



Examining the Effects of Work-Life Balance on the Psychological and Physical Well-Being of Pastors in the United States

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ABSTRACT

This study intends to investigate how pastors' psychological and physical health are affected by work-life balance. The study aims to shed light on the difficulties pastors encounter in juggling their personal and professional life and to investigate how this balance affects their general well-being. A mixed-methods strategy is used in the study, including qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys. While quantitative surveys are given to a larger sample to get information on the psychological and physical well-being of pastors, qualitative interviews are done with a selection of pastors to learn more about their experiences with work-life balance. To find themes and patterns relating to work-life balance and its effects, the data gathered from both ways is evaluated. According to the data, pastors struggle mightily to establish work-life balance, which has a detrimental effect on their mental and physical health. The main causes of imbalance were found to be high levels of work expectations, lengthy work hours, and a lack of distinction between work and personal life. The implementation of tactics including establishing boundaries, engaging in self-care, and developing encouraging settings inside religious organizations are suggested. The importance of work-life balance for pastors and its effect on their psychological and physical well-being are highlighted by this study's result. This study adds to the body of knowledge on work-life balance in the context of the clergy by offering empirical evidence and insights into the difficulties experienced by pastors. The conclusions and suggestions can help religious leaders, decision-makers, and organizations create interventions and support structures that improve pastors' work-life balance and support their general well-being.

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INTRODUCTION

Pastors in the United States(US) have challenges balancing their work and life demands. Although creating this balance can be challenging, it can be essential, especially for people with a busy working schedule. Pastors in the US have great responsibilities that may create challenges to maintaining a balance with their personal lives. For instance, pastors have the role of being supervisors and bosses. Pastors are crucial in providing accountability and structure in the church. More importantly, although other people may take part in hiring officials at the church, pastors still have the role of firing them

and this constitutes their great responsibility.¹ This role may be challenging since it is involving and can create an imbalance in their personal lives.

More importantly, pastors are coaches in the church. Typically, pastors often do a great deal of teaching and coaching. Pastors believe that all the various aspects of life have great impacts on the effectiveness of the ministry and so they often have the responsibility of coaching people about family, faith, marriage, health, finances, and relationships.² Thus, these responsibilities make it challenging for pastors to maintain a work-life balance. Pastors also act as mentors to various people in the church and this makes them busy with increased responsibilities within the church.

Maintaining a work-life balance can have tremendous implications on the physical and psychological well-being of pastors. For instance, pastors who maintain a work-life balance are likely to have less stress in their lives and this can result in healthy living.³ More importantly, pastors can benefit from the work-life balance through a better sense of well-being. This is because a work-life balance creates satisfaction among pastors and this can improve their professional and personal lives.

Pastors in the US often face various challenges while maintaining their work-life balance and the main one is the increased responsibilities and roles at work. Pastors who have more work at the church can have challenges balancing their work and life demands.⁴ More importantly, increased roles at work among pastors may result in working for longer hours. These longer hours may often result in fewer hours with their families and this is attributed to an imbalance between work and life demands.

Increased responsibilities at home are also another challenge facing pastors when striving to balance their work and life demands. Increased responsibilities at home may mean more children and this forces pastors to spend more time at home than at work. Additionally, pastors who are married may have challenges balancing their work and life demands because they are forced to spend more time at home. Thus, this study aims to shed light on the difficulties pastors encounter in juggling their personal and professional life and to investigate how this balance affects their general well-being. This will be conducted through a mixed-methods strategy that includes qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys.

METHODOLOGY

The study uses a mixed-methods approach to examine how work-life balance affects pastors' psychological and physical health in the United States. To fully comprehend the topic, the research process combines quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews. In order to guarantee that the sample was representative, about 30 pastors were polled and interviewed. Using a purposeful sampling strategy, pastors from different denominations, regions, and degrees of pastoral experience were chosen for the qualitative interviews. These in-depth insights into the pastors' experiences with work-life balance were supplied through the interviews. Pastors were also given quantitative surveys to complete in order to collect information on their psychological and physical health. A thorough investigation of the subject was made possible by the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, which led to a better knowledge of the difficulties pastors encounter and how those difficulties affect their general well-being.

¹ Clement Yung Wen, "Protestant Pastors and Public Life: An American Portrait (1989–2009)," *The Expository Times* 128, no. 11 (August 4, 2017): 567–68, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0014524617708280>.

² Wen, "Protestant Pastors and Public Life: An American Portrait (1989–2009)."

³ David Pendleton, Peter Derbyshire, and Chloe Hodgkinson, "New Balance; Work-Life Balance Is Non-Sense," in *Work-Life Matters* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2021), 75–87, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-77768-5_6.

⁴ Carol A. Shepherd, "Prudery, Primates and Public Conveniences: Specific Challenges Faced by Pastors and Educators," in *Bisexuality and the Western Christian Church* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 249–68, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-94679-5_11.

FINDINGS

Today, pastors face various challenges while maintaining their work-life balance. The various challenges pastors face were mentioned by the respondents and they are discussed in the following sections.

1. Unrealistic Demands Of Work And Life

The demands of work and life for pastors can easily rise to incredible levels. Typically, the unreasonable demands of the job may eat into the family and personal time of pastors. For instance, arrangements such as technology overload and weekend meetings can be challenging to pastors as they would be forced to use the time allocated for personal activities.⁵ More importantly, unrealistic demands may result in pressure build-up among pastors and this can be challenging especially when they seek to balance their life and work demands.

Additionally, pastors need personal time to accommodate their friends and family and thus unrealistic demands on their work can result in a lack of time to hang out with their families and friends.⁶ Since pastors have the responsibility of being there for their congregation, it exerts pressure on them and creates an unhealthy balance between work and life demands. In such cases, unrealistic demands on pastors can have tremendous implications on their work and life balance.

2. Lack of Control

Control of the lives of pastors is a critical aspect of maintaining their work and life balance. Thus, a lack of control among pastors can result in an imbalance of life and work demands. In this manner, a lack of control among pastors often exerts pressure on their lives and they are often left hanging with a dark cloud above them. In such cases, pastors may lack purpose in their lives and this makes it challenging to maintain a work-life balance. Control is essential in ensuring pastors have meaningful and healthy relationships with their congregation and family members.

Additionally, the lack of control among pastors can result in the failure to deal with insecurity and uncontrollable workload. This may result in increased stress levels that may have tremendous implications on a pastor's personal life.⁷ In cases such as kid issues, illnesses, and exams, pastors may find it challenging to keep with such issues because they lack control. Thus, control is the initial step in maintaining a work-life balance. Control also involves dealing with personal issues at home and this may involve divorce and kids' issues, having control in these aspects often reflects on the work demands.

3. Unsupportive Relationships

Relationships among pastors can be essential in ensuring they have a better understanding of maintaining their work-life balance. Pastors often have relationships with their colleagues, friends, families, and congregations. These relationships give them a sense of belonging that may positively reflect on both their personal and work lives.⁸ Therefore, unsupportive relationships may have negative implications on the work-life balance of pastors. For instance, unsupportive relationships at work may reduce the morale of pastors and this may force them to focus more on their personal lives.

Additionally, unsupportive relationships in the workplace environment can be detrimental to the work-life balance of pastors. This is because it may make them feel isolated and left out and this

⁵ Matthew Mckew, "Work-Life Imbalance Causes Healthcare Workers to Quit," *Nursing Management* 24, no. 8 (November 28, 2017): 6–6, <https://doi.org/10.7748/nm.24.8.6.s2>.

⁶ Misun Lim and Joya Misra, "Work/Life Balance," in *Sociology* (Oxford University Press, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199756384-0218>.

⁷ Pendleton, Derbyshire, and Hodgkinson, "New Balance; Work-Life Balance Is Non-Sense."

⁸ Yang Woon Chung, "Workplace Ostracism And Workplace Behaviors: A Moderated Mediation Model of Perceived Stress and Psychological Empowerment," *Anxiety, Stress, & Coping* 31, no. 3 (May 4, 2018): 304–17, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2018.1424835>.

may exert pressure on their work life.⁹ On the other hand, unsupportive relationships at home can also be detrimental to pastors as it may result in frustrations that affect how they relate with other people.¹⁰ Typically, the responsibilities of pastors in the church can be challenging, and thus it is crucial that they are welcomed with a supportive relationship while at home. Unsupportive relationships at home often make pastors unhappy and unsatisfied with their personal lives.

4. Lack of Resources

The lack of resources among pastors is a major cause of the imbalance in their work and life demands. Limited resources may affect how pastors organize themselves both at home and at work. For instance, limited resources may result in the lack of babysitters and this may exert pressure on pastors as they are faced to take care of their children. In such cases, pastors may spend most of their time at home and this may create an imbalance in their work demands. The lack of resources may also result in the lack of personal assistance. Personal assistance for pastors is essential in ensuring they don't drown in their workloads.¹¹ In such cases, personal assistants can take charge of some responsibilities and the pastors get ample time to deal with their work schedules and personal lives.

Additionally, resources are essential in ensuring that pastors have social status and this allows them to create meaningful relationships. Thus, limited resources can hinder the creation of meaningful and supportive relationships and this often results in lower self-esteem.¹² Confidence is important in a pastor's work and resources often support confidence which can lead to proper work and life balance.

5. Lack of Adequate Skills

Managing both personal and work life requires skills that can help in the creation of a balance between the two. Thus, pastors without the necessary skills can have a problem managing their work and personal lives. For instance, survival skills go a long way in ensuring that pastors can manage their workload and at the same time focus on their lives. Pastors require proper listening and communication skills which ensure that they have a better chance of meeting their work targets so they can go back to their personal lives at the right time.

Personal awareness is also an important skill among pastors that can ensure they develop better management of their personal lives. It ensures that pastors understand how to control their emotions and attitudes toward their work and personal life. Professionalism can ensure that pastors can better manage their workloads so that it doesn't affect their personal lives. In this manner, pastors can manage their time and ensure their work life doesn't overlap with their personal lives. This is a great step towards ensuring a proper work and life balance.¹³ Skills such as creative and critical thinking can ensure pastors are successful in managing their personal and work demands.

6. High-stress levels

High-stress levels is one of the major challenges affecting pastors as they go through their work and personal lives. High-stress levels can stand in the way of meaningful relationships as people become more agitated by simple things. Thus, high-stress levels can hinder pastors from establishing a work-life balance. Thus, pastors should often strive to minimize the stress in their lives. Typically, the role and responsibilities of pastors can be challenging as they are often forced to work with people who

⁹ Eugene Ohu, Emem Laguda, and Kemi Ogunyemi, "Mindfulness and Stress Reduction: Managing Workplace Stress," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Workplace Spirituality and Fulfillment* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2018), 237–67, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-62163-0_7.

¹⁰ Lim and Misra, "Work/Life Balance."

¹¹ Rachel Epstein et al., "Work-Life Imbalance in the Time of COVID-19," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics* 11, no. 2 (July 2021): 280–85, <https://doi.org/10.5642/jhummath.202102.13>.

¹² Julie Haddock-Millar and Eliot Tom, "Work-Life Balance," in *Coaching and Mentoring for Work-Life Balance* (Routledge, 2019), 5–15, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429280405-2>.

¹³ Mckew, "Work-Life Imbalance Causes Healthcare Workers to Quit."

may have no interest in the gospel.¹⁴ Although this may be challenging, pastors in the US have the responsibility of spreading the word of God even to those who may reject them.

In this manner, pastors are often stressed at the end of the day. Unfortunately, they do not find ample personal time away from work, where they can relax and focus on rejuvenating for the next day. In many instances, pastors do not acquire stress management skills to ensure that they understand how to cope with their workloads. This often leads them to pass on the stress to persons close to them (spouses and children).

7. Unhelpful Attitude

A positive attitude is a critical aspect in ensuring pastors develop a healthy balance between their work and life demands. For instance, during heavy workloads, pastors need to develop resilience against the pressures of work. A positive attitude in their work-life can motivate pastors to have a positive attitude toward their personal lives and this is essential in the creation of a healthy work-and life-balance.¹⁵ Thus, a positive attitude at work can reflect on the personal lives of pastors.

Resilience in times of challenging situations both at work and home portrays the attitude pastors have toward their work or personal lives. Some pastors often do not understand how to cope with stressful situations at work and therefore have no coping skills.

Psychological and Physical Effects of Work-Life Balance on Pastors

1. Work-life Balance reduces Stress

Work-life balance is a critical aspect of life that can be beneficial to pastors. In the US, workplace stress is considered one of the leading causes of death.¹⁶ More importantly, research has revealed that most Americans identify their work as one of the leading causes of stress in their lives. It is vital that a work-life balance is maintained to minimize stress. Typically, most people believe they have limited choices in their lives and thus they are stuck up in stressful jobs. In the case of pastors in the US, most of them believe they have been called to be pastors and to pass on the gospel to their congregation, this responsibility can be extremely stressful.

Therefore, pastors who maintain a healthy work-life balance often have less stress since they have better control of their lives. Typically, work-life balance among pastors is created through life choices. This aspect often causes stress where pastors make the choice to take more responsibilities yet they understand they lack the capacity to perform those duties.¹⁷ Thus, pastors should strive to make the right choices to avoid overworking themselves. In such cases, pastors should delegate duties to ensure they don't overwork themselves.

Also, pastors should make the right choices to avoid stressing themselves. For instance, they should strive to say no to things that stress them. More importantly, in cases of more work, pastors should strive to delegate other duties. Additionally, pastors should strive to prioritize duties to ensure they focus more on essential work and postpone those less important to avoid overworking themselves.¹⁸ Thus, through the creation of a healthy work-life balance, pastors often focus on their own well-being through the reduction of stress levels.

¹⁴ James Campbell Quick, "Workplace Stress and Wellbeing: Pathways for Future Research Advances," in *A Research Agenda for Workplace Stress and Wellbeing* (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789905021.00009>.

¹⁵ R R Rajan Chaudhary and Rajesh Bagga, "Work Life Imbalance and Psychosocial Tribulations among Working Women," *International Journal of Management Excellence* 10, no. 2 (February 28, 2018): 1323–33, <https://doi.org/10.17722/ijme.v10i2.974>.

¹⁶ Chung, "Workplace Ostracism And Workplace Behaviors: A Moderated Mediation Model of Perceived Stress and Psychological Empowerment."

¹⁷ David Cabrelli, 9. *Work-Life Balance*, vol. 1 (Oxford University Press, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.1093/he/9780198813149.003.0009>.

¹⁸ Chaudhary and Bagga, "Work Life Imbalance and Psychosocial Tribulations among Working Women."

2. It Improves Mental Health

A work-life balance among pastors can be vital in ensuring they develop a healthy mental capacity. Typically, the main importance of work-life balance is that it improves mental health. In such cases, when pastors put a balance between their work and life demands, they often have an easier time dealing with negative thoughts and emotions. Typically, the human brain isn't designed to take a high level of stress associated with great workloads.¹⁹ Thus, a work-life balance gives pastors the space to think about their personal lives and focus on improving their well-being.

More importantly, a work-life balance ensures that the subconscious thoughts are given time to reach the surface and this can be done through meditation and mindfulness. Thus, this balance can be essential in ensuring pastors develop self-awareness in everything they do. Through self-awareness, pastors can deal with their personal problems in a healthy manner; this is essential for their mental health. More importantly, self-awareness ensures that pastors can make better and more informed decisions since they have more time to think and meditate on their thoughts.²⁰ In such cases, pastors should be encouraged to exercise daily and have a healthy lifestyle.

3. Better Physical Health

By developing a healthy work-life balance, pastors can have better physical health. Taking care of a person's physical health is a vital aspect of the creation of a work-life balance. Normally, this includes eating healthy and reducing alcohol and sugar intake. More importantly, a balance between work and life demands ensures they can focus on healthy sleeping habits and improve their exercise regime.²¹ Additionally, a healthy mental state often encourages a healthy physical state and this can be essential for pastors seeking to create a balance between their life and work demands.

How pastors live and work has tremendous implications on their physical health and well-being. Thus, pastors with busy schedules may find it challenging to exercise and live healthily. For instance, when pastors have offices, they may spend the whole day sitting behind the desk and then get glued to their couches at home because they are stressed and exhausted. This lifestyle eventually develops into adverse health implications. In such cases, some pastors may be forced to cope with these stressful situations through alcoholism and drug addiction.

Typically, the human body is not meant to sit for long periods because it impedes physical health. Thus, pastors should often strive to create a work-life balance by creating some time to exercise and move around instead of sitting behind their desks. A balance between work and life demands should include more outdoor activity and movement as this may help improve pastors' physical health. Research has also revealed that physical exercise generates endorphins in the body, these hormones are associated with good mood and happiness.²² These hormones are vital in ensuring pastors sleep better hence improving their physical health.

4. It Enhances the Present Ability

In the US, employees often face a major problem of being present and this greatly affects their productivity. Being present relates to both at home and at work. When employees are more at work they may fail to present at home.²³ In such cases, pastors who have a healthy work-life balance may have a higher present ability both at home and work. Lacking the ability to be present is evident when

¹⁹ Janice Green, "196 Health and Wellbeing- Work-Life Imbalance in Developing Countries," in *Work Organisation and Psychosocial Factors* (BMJ Publishing Group Ltd, 2018), A576.2-A577, <https://doi.org/10.1136/oemed-2018-ICOHabstracts.1627>.

²⁰ Sonal Gaur and J Saminathan, "Study Report on Work Life Imbalance Impact on Job Satisfaction in Non-Clinical Staff at Tertiary Health Care Center, Delhi," *Clinical Practice* 15, no. 6 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.4172/clinical-practice.1000421>.

²¹ Epstein et al., "Work-Life Imbalance in the Time of COVID-19."

²² Campbell Quick, "Workplace Stress and Wellbeing: Pathways for Future Research Advances."

²³ Elizabeth L. Shoenfelt, Rosemary Hays-Thomas, and Laura Koppes Bryan, "An Introduction to Industrial-Organizational Psychology," in *Mastering Industrial-Organizational Psychology* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 1–16, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780190071141.003.0001>.

pastors think of work while they are with friends and families. When pastors worry about their personal lives at work may also indicate that they lack the ability to be present.

On the other hand, pastors who develop a healthy work-life balance may have a better chance of being present since they often understand how to balance their work and personal lives. In such cases, a work-life balance can motivate pastors to be present and develop mindful practices.²⁴ For instance, mindfulness has been known to create internal balance where pastors understand how to better manage their internal thoughts and emotions.

Therefore, a work-life balance ensures that pastors are more attuned to other people's feelings and emotions. In this manner, pastors can understand how to develop meaningful relationships since they understand how to comprehend the people around them. By establishing a balance between personal and work demands, pastors can understand how to respond to those around them and ensure they are respectful at all times.²⁵ In such cases, pastors can have a better relationship with their friends, families, colleagues, and clients. More importantly, through this balance, pastors can encourage positivity in their lives by being aware of the good aspects of their lives and not just focusing on the bad aspects.

5. It Improves Relationships

Pastors who have a balanced life are more likely to have meaningful and better relationships in their lives. Typically, working too much reduces the time spent with family members and friends. Overworking means pastors have limited quality time with their loved ones.²⁶ Also, pastors may feel exhausted when heading home and fail to have quality time with their family members. On the other hand, pastors who have established a balance between their personal and work life can have quality time with their family and friends since they all always reach home when they are still energetic.

Additionally, through a balanced work-personal life, pastors can understand how to improve their relationships and become better people in society. Pastors can have ample time to improve their overall outlook. The ripple effect of a balanced life is that pastors can develop a healthy social life full of friends and family members. Career relationships can improve through having a balanced work-life relationship. Establishing connections with people through a balanced life can help pastors become generally happy.

Today, people are busy and technology has been allowed to take control of the human connection. Thus, through a balanced life, pastors can understand how to control their human connection and take time to develop meaningful relationships.²⁷ Deep connections must not be only with families since pastors with a balanced life can make ample time to visit friends and colleagues. This can improve their satisfaction and happiness levels. Through connecting with friends, pastors can add meaning to their lives. Pastors can find meaning in their careers by making friends and this reduces the incidence of boredom.

6. It Improves Work-Place Engagements

Typically, pastors who are motivated and feel happy about their work are likely to be engaged and more loyal. Pastors who are engaged are more likely to feel committed to what they do best. The church can therefore benefit as pastors may become engaged with more people. Additionally, a balanced life encourages pastors to be more engaged with their lives and ensure they reach more people through the gospel. Additionally, most people believe that engagement can be motivated through incentives and pressure.²⁸ However, this may not be true as in the long run, it results in resentment, anxiety, and stress.

²⁴ Cabrelli, 9. *Work-Life Balance*.

²⁵ Green, "196 Health and Wellbeing- Work-Life Imbalance in Developing Countries."

²⁶ Chaudhary and Bagga, "Work Life Imbalance and Psychosocial Tribulations among Working Women."

²⁷ Jeanne Hoeft, "Pastor/Parishioner Relationships," in *Professional Sexual Ethics* (1517 Media, 2013), 183–92, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt22nm89t.21>.

²⁸ Ronald E. Riggio, "Research Methods in Industrial/Organizational Psychology," in *Introduction to Industrial/Organizational Psychology* (Seventh Edition. | New York : Routledge, [2017] | Revised edition of the author's

Thus, pastors with a balanced life are more likely to have better workplace engagements as they become stimulated and motivated with their work. Pastors may become physically and mentally healthy by having a balanced life as this motivates them to work harder.²⁹ In addition, pastors may become motivated to work harder in evangelism work and pass the gospel to many people, as they are motivated to become more engaged with their work and perform their duties at higher levels. A balanced life leads to better engagement that may result in enhanced workplace morale, better communication, and more accountability.

7. It Improves Creative Thinking

Typically, the brain needs time to think and rejuvenate, hence, pastors need to make time to relax in a free environment devoid of social media, phone calls, texts, emails, and people. Through this space, pastors can take time to think and focus on their personal lives. This space is often vital in ensuring pastors have time to think creatively and critically.

Normally, the roles and responsibilities of a pastor's work can be challenging as this may result in high-stress levels. In such cases, pastors should take time to think and focus on their personal lives. With this balance in life, pastors can think creatively and become precise in making their decisions and choices. Finally, a balanced life can be essential in ensuring pastors improve their productivity levels.³⁰ Thus, pastors should often strive to develop a balance between their personal and work demands as this ensures they have better management of their decision-making skills.

8. It Increases Productivity

Research has revealed that work-life balance can be vital in improving the productivity of employees. Hence, pastors can improve their productivity by having a balance in their lives. Typically, most pastors often want to be more productive in spreading the gospel and manning the church, thus having a balanced life can help them reduce stress and focus on improving their work productivity. This is because a balanced life is often based on time management where both work and personal life are given their specific time.³¹ This encourages productivity since pastors can rest and have more energy to resume work.

More importantly, a balanced life focuses on both mental and physical well-being where pastors can develop a healthy lifestyle. Mental health is improved through reduced stress which can be essential in ensuring pastors have a focused mind to work harder and smarter in spreading the gospel. On the other hand, a balanced life often focuses on exercise and rest which is vital for the physical health of pastors. Through these exercises, pastors can sleep well and thus have enough rest to work efficiently the next day.³² Through improved mental and physical health, pastors can increase their productivity in spreading the gospel.

Additionally, a balanced life can be essential in ensuring pastors are often present and have a clear mind when critical decisions need to be made. Creative and critical thinking can also be encouraged through a balanced life where people can have a precise and clear mind in making decisions.³³ Pastors can be motivated to work harder since they often have high energy levels after enough rest and sleep. Research has revealed that the best formula for improving productivity is through encouraging a balanced life. This can help pastors work harder and smarter.

9. It Encourages Fulfilment and Happiness

The primary importance of incorporating a balanced lifestyle into your life is that it encourages happiness and fulfillment where people become happy with their work and how they live their lives.

Introduction to industrial/organizational psychology, 2013.: Routledge, 2017), 22–60,
<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315620589-2>.

²⁹ Ohu, Laguda, and Ogunyemi, "Mindfulness and Stress Reduction: Managing Workplace Stress."

³⁰ Green, "196 Health and Wellbeing- Work-Life Imbalance in Developing Countries."

³¹ Epstein et al., "Work-Life Imbalance in the Time of COVID-19."

³² Haddock-Millar and Tom, "Work-Life Balance."

³³ Cabrelli, 9. *Work-Life Balance*.

In such cases, pastors can benefit from a balanced life through its fulfillment and happiness. Thus, pastors can love their jobs and appreciate their lives due to the fulfillment acquired from a balanced life.³⁴ More importantly, through the control acquired through a balanced life, pastors can learn to work harder and improve their productivity; this is essential in spreading the gospel.

A balanced life is often focused on feeling good about a given career path and lifestyle. In this manner, pastors can develop a love for their job and develop meaningful relationships. Life control can also be acquired by having a balanced between personal and work life.³⁵ Pastors can focus on improving their relationships at home and at work. Pastors can, therefore, avoid focusing too much on a single aspect of their life since there is always a balance between personal and work life.

10. It Brings Success

Generally, career success is often attributed to a balanced life and this can be vital in ensuring that pastors develop their careers and improve their overall wellbeing. A balanced life can be essential in ensuring success among pastors since they often have better control of their lives. Success has always been associated with a balanced life since people have control of what is important in their lives. In the context of this discussion, pastors can prioritize the vital aspects of their lives and focus on what is more crucial in their lives.³⁶

Additionally, a balanced life can be crucial since it ensures pastors focus on their well-being while serving others within their control. Through critical and creative thinking, pastors can serve the church to the best of their ability and ensure they are successful in spreading the gospel. A controlled life is vital in achieving the various goals and objectives of life since people have a better understanding of how to achieve them.³⁷ A balanced life can ensure that pastors become well-rounded people and think more creatively. Creative thinkers have more chances of becoming successful in life.

RECOMMENDATIONS

How Pastors can be Empowered to Have a Work-Life Balance

Pastors in the US often face various challenges when managing their work-life balance and thus there is a need to empower them to do this effectively. For instance, pastors should be taught how to transition from work to their families. This training can be incorporated into theological schools to ensure they understand how to maintain this balance in their lives. One of the ways of transitioning from work to personal life is through engaging in relaxing and mindful activities that encourage people to relax and unwind from work.³⁸ Such activities include listening to podcasts and music, meditating, reading, and exercising.

These activities have often proved vital in ensuring pastors can unwind from their work activities and focus on their personal lives. Pastors can also take some time to engage in activities that involve their families such as reading stories to their children and going out in restaurants and parks. Winding down is a critical aspect in creating a balance between work and personal life since it prevents work activities from overlapping with personal activities.³⁹ In such cases, pastors can forget a stressful day by hanging out with their families and friends.

Additionally, pastors should be encouraged to seek help when they have problems balancing their work and personal lives. Typically, most people seek help and advice from pastors and thus pastors can be neglected since they are regarded as having no problems. Thus, pastors should be encouraged to seek help to develop an understanding of how to manage both their personal and work life. In this way, pastors can reduce their stress and anxiety levels by understanding how to balance their lives.

³⁴ Chaudhary and Bagga, "Work Life Imbalance and Psychosocial Tribulations among Working Women."

³⁵ Chung, "Workplace Ostracism And Workplace Behaviors: A Moderated Mediation Model of Perceived Stress and Psychological Empowerment."

³⁶ Shoenfelt, Hays-Thomas, and Koppes Bryan, "An Introduction to Industrial-Organizational Psychology."

³⁷ Campbell Quick, "Workplace Stress and Wellbeing: Pathways for Future Research Advances."

³⁸ Cabrelli, 9. *Work-Life Balance*.

³⁹ Chaudhary and Bagga, "Work Life Imbalance and Psychosocial Tribulations among Working Women."

When pastors feel overwhelmed and burned out, they should understand how to minimize the implications of overworking and stressing out. Minimizing the implications of overworking can be essential in ensuring pastors prevent turnover and improve their capability to be present at all times.⁴⁰ Pastors should feel comfortable approaching their managers and reporting that they feel overwhelmed. Being open can encourage pastors to reduce their stress levels by delegating extra duties and ensuring they have enough rest. When pastors are open to revealing that they are being overworked, they may develop fulfillment and happiness in both their personal and work lives.

Pastors should be trained to balance their workload. They should be encouraged to have timetables to ensure they prioritize the most vital aspect of their work and avoid overworking. Pastors can be encouraged to postpone secondary duties and responsibilities to ensure they work on them when they have rested. Pastors can improve their productivity when they work after a meaningful rest. Management of tasks is a vital aspect in ensuring a balance between personal and work life. On the other hand, pastors can hire personal assistants to help them manage their personal and work lives.

The importance of a work-life balance should be advertised among pastors to ensure they understand the importance of this balance. For instance, pastors should clearly understand that a life balance can be essential for both their mental and physical well-being.⁴¹ This is because the life balance reduces stress which can help them think clearly and make the right choices while at work. More importantly, by having enough time to rest and exercise, pastors can increase their productivity by loving their work and having less fatigue. Similarly, enough rest and good sleep among pastors can reflect on their mental health as they will have a healthy lifestyle.

Also, pastors should understand that a work-life balance can ensure that they build meaningful relationships and focus on improving their relationships both at work and at home. Pastors can have enough time with their kids and still get back to work and perform their ministerial duties. A balanced life can also improve creative thinking among pastors and this is essential in the decision-making process.⁴² Pastors are leaders and thus they often act as role models. They should have better control of their lives by having a balanced life to encourage their congregation to follow in their footsteps.

Additionally, pastors should have an open conversation about their mental health. When pastors are encouraged to have an open conversation about their mental health, they can develop an understanding of how to improve their mental health. Typically, the role and responsibilities of pastors can be stressful at times, and thus it is essential that they have open conversations regarding their mental health.⁴³ This can be important in ensuring they understand how to cope with stressful situations and become better people in society. More importantly, pastors can develop emotional balance by having open conversations regarding their mental health.

Pastors should be given enough time to go on vacation and focus on their personal lives. This is essential since it ensures they have time to reenergize and come back rejuvenated. This is also vital since they can improve their productivity since they will work after resting. Taking time far from work is a vital aspect in ensuring employees remain satisfied, productive, and focused.⁴⁴ Thus, pastors should be offered enough time to focus on their personal lives and even spend time with their families. Normally, pastors spend more time with other families and they may end up neglecting their, thus, they should be given time to spend with their families.

Pastors can also take their own initiative and ensure they maintain a work-life balance. For instance, they should be encouraged to access live services and personal health trainers and coaches. Personal health coaches can be vital in ensuring pastors closely monitor their psychological and physical well-being.⁴⁵ Normally pastors often focus on the well-being of their congregation and they

⁴⁰ Green, "196 Health and Wellbeing- Work-Life Imbalance in Developing Countries."

⁴¹ Gaur and Saminathan, "Study Report on Work Life Imbalance Impact on Job Satisfaction in Non-Clinical Staff at Tertiary Health Care Center, Delhi."

⁴² Lim and Misra, "Work/Life Balance."

⁴³ Riggio, "Research Methods in Industrial/Organizational Psychology."

⁴⁴ Chung, "Workplace Ostracism And Workplace Behaviors: A Moderated Mediation Model of Perceived Stress and Psychological Empowerment."

⁴⁵ Haddock-Millar and Tom, "Work-Life Balance."

may end up neglecting theirs, thus, having personal coaches can be essential in monitoring the well-being of pastors. In such cases, personal health trainers can also encourage pastors to take some time off from work after stressful activities.

Additionally, pastors should be encouraged to take part in exercise and physical activities to ensure they have a balanced life that doesn't heavily rely on work but also on personal activities. Exercise has been known to result in the secretion of endorphins in the body; this hormone is responsible for leading to good moods and happiness.⁴⁶ Thus, pastors must exercise regularly and not just spend most of their time behind desks.

More importantly, pastors should be assisted in having a personalized health journey where they can monitor their own well-being and ensure they know when to get rest and when to resume work. In such cases, it is vital that pastors develop a better understanding of their well-being to develop a personalized health plan. They should be given an opportunity to develop social connections with their colleagues and friends and ensure that they have an active social life.⁴⁷ Through their social lives, pastors can have meaning and happiness in their lives. Pastors should be given a chance to have seamless adaptive and integrated partner resources. This can be essential in ensuring pastors have an active social life. They should be given time to engage in fun and team-based challenges that enhance well-being and boost collaboration.

How Pastors Can Cope with Work-life Balance Challenges

Although pastors face various challenges in maintaining a work-life balance, there are various ways pastors can cope with these challenges. One of the main ways is that pastors should be clear and precise with what they expect from their personal and work life. In this manner, pastors who understand what they expect from their work and personal life can develop a healthy balance between the two. Through understanding what they expect from their personal and life balance, pastors can determine whether the demands from their personal and work-life balance are aligned with their expectations.

For every challenging situation, pastors should ask themselves what their gain is. More importantly, pastors should understand the price they pay for these situations. These questions can be essential in the creation of a healthy work-life balance.⁴⁸ Also, pastors can ask themselves who else benefits from these situations since this can help them develop a better structure for their choices and decisions. The lack of control among pastors can be coped with by finding a contrasting internal response. In such cases, pastors should not be frustrated when they lack control of their lives as this may worsen the situation.

Pastors need to understand how to accept various challenging situations and accept the fact that they may lack control of their lives. Acceptance is the first step in ensuring pastors develop control of their lives. In cases of unsupportive relationships, pastors should develop skills in people management and ensure they improve their expectations and communication skills. Proper listening and communication can go a long way in ensuring supportive relationships are developed.⁴⁹ More importantly, seeking help and support in the development of supportive relationships can help pastors maintain a work-life balance.

When seeking support, pastors can understand how to restructure their expectations and ensure they are realistic to avoid getting frustrated. The issue of limited resources among pastors that contributes to the lack of personal assistance and nannies can be solved by being creative and finding new sources of resources. In such cases, pastors can outsource some of their tasks to ensure they are not overworked.⁵⁰ Overworking is a serious problem that can hinder the work-life balance since pastors are often left exhausted and they may fail to focus on their personal lives.

⁴⁶ Campbell Quick, "Workplace Stress and Wellbeing: Pathways for Future Research Advances."

⁴⁷ Green, "196 Health and Wellbeing- Work-Life Imbalance in Developing Countries."

⁴⁸ Cabrelli, 9. *Work-Life Balance*.

⁴⁹ Chung, "Workplace Ostracism And Workplace Behaviors: A Moderated Mediation Model of Perceived Stress and Psychological Empowerment."

⁵⁰ Mckew, "Work-Life Imbalance Causes Healthcare Workers to Quit."

Resilience is also a vital aspect that can help pastors develop a healthy work-life balance. One of the best ways of developing resilience is through meditation where pastors can take ample time to focus on their personal lives. Thus, pastors should ensure they give themselves adequate time where they can have mindful meditation and focus on improving their weaknesses and their strengths.⁵¹ More importantly, meditation can be vital in reducing stress among pastors as they may focus on the most crucial aspect of life. In such cases, pastors can avoid passing on their stress to their personal lives.

The lack of skills is also a challenge that can hinder pastors from establishing a healthy work and life balance. Thus, when pastors recognize their weaknesses and lack of skills, they should take immediate action in ensuring they develop and improve their skills. More importantly, the development of these meaningful skills can establish control in their lives. Control can help them better manage their work and life demands.⁵² In such cases, pastors should also focus on reducing stress through strategies such as meditation and mindfulness to ensure that pastors become kinder to themselves and accept the various situations in their lives.

CONCLUSION

This article has looked at the effects of work-life balance on the psychological and physical well-being of pastors in the United States of America. It discussed the various challenges of pastors while maintaining their work-life balance. Some of these challenges mentioned include unrealistic demands and a lack of resources. It has been posited that living a balanced life will have both psychological and physical effects on pastors in the US. They would thus be able to work efficiently and effectively to ensure that the gospel is spread accordingly. Stakeholders (Church Leadership) should endeavour to promote the well-being of pastors so that they do not develop burnout.

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⁵¹ Epstein et al., “Work-Life Imbalance in the Time of COVID-19.”

⁵² Campbell Quick, “Workplace Stress and Wellbeing: Pathways for Future Research Advances.”

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