of reliability (Cronbach's alpha: 0.72 - 0.82). The two dimensions were distinct from each other and accounted for over 50% of the variance between items. Pilot study carried out by the researcher with thirty (30)

clergymen from the Anglican Communion in Anambra, drawn with the aid of purposive sampling techniques, yielded a Cronbach alpha of 0.96.

Procedure

The researchers obtained a letter of introduction from the Head of the Psychology Department and ethical clearance from the Chairman of the Ethics Committee, which was attached to the instrument and sent to the bishops of different dioceses for identification and permission for their institutions to be used for the study. Upon obtaining the necessary approval from the bishops of the dioceses involved in the study through one of the researchers who is an Anglican Communion Clergyman, the researchers sampled clergymen for the study based on their consent. The researchers sample participants from the population of clergymen in Enugu State using a mixed sampling technique (cluster and purposive). The clergymen were first clustered according to their Dioceses, while purposive sampling techniques were adopted to

draw the participants (clergymen) for this study. The researchers sought the help of research assistants to distribute and retrieve the instruments from the participants after completion. All participants were informed that participation was voluntary and that the information provided on the questionnaires would remain confidential. Ninety-eight (98) copies of the instruments were distributed, eighty-one (81) were returned, and out of these, 8 copies were discarded for improper completion, whereas the remaining 73 copies, which were correctly filled out, were used for data analysis.

Design and Statistics

A correlational design was employed to examine the relationship between the study variables. To investigate the moderating roles of problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies on the relationship between job stress and family stress, a moderation regression analysis was conducted using Hayes' PROCESS Macro (Model 2) (Hayes, 2017).

Results

Table 1: Mean, Standard Deviation and Inter-Correlation of the Study Variables

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1.Family Stress	62.97	19.58	-				
2.Job Stress	34.96	14.97	.390**	-			
3.Problem	18.74	3.89	.381**	.216*	-		
4.Emotion	48.84	20.00	.452**	.176	.558**	-	
5.Age	36.63	8.99	-.129	-.016	-.079	.038	-

*Note: N = 73; correlation significant at * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$*

In table 1 above, job stress has a with family stress $r(73) = .39$, $p < .001$. This implies that as job stress increases family stress also increases among Anglican clergymen. Problem-focused coping strategies (and emotion-focused) has a significant positive relationship with family stress ($r(73) = .38$, $p < .001$) and job stress ($r(73) = .22$, $p < .05$). This implies that the more problem-focused coping strategies are used, family stress and job stress increase among Anglican clergymen. For emotion-focused coping strategies the table shows a significant positive relationship with family stress $r(73) = .45$, $p < .001$) and an insignificant positive relationship with job stress ($r(73) = .18$, $p > .05$). This means that emotional-focused coping strategies employed by Anglican clergymen aggravate their family stress but not their job stress.

Table 2: Summary of Moderated Regression Statistics on Family Stress, Job Stress and Coping Strategies (Problem-Focused and Emotion-Focused)

<i>Predictor</i>	β	<i>se</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95%CI (LL, UL)
Constant	-2.660	24.767	-.107	.915	(-52.10, 46.78)
Job Stress	1.196	.768	1.557	.124	(-.34, 2.73)
Problem	-.184	1.469	-.125	.901	(-3.11, 2.75)
Int_1	.025	.044	.581	.563	(-.06, .11)
Emotion	1.118	.256	4.364**	.000	(.61, 1.63)
Int_2	-.025	.007	-3.460**	.001	(-.04, -.01)
Model fit					
R^2	.42				
$F(5, 67)$	10.00			.000	

*Note: N = 73; * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$, = unstandardized coefficients (β); standard error (*se*); test statistics (*t* and *p*); job stress and problem-focused coping (Int_1); job stress and emotion-focused coping (Int_2); confidence interval (CI) (LL: lower bound and UL: upper bound)*

Table 2 revealed a moderation analysis which was conducted using Hayes' Process Macro (Model 2) to investigate if a multi-categorical moderator (coping strategies) influences the relationship between job stress and family stress. Job stress did not predict family stress ($b = 1.20$, $t = 1.56$, $p = .124$), hence the first hypothesis which stated that job stress will predict family stress was rejected. Thus, job stress of clergymen does not necessarily aggravate their experience of family stress. Problem-focused coping strategy did not predict family stress ($b = -.18$, $t = -.13$, $p = .901$), whereas emotion-focused coping strategy positively predicted family stress ($b = -1.12$, $t = 4.36$, $p = .001$), hence, the second hypothesis which stated that coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) will predict family stress is hereby partially accepted. This implies that maladaptive (emotion-focused) coping mechanisms used by clergymen also increase their family stress. The overall model was significant, explaining 42% of variance $R^2 = .42$, $F(5, 67) = 10.00$, $p < .001$. Results indicated a non-significant interaction between job stress and problem-focused coping strategy ($b = -.03$, $t = .58$, $p = .57$). However, emotion-focused coping negatively predicted job stress in family stress of clergymen ($b = -.03$, $t = -3.46$, $p = .001$); hence, the third hypothesis which stated that coping strategies (problem-focused and

emotion-focused) coping will moderate the relationship between job stress and family stress of clergymen was partially accepted, indicating that the effect of job stress on family stress is retarded when emotion-focused coping strategy is applied by the clergymen.

Discussion

The first hypothesis, which stated that job stress would significantly predict family stress among clergymen, was disconfirmed. The regression results revealed that job stress did not predict family stress. This finding suggests that, for Anglican clergymen in the study, the stress experienced in their professional role does not directly spill over into the family domain.

This outcome aligns with the observations of Kim et al. (2025), who argued that occupational stress does not always translate into family stress when individuals possess strong boundary-management skills. Similarly, Abdou et al. (2024) emphasized the role of cultural and communal support in mitigating the transfer of workplace stress into family contexts.

The second hypothesis, which stated that coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) would significantly predict family stress among clergymen, was partially confirmed. The regression results revealed that coping strategies indeed showed a partial significant relationship with family

stress. Specifically, problem-focused coping did not predict family stress, whereas emotion-focused coping positively predicted family stress. This implies that emotion-focused coping increases family stress experienced by clergymen.

This finding highlights the complex role of coping strategies in increasing family stress outcomes. The positive relationship between emotion-focused coping and family stress may appear counterintuitive. However, studies by Chan and Wong (2018); Rogers (2022) buttressed the importance of coping strategies in job stress and or family stress among Clergy wives, Catholic Priests, and Black Pastors. For clergymen, the cognitive and time demands of problem-solving such as managing congregational conflicts, administrative duties, or pastoral counselling may leave limited emotional and temporal resources for family interactions. As a result, the very act of “trying to fix” problems at work may inadvertently increase tension or dissatisfaction at home.

Hence, Anglican clergymen often face unique pressures due to the dual demands of ministry and family life. The expectation to be spiritual leaders, counsellors, and administrators can create a heavy workload. When clergymen rely heavily on emotion-focused coping, they may unintentionally carry the weight of church-related problem-solving into the home, leaving little room for emotional presence with their families. This can manifest as irritability, fatigue, or a reduction in quality time with spouses and children.

In summary, the confirmation of the second hypothesis underscores the dual nature of coping strategies among Anglican clergymen. Emotion-focused coping, while useful in ministry, may intensify family stress when it drains personal resources. These findings resonate with the insights of (Chan & Wong, 2018), while also reflecting the lived realities of Anglican clergymen who balance the sacred responsibilities of ministry with the everyday demands of family life.

The third hypothesis, which stated that coping strategies (problem-focused and emotion-focused) would moderate job stress in family stress, was partially confirmed; hence, the hypothesis was accepted. The results showed that problem-focused coping did not moderate job stress in family stress

among clergymen whereas emotion-focused coping strategies negatively moderated job stress in family stress among clergymen. The results indicate that emotion-focused coping strategies negatively moderated job stress in family stress among clergymen. This suggests that the presence of emotion-focused coping strategies may weaken the potential impact of job stress on family stress. In other words, even when clergymen experience high levels of occupational stress, the effective use of emotion coping strategy can buffer or reduce the extent to which this stress translates into tension or conflict within the family domain.

Although emotion-focused coping was previously shown to positively predict family stress in isolation, its moderating role reveals a more complex dynamic. When clergymen actively address work-related problems, the strategy can serve a protective function, reducing the spillover effect of job stress onto family life. This may occur because structured problem-solving allows clergymen to regain control over occupational demands, thereby preventing unresolved work stress from affecting family interactions.

Emotion-focused coping, which includes strategies such as prayer, meditation, acceptance, and emotional reframing, also buffers the relationship between job stress and family stress. By helping clergymen regulate their emotional responses to work-related pressures, emotion-focused coping reduces the likelihood that occupational stress will disrupt family harmony. This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that adaptive emotion regulation can serve as a protective factor in maintaining relational well-being, especially in populations with high spiritual engagement (Pargament, 1997; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Implications

1. The findings of this study aligned with the ABC-X Model of Family Stress, which was adopted as the theoretical anchor. In this study, while job stress and problem-focused coping strategies did not independently and significantly predict family stress, except emotion-focused which positively predicted family stress and equally negatively moderated job stress in family stress. This suggests that emotion-focused coping

strategies function as critical resources that buffer the potential negative effects of job stress on family life, which is entirely consistent with the ABC-X framework.

2. Practically, the findings of this study offer several actionable insights for supporting the well-being of clergymen and promoting healthier family functioning: Since emotion-focused coping strategies buffer the impact of job stress in family stress, clergy development programs should incorporate coping skills training. This could include workshops on effective problem-solving, time management, conflict resolution, and emotion regulation techniques.
3. Overall, the study affirms that supporting both adaptive and maladaptive coping mechanisms are critical not only for clergymen's occupational effectiveness but also for their family well-being, reinforcing the need for structured programs and institutional policies that promote work-life harmony.

Limitations

Despite the valuable insights gained, this study has several limitations that should be acknowledged: The study employed a correlational research design, which limits the ability to draw causal inferences. While associations between emotion-focused coping strategies and family stress were identified, it is not possible to determine the directionality of these relationships definitively. Longitudinal studies would provide stronger evidence regarding how job stress and coping strategies influence family stress over time.

The study focused exclusively on clergymen with a small sample size which seems inadequate for moderation analysis thus may have effect on the statistical power and may limit generalizability to other occupational or religious populations. Differences in organizational structure, cultural context, or denominational practices could influence stress and coping dynamics. Factors such as personality traits, social support from extended family or congregation, spiritual intensity, or mental health status were not controlled for, yet they could influence the relationship between job stress, coping, and family stress.

The findings may be influenced by cultural norms regarding family roles, clergy responsibilities, and acceptable expressions of stress. This may limit the applicability of the results to clergy in different cultural or religious settings. Considering the limitations, the study recommends that future studies could target longitudinal or experimental studies to explore causal pathways between job stress, coping, and family stress. Inclusion of additional mediating and moderating variables such as social support, spiritual practices, or personality factors in job stress and family stress could also provide important evidence in this area.

Conclusion

This study investigated the moderating role of coping strategies in job stress and family stress among clergymen. The findings revealed that job stress and problem-focused coping strategies did not predict family stress, suggesting that clergymen experience of job stress and use of problem-focused coping strategies do not possess as factors in family stress. Importantly, emotion-focused coping strategies played a critical role in shaping family stress outcomes. Emotion-focused coping was associated with higher family stress when considered directly, however, it equally negatively moderated job stress in family stress of clergymen, indicating its buffering effect.

Recommendations

1. Counselling services and family support initiatives should educate clergymen and their families on stress management strategies and emphasize the importance of coping resources in maintaining family harmony. Support groups or mentorship programs within religious communities can provide both emotional support and practical advice for managing occupational stress.
2. By fostering adaptive coping strategies before high-stress situations arise, religious institutions can proactively reduce the likelihood of family stress among clergy. Interventions could include regular check-ins, stress audits, or training on recognizing early signs of stress to prevent escalation.
3. Seminaries and clergy training programs can incorporate courses on psychology of stress,

coping, and family dynamics, emphasizing the dual role of coping strategies as both preventive and buffering mechanisms.

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