



**PASTORAL CARE INTERVENTIONS BY UNTRAINED PASTORAL CAREGIVERS IN
POLOKWANE LOCAL MUNICIPALITY, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA**

By

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DECLARATION

I, Segotji Elias Mashabela, declare that the thesis entitled “**Counselling Interventions by Untrained Pastoral Counsellors in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa**” is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledge by means of complete references.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Mashabela', is written above a horizontal line.

Mr Segotji Elias Mashabela

23 February 2024



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife Duduzile Mashabela, Morwedi 'a Thabethe, who always encouraged me to go higher than where I am and to my children Londeka, Tumisho and Rethabisitswe who admire me as their role model.



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me.

ABSTRACT

Studies that were conducted about pastoral counselling interventions have successfully brought to light areas which were previously unknown. However, little has been written about pastoral counselling interventions by untrained pastoral counsellors and the role that untrained pastoral counsellors play in their pastoral counselling interventions. Some of their interventions were acceptable but other interventions were outrightly unacceptable, questionable, and a little deviant from the expected norm. This study seeks to investigate various counselling interventions and services conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors in the Polokwane Local Municipality of the Limpopo Province of South Africa. A qualitative research approach was utilized to solicit the needed information from various participants in this study to answer the research questions. This study utilized purposive sampling. These willing participants were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. Focus group discussions added more value in getting more helpful information for better analysis and interpretation of the findings of this study. The findings that this study generated will add light to the body of knowledge and allow other researchers to expand more on this subject or related parts of this topic.

Key Words: Clergyperson, Pastoral care, Pastoral counselling, Mutual care, Pastoral Psychotherapy, Untrained pastor,



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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Some media reports about men of cloak concerning their congregants and their lives are raising questions. After conducting many hearings that implicated misconduct of pastors who claimed to be helping troubled congregants, the chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Commission), expressed her desire which included that the Commission should recommend to the government to have pastors licensed (CRL Commission Report 2017:35). The unorthodox rituals and interventions as noted above, implicating pastoral counsellors in the name of helping and counselling, pose a threat to the communities as expressed by the CRL Rights Commission. Due to such malpractices by some pastors, the CRL Commission (2017) was obliged to carry out investigations and hearings throughout South Africa. Part of the findings of the report caught my attention. These are what the Commission labelled as indecent activities in which pastors were found to have urged their congregants to drink petrol, fed congregants rats, and snakes, sprayed congregants with doom insecticide, locked congregants in deep freezers, male pastoral counsellors raped young girls in their churches, congregants urged to eat grass, and the pastor was reported to have driven over their congregants. Many people who did that are pastoral counsellors from Limpopo Province and some of them are from Capricorn District Municipality, in Polokwane Local Municipality.

Pastoral counselling is a form of counselling that integrates psychological insights, and spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. I align my thoughts



with the view held by McMinn (2011) regarding pastoral counselling. He defined pastoral counselling as “a specialized form of counselling that integrates psychological, theological, and spiritual insights to address the needs of individuals seeking help with emotional, relational, and spiritual issues.” This definition makes it clear that this form of counselling is a specialization, and it integrates other forms of counselling within it.

Hill and Pargament (2008:65) define pastoral counselling as “the application of psychological principles and techniques to issues of spiritual life and religious faith, with special attention given to the pastoral role of spiritual care.” In adding their voice to the definition of pastoral counselling, these scholars emphasized the spiritual and caring part of pastoral counselling and I concur with them because one cannot separate pastoral counselling from the component of care that is expected from pastoral counsellors.

Practitioners of pastoral counselling (pastoral counsellors) are religious leaders or trained professionals with a background in both theology and counselling, and who use spiritual and religious principles to help individuals address emotional, psychological, and spiritual challenges they are faced with in life. The religious principles that pastoral counsellors use, are labelled by Meyer (2020:5-7) as “tools of faith and are listed as Bible verses, meditation, and confession.” The listing of religious principles used by pastoral counsellors as noted by Meyer is found to be helpful and also bringing a distinction between pastoral counselling and other forms of counselling. I align my thoughts with those of Meyer because other forms of counselling do not use these religious principles or tools of faith as Meyer addresses them.

Pastoral counselling is a specialized form of counselling that is provided by trained and licensed counsellors who are also ordained ministers or spiritual leaders. Both Patton (1983) and Snodgrass (2012) echoed the same sentiments that services of pastoral counselling are conducted by pastors who are educated in theology and are ordained for that ministry of counselling. I concur with these scholars in their assertion because it is a task that requires not only training but also a specialized form of training.



Pastoral counsellors use a holistic approach to address the concerns of their clients, recognizing that individuals are not just physical beings, but also emotional and spiritual beings. They use this combination of psychological, theological, and spiritual insights to help their clients to understand and to deal with their problems. Like other forms of counselling, pastoral counselling also has its goals, which are to help clients find meaning and purpose in their lives, develop a stronger relationship with their faith, and work toward personal growth and healing. Pastoral counsellors often address a wide range of issues which range from depression, anxiety, relationship problems, grief, addiction, and spiritual concerns. While addressing challenges such as the psychological and emotional needs of clients, pastoral counsellors also help individuals to achieve a greater sense of the meaning, purpose, and inner peace.

As an intervention, pastoral counselling integrates spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. Common elements of how pastoral counselling is done are as follows:

- Relationship building: The pastoral counsellor works to build a strong and trusting relationship with the client (or counselee). This may involve active listening, empathy, and validation of information told to the pastoral counsellor.
- Assessing the needs of the counselee: The pastoral counsellor assesses the client's needs by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the client's emotional, psychological, and spiritual health. This may involve reviewing the client's history and discussing current concerns.
- Element of spirituality: Pastoral counselling is unique from other forms of counselling in that it integrates spiritual and religious beliefs into the counselling process. The pastoral counsellor helps counsees to connect with their faith and to find meaning and purpose in their lives.

- Evidence-based techniques: While pastoral counselling involves spiritual and religious aspects, it is still based on evidence-based techniques used in traditional counselling.
- Pastoral counsellor and counselee confidentiality: in both clinical and pastoral counselling, confidentiality is an important virtue that should be maintained and the relationship between the counsellor and client is built on trust and mutual respect.
- Goal setting and evaluation of goals by both the pastoral counsellor and the counselee: The pastoral counsellor and client work together to set goals for the counselling process. As Egan's Skilled Helper Model guides, this may involve developing a treatment plan that is tailored to the unique needs of the individual.
- Follow-up sessions: The pastoral counsellor may follow up with the counselee after the counselling sessions to monitor progress and make any necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.

Pastoral counselling differs from other forms of counselling conducted by psychologists and social workers. In its practice, pastoral counselling integrates spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. To spell out how pastoral counselling differs from psychological and social work interventions, the following points should be considered:

- Psychologists are trained to diagnose and treat mental health disorders using evidence-based therapies, while social workers are trained to address the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to mental health issues.
- The focus in psychological counselling is on the individual's internal psychological experiences, such as thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Social work counselling takes a broader perspective, addressing the social, cultural, and environmental factors that impact an individual's mental health.
- Psychological counselling uses a range of therapeutic techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, psychodynamic therapy, and humanistic therapy. Social work counselling may also use these techniques, but they also focus on



practical problem-solving and skill-building techniques to help clients overcome social barriers.

- Psychological counselling is typically provided in private practice settings, such as, but not limited to, mental health clinics, or hospitals. Social work counselling is often provided in community-based organizations, schools, or government agencies.

To sum it up, the three interventions as mentioned above, are focused on helping individuals overcome mental health issues, but they differ in their focus on treatment, therapeutic techniques, and settings. Although many authors made efforts and were successful in their studies about pastoral counselling, the interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors who conduct pastoral counselling to their troubled members were not explored. This proposal presents a statement of the problem, aim, research objectives, research questions, and the research methodology.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Pastoral counselling is a form of therapy that integrates spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. The interventions provided by untrained pastoral counsellors in the Polokwane Local Municipality present a significant research problem. The understanding around what is the potential advantages and constraints of untrained pastoral counsellors' interventions is hampered by the dearth of empirical research concentrating specifically on those practices in this area, which hinders the creation of relevant training to ensure that they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills that provide effective and ethical counselling interventions. As a result, there is an urgent need to investigate the counselling interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors in the Polokwane Local Municipality to learn more about their methods, efficacy, and effects on the community.



1.3 AIMS OF THE STUDY

The aims of this study are:

- To understand the depth of knowledge in pastoral work by pastors from their own perspective
- To establish the knowledge of the difference between pastoral care and pastoral counselling from their own perspective
- To understand the effectiveness of pastoral intervention in counselling from the perspective of the ordinary members of the church

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this study are as follows:

- To use the findings to build a recommendation for pastoral care in the context of African people and their complex challenges
- To create an awareness of the dangers of doing counselling without formal training in relevant methods in the field of the study
- To assess the adherence of untrained pastoral counsellors with the legislation
- To examine the efficacy of untrained pastoral counselling interventions on the counselees

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS



The research questions of this study are as follows:

- What are the pastoral counselling interventions that are conducted by trained and untrained pastoral counsellors?
- Why are some churches allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it?
- How are congregants and communities affected by pastoral counselling interventions conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors?

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of the study is to shed light on the pastoral counselling practices by untrained pastoral counsellors and to explore the potential harm that untrained pastoral counsellors may cause to individuals seeking counselling because of their lack of formal training in pastoral counselling. The study highlights the importance of proper training in pastoral counselling and psychotherapy, as well as the use of evidence-based practices and adherence to ethical guidelines and professional standards. The study also emphasizes the need to address the concerns of community members and congregants of untrained pastoral counsellors who may be unaware of the potential harm that could result from receiving counselling from an untrained individual.

Data collecting methods that were used in this study aided in bringing together relevant information and provided evidence-based solutions to address the problem of untrained pastoral counsellors. This study may benefit both community members and untrained pastoral counsellors by mitigating the potential harm caused by a lack of formal training in pastoral counselling and providing suggestions for assistance in developing pastoral counselling skills.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of adhering to core professional values in counselling, such as safeguarding the integrity of the counsellor-client relationship and practicing competently and ethically. It underscores the need for trained pastoral counsellors who can provide evidence-based and effective counselling services to individuals seeking help.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

After conducting many hearings that implicated misconduct of pastors who claimed to be helping troubled congregants, the chairperson of the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities expressed her desire which included that “the Commission should recommend to the government to have pastors licensed” (CRL Commission Report, 2017:35). The unorthodox rituals and interventions that implicate pastoral counsellors in the name of helping and counselling, pose a threat to the communities as expressed by the Commission for the Promotion and Protection of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. Due to such malpractices by some pastors, the CRL Commission (2017) was obliged to carry out investigations and hearings throughout South Africa. Part of the findings of the report caught my attention. These are what the Commission has labelled as indecent activities in which pastors were found to have urged their congregants to drink petrol, fed congregants rats, and snakes sprayed congregants with doom insecticide, locked congregants in deep freezers, male pastoral counsellors raped young girls in their churches, and congregants urged to eat grass.. Radebe (2021:1) and Heyman (2021) recorded incidences of some pastors of Capricorn District Municipality who lured female members of their churches into their offices to give them a prophetic word from God; when these female members refused to sleep with them, pastors threatened to kill them or throw them out of their congregations.

The CRL Commission’s investigation the commercialization of religion by religious leaders. One point that stood out, which the Commission lamented in various sections of their report is the “lack of training and education of pastors and pastoral counsellors” (CRL



Commission Report 2017:16). This report suggests that one of the contributing factors that led to indecent practices by pastors is their lack of training when they get into the work of God. This is why recommendations 3 and 8 of the Commission (2017:35-36) urge the South African government to reconsider training, education, and licensing of pastoral counsellors to be a requirement for this profession just as much as other professions such as pharmacists, psychologists, social workers also have requirements to meet before they are registered and licensed as professionals. According to the Commission, the fact that many of these pastoral counsellors are not trained, not licensed, and are not regulated or accountable to any statutory organisation, opens a loophole of abuse of people's belief systems.

1.8 PASTORAL COUNSELLING AS VIEWED BY SCHOLARS

Definitions and views held by scholars about pastoral counselling shed more light on what this concept is. I found it important to share the views of scholars in this section so that the concept is made clear before I delve into the state of literature about this subject.

Studies that were previously conducted by researchers revealed that pastoral counselling is an intervention that is being utilized both internationally and nationally by people who experience challenges in their lives. Europe, America, Africa, as well as South Africa, have been cited by scholars regarding how they view and use pastoral counselling as an intervention when they face challenges in life.

Encyclopedia (2022:1) defines pastoral counselling as “the practice of talking with individuals, couples, and families to increase their understanding of emotional and religious conflicts and to help resolve problems using religious and other resources.” The term ‘pastoral counselling’ has its roots in Latin as Louw (2011:155) noted. Louw wrote that the Latin *pascere* has been interpreted in English as a pastor, denoting that the pastor must feed and take care of the flock. According to Louw's (2011:155) interpretation of pastoral counselling, locate pastoral care and counselling within the field of theology, the

science that deals with the care of human souls (*cura animarum*). Patton (1983:16) defines pastoral counselling as “a type of pastoral care that is performed by one who has been educated theologically for ordained ministry and who has the identity and accountability of a clergyperson”. Both Louw and Patton give clear and congruent definitions of what pastoral counselling is as well as the fact that it deals not only with the mental part of the person but also the soul of the person. I find their definition important because this definition gives a holistic view of what pastoral counselling is.

Snodgrass (2015:5-6) noted one additional focus of pastoral counselling, which is the spiritual well-being of the person. The mentioning of the spiritual well-being of the person by this scholar plays a crucial role in this concept because this is what makes pastoral counselling stand out as a specialization in addition to the other conventional forms of counselling. Pastoral counselling is distinct from other forms of counselling that are offered by professionals like social workers and psychologists. As Meyer (2020:5-7) stated, “pastoral counselling uses tools of faith such as Bible verses, meditation, and confession, which are not used in counselling conducted by social workers and psychologists.”

Streets (2014:1) noted that “pastoral counselling is a constituent of practical theology.” Practical and pastoral theology (as they are interchangeably used) are mentioned by Atkinson and Field (2014:47) as the “study of all aspects of the care of persons in the church. Pastoral theology, from where pastoral counselling emanates, focuses mainly on pastoral counselling, also known as the care of souls.” To be a pastoral counsellor, according to Townsend (2009), one had to be allocated for that specialized ministry by one’s denomination because this helps to keep pastoral counsellors accountable for the ministry in their home. I concur with Townsend when emphasizing that pastoral counsellors who are accountable to their denominations are likely to do their work with care and caution as they are aware that they are being monitored and should give an account of their counselling activities to their denominations. Jackson (2012) brings another shade of meaning to pastoral counselling which adds value to the definitions

given by other authors. In his definition of what pastoral counselling is, Jackson (2012:5) noted that “pastoral counselling is a specialization engaged in by clergy people who have had special training in counselling under supervision.

1.8.1 Pastoral Counselling in America and Europe

Townsend (2009:3) noted that “pastoral counselling had its origin in Protestant pastors in North America, now known as the United States of America (USA) as a twentieth-century phenomenon and that they incorporated psychological information into it, making it a ministry specialty that required distinctive training.” According to Townsend (2009:3), “pastoral counselling claims a genealogy anchored in ancient Hebrew and Christian understanding of care which expanded through the history of the Western Christian church and the Protestant Reformation.” Pastoral counselling later focused on the confluence of modern theology and behavioural sciences in Europe and the USA. As Townsend noted, between 1920-1940, in both USA and Europe, physicians and psychologists welcomed pastoral counsellors, addressing them as partners in treatment and viewed pastoral counselling as moral education or suggestive therapy. Besides the fact that pastoral counselling is viewed as a professional field in Europe, Radoja (2015:148) remarked that “pastoral counselling is considered by some Europeans as one of the most anticipated activities by patients and health personnel.”

Pastoral counselling in the United Kingdom (UK) has been and is still the practice that is on the increase even now, as noted by Savage (2021). According to Savage (2021:3), chaplaincy and pastoral care in the United Kingdom are of great worth among the people, even among non-religious ones. Savage noted that pastoral care (of which pastoral counselling forms the major part) in the UK has increased in importance in the period from 2011 to 2019. Savage’s study highlighted that chaplaincy departments (the department that deals with pastoral care and counselling) are experiencing an increase in the number of chaplains in prisons and a shift in terms of the services that are conducted by chaplains. He highlighted that chaplains’ time at work is no longer

conducting specific religious activities such as worship, prayer, and sacraments, but doing works of care and pastoral counselling in prisons and health care facilities and that this was noted as the primary role of chaplains in the United Kingdom.

1.8.2 Pastoral Counselling in Africa

Machinga (2019:151) posits that “before the African continent was occupied by adherents of the Christian and Islamic religious traditions, native Africans had their own beliefs, thoughts, interventions, and worldviews.” Writing about Zimbabweans’ views of God, he added that Zimbabweans had their spirituality, which consisted of attitudes, beliefs, practices, and rituals that enabled them to cope with day-to-day realities. Machinga further points out that Africans believe there is God, addressing God in their different languages, and that according to Africans, one cannot directly approach God when one encounters difficulties in life. Africans believe that God is supreme and that the only way of approaching God is through the ancestors. Machinga (2029) states that the people of Africa do not have a problem with pastoral counselling, except that the Western approach should not be forced on the people of Africa. In his own words and with a tone of caution to pastoral counsellors, Machinga (2019:152) remarked:

“Pastoral counsellors operating in a particular location need to respect and honour the location, i.e. the identity, attitudes, and positions of a people. For pastoral counsellors operating in Zimbabwe, although the client may be a Christian, the client’s religious location, as well as how the client experiences and lives the Christian faith, is deeply informed by indigenous African thoughts.”

Conducting Pastoral counselling in Africa requires the counsellor to understand the worldview of Africans regarding their interpretation of the origin of the problems and how problems should be solved. Louw (2011:155) asserts that any theory of counselling people in Africa, even a definition of care and counselling, should deal with an African worldview, philosophy, and spirituality. Louw (2011:150) further mentions that in African societies, herbalists, priests, and diviners are seen as specialists in dealing with personal and interpersonal problems. Louw observed that in Africa, healing is ritualistic and

communal and that the source of healing is attributed to the ancestors. Although pastoral counselling is acceptable to the people of Africa as an intervention to assist those who seek help with their problems. “Ancestral worship with its various forms of rituals is viewed as the most effective way of solving problems in an African perspective” (Louw, 2011:150).

1.8.3 Pastoral Counselling in South Africa

In his argument regarding the South African perspective on pastoral counselling, Phaswana (2008:18) argues that “pastoral counselling would become meaningless if counsellors ignored the South African cultural context.” About how the Zulu people in South Africa view pastoral counselling and care, Phaswana (2008:60) states that “both the Zulu and Vhavenda people accept and apply pastoral counselling when they go through problems in their lives.” According to his observations, South African people maintain that in their use of pastoral counselling, certain behaviours and cultural practices should not be neglected, which according to Phaswana (2008), if they are neglected, pastoral counselling and care would be superficial and irrelevant. Phaswana’s study revealed that in addition to pastoral counselling, some people in South Africa believe that the ancestors have answers to their problems because the ancestors are in touch with the spirits, and if they are well pleased, they will heal the problems that individuals and families encounter. In the above section, Phaswana’s comments are about problems of life in general, not those that are a result of crime in the country.

The findings of the study conducted by Davies and Dreyer (2014) indicated the reasons that prompt South Africans to turn to the pastor for answers. These scholars have found that South Africa is a country in which various forms of crime are experienced by its citizens in the cities as well as in townships. They singled out domestic violence and abuse, rape of infants and toddlers, child abuse, maltreatment of children, spousal abuse and human trafficking. These scholars have indicated that the effects of these violent situations, leave South Africans with hopelessness, self-hatred, guilt, despair, and self-

annihilation. Davies and Dreyer (2014:2) remarked that because of these difficult situations, “South Africans find themselves with escalated and complex emotions which prompt them to turn to pastors for counselling and restoration of hope in their lives”. In their search for pastoral counselling and hope, they do not make any distinction regarding who is a trained pastor and who is not. They often fall into the hands of untrained pastoral counsellors.

1.8.4 Interventions and Qualifying Criteria of Trained Pastoral Counsellors

Trained pastoral counsellors have acquired Theological training and have a minimum requirement of a Diploma in Theology, as noted by Masenya (2014) and Jackson (2012:5). The American Association of Pastoral Counsellors, cited by (Good Therapy, 2022) clarifies the requirements for one to become a trained pastoral counsellor. The Association stated that one must meet the requirements of their religious group, which is being ordained, receiving graduate-level training in both theology and psychology and earning one of the following graduate degrees:

- Masters degree in Divinity;
- Graduate or Doctoral degree in Biblical Studies, Theological Studies, or Spiritual Studies; and
- Graduate or Doctoral Degree in Pastoral Counselling.

In addition to that, the trained pastoral counsellor must also complete 375 hours of supervised self-reflective clinical pastoral education (CPE) experience. This supervised clinical pastoral experience should be done with classroom instruction and discussion to ensure candidates fully integrate their learning in theology and behavioural science. After meeting the training requirements and practical experience, the association expects the candidate to take part in a 90-minute interview conducted by a certification committee to finalize the process.



Trained pastoral counsellors are affiliated with credible professional body such as the Association for Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP), the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP), and the South African Council of churches. The ACRP and ASCHP are professional bodies that are constantly monitored by and submitted to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for quality practices by members of these associations. Members of these associations undergo further training in their programs called Continuous Professional Development which earns members credits on successful completion. This is not happening with untrained pastoral counsellors. As a professional body, and in addition to registering and regulating the operations of other counsellors, ASCHP registers also members of Faith-Based organisation. These are pastoral counsellors who are on the ASCHP list of counsellors that are periodically submitted to SAQA. ASCHP (2022:1) indicated that it provides a code of conduct and operates a disciplinary mechanism for the reporting and investigation of members who are alleged to have contravened the code. It further indicated that one of its mandates is to ensure that its members practice within their professional scope of practice, which is not the case with untrained pastoral counsellors.

Trained pastoral counsellors are accountable to a regulatory body. Their churches are under the auspices of the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and they are therefore accountable to the SACC. Their interventions and services are to restore life and hope to the souls of those who suffered abuse and or problems in their lives. They signed a code of ethics that prohibits them from having sexual relations outside of their marriages.

1.8.5 Practices of Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

Pastoral counsellors use a holistic approach to address the concerns of their clients, recognizing that individuals are not just physical beings, but also emotional and spiritual beings. They use a combination of psychological, theological, and spiritual insights to help their clients understand and deal with their problems. The goal of pastoral counselling is

to help clients find meaning and purpose in their lives, develop a stronger relationship with their faith, and work toward personal growth and healing. Pastoral counsellors may address a wide range of issues such as depression, anxiety, relationship problems, grief, addiction, and spiritual concerns.

In pastoral counselling, confidentiality is maintained, and the relationship between the counsellor and client is built on trust and mutual respect. Pastoral counsellors may work in various settings such as hospitals, mental health clinics, and churches, and may offer individual, couple, or group counselling sessions. As a form of counselling intervention, the purpose of pastoral counselling is to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues.

Cook, House and Guerra, (2014) and Jones and Butler (2017) present a summary of the benefits of pastoral counselling in which they indicated that clients of it enjoy the following benefits:

- Improved coping skills: Pastoral counselling can help individuals develop coping skills and resilience in the face of difficult life circumstances.
- Holistic assistance: because of its nature, pastoral counsellors often take a holistic approach to therapy, considering not only the mental and emotional aspects of a person's well-being, but also their physical, social, and spiritual health.
- Guidance and support: Pastoral counsellors can provide guidance and support for individuals who are struggling with questions related to their faith, spirituality, or moral values.

1.8.6 Increased Sense of Meaning and Purpose

For some individuals, pastoral counselling can help them gain a deeper understanding of

their place in the world and their purpose in life. The discrepancies between how trained pastoral counselling is done and how untrained pastoral counsellors are doing it can be attributed to their lack of formal training and psychotherapy in pastoral counselling. Without proper training, untrained pastoral counsellors may also inadvertently harm individuals by giving inappropriate advice or failing to recognize the signs of serious mental health issues. Due to being untrained in pastoral counselling skills, pastoral counsellors may fall into the temptation of relying on their own beliefs and experiences rather than evidence-based practices, which can lead to limited or ineffective treatment. They may also lack knowledge of ethical guidelines and professional standards for counselling, which can result in boundary violations or other forms of unethical behaviour.

Trained pastoral counsellors abide by professional values which they receive from the boards that hold them accountable. Two of the core professional values of the American Counselling Association, which untrained pastoral counsellors are often reported for conflict with core professional values 4 and 5. Core Professional value 4 states that a counsellor should safeguard the integrity of the counsellor-client relationship, and core professional value 5 emphasizes that counsellors should practice competently and ethically. These two core professional values are found to be important as they fit well within this study, and they offer information that is relevant and helpful about counselling intervention. I concur with these core professional values of the Association because, without the guidance of professional values, practitioners are likely to do unexpected things. Untrained pastoral counsellors are often found to be lacking in these two core professional values.

Interventions used in this study among others, included interaction with willing participants who were relevant and had first-hand information related to this study. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were used to solicit required information from willing participants so that this study produced evidence-based solutions that could give proper answers to the research question.

The fact that untrained pastoral counsellors conduct counselling without having formal training in it, may raise concerns within communities and congregants of the untrained pastors. If they continue offering counselling to the clients, there is a likelihood that they may harm individuals by giving inappropriate advice or by failing to recognize the signs of serious mental health issues in their clients. Arresting this problem will therefore help in attending to apparent concerns that could be raised by community members and congregants of the untrained pastoral counsellors. Addressing the problem could also benefit both the community members as well as the untrained pastoral counsellors in a variety of ways. One of the benefits of arresting this problem is that possible harm as the result of lack of formal training in pastoral counselling could be mitigated and or avoided. It could also be important (since the willingness to serve is there) that possible assistance in pastoral counselling skills be suggested to untrained pastoral counsellors so that they may render effective and evidence-based practices.

This study may benefit people in several ways. Firstly, the findings of the study could create awareness within communities and congregations about the potential risks associated with untrained pastoral counselling. This can encourage them to seek trained pastoral counsellors or other mental health professionals when needed, rather than relying solely on untrained pastoral counsellors.

Secondly, the study may provide evidence-based solutions to address the problem of untrained pastoral counselling. By using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis, the study gathered relevant information from willing participants and produced effective interventions that helped to mitigate the harm that could be caused by untrained pastoral counselling.

Thirdly, the study highlighted the importance of professional values and ethical guidelines in pastoral counselling. By emphasizing core professional values such as safeguarding the integrity of the counsellor-client relationship and practicing competently and ethically, the study could raise awareness among untrained pastoral counsellors about the



importance of adhering to these values. Overall, the study may benefit individuals, communities, and congregations by promoting safe and effective pastoral counselling practices, reducing the risks associated with untrained pastoral counselling, and providing guidance and support for untrained pastoral counsellors who wish to improve their skills and knowledge in this area.

As noted by Hyman (2021:1), “untrained pastoral counsellors often rape their members, especially young girls who are members of their congregations.” These untrained pastoral counsellors have dubious ways of delivering messages of God to female congregants. They lure female congregants into their offices in the pretext of giving them pastoral counselling, but during that, they threaten them with death if these ladies refuse to have sexual intercourse with them, as noted by Radebe (2021). As the CRL Commission noted (2017), most of their churches are owned by one person or sometimes by the leader together with his wife. As such they are not accountable to any person or any regulatory body. They are not trained, not educated concerning church work, and are not licensed, as the CRL Commission (2017:35-36) noted and attempted to urge the South African government to make it mandatory for them to have qualifications related to church work and that they should be licensed and regulated, just like other professionals. Bitrus and Kinison (2021:147) address untrained pastoral counsellors as “unlettered, untrained, unskilled and ill-informed” pastors and that they are marked by the false gospel as well as mess and confusion in the communities where they practice their pastoral counselling.

As noted by the above scholars, I concur with them that untrained pastoral counsellors are seen by the trends noted above which are summarized as follows: no qualification concerning church ministry, surrounded by scandals which include raping their church members, giving advice that is hurtful and confusing to those who go to them for help, unaccountable to any regulatory body, has no license and are ill-informed, and unskilled in their work.

1.8.7 Distinction Between Interventions of Trained and Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

In their code of ethics for pastoral counsellors who enter counselling ministry within their communities, the National Association of Evangelicals (2012:1) demands that “pastoral counsellors should sign the code of ethics.” One of the ethical lines within the code states that the pastoral counsellor should at all costs and always avoid sexual relations with the people that he/she helps. This is not so with untrained pastoral counsellors since there is no code of ethics that they sign.

Whereas trained pastoral counsellors had undergone training concerning the ministry of pastoral counselling, untrained pastoral counsellors are not trained (as indicated by the authors above). Trained pastoral counsellors are not surrounded by scandalous reports of raping those they help. But untrained pastoral counsellors are surrounded by such disturbing reports that are in the CRL Commission report (as stated above).

Whereas trained pastoral counsellors are accountable to their churches as well as to their regulatory professional bodies, untrained pastoral counsellors are not accountable to any regulatory body because they have no formal qualification qualifying them as professionals and they are not under any regulatory body that governs their pastoral counselling interventions. Trained pastoral counsellors undergo Continuous Professional Development carried out by their professional bodies as mentioned by ACRP and ASCHP. Untrained pastoral counsellors do not take any Continuous Professional Development studies.

1.9 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study -was underpinned on the theory by Chris Schlauch (1985) known as Pastoral Psychotherapy. Schlauch (1985:1) defines pastoral psychotherapy as “a psychotherapeutic activity in which a pastoral psychotherapist observes, understands, and interprets the psychological, religious, and moral dimensions of the ongoing process

through psychological, theological, and ethical frames of reference”.

Carrol (2021) notes that pastoral psychotherapy embraces and integrates the disciplines of theology, spirituality, and faith. He also highlighted that this theory uses traditional religious resources such as prayer, reading of Scripture, meditation, and worship and that pastoral psychotherapy is mostly loved because of its responsiveness to the spiritual values and beliefs of the clients. The concept, of pastoral, from where pastoral counselling stems, was well demystified by Oates (1974) as he makes a distinction between pastoral counselling from other forms of counselling. Oates (1974:11) noted that “pastoral counselling becomes pastoral when the counselee or the counsellor focuses on the relationship upon the relation of God to the process of their lives.” According to Oates’ theory, God becomes the third person in the relationship. Oates remarked that instead of counselling being simply a dialogue between the counsellor and the counselee, it becomes a triologue because there is now God as the third person in this relationship. I find this theory very helpful regarding pastoral counselling. The American Psychological Association (2021) asserts that this theory uses insights and principles derived from theology and behavioural sciences to help individuals, couples, families, and groups achieve healing and growth in the challenges they encounter. Cooper-White (2007:5) claims that “pastoral psychotherapy heals painful psychic wounds and long-standing self-defeating relationships with self and others.” Pastoral psychotherapy was found to be the right theory to be used in this research because it is in line with what this research seeks to explore. Data was analysed from the perspective of this theory (pastoral psychotherapy) and followed step by step as Schlauch explained to arrive at the findings that this study seeks to explore.

1.10 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS OR CONCEPTS

1.10.1 Pastoral psychotherapy

McMinn (2011:13) defines pastoral psychotherapy as “a form of therapy that integrates

spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional psychological and therapeutic approaches to address mental, emotional, and spiritual health issues."

1.10.2 Pastoral care

Carrie Doehring (2015: xxii) defines pastoral care as follows: "Pastoral care in Christian and Jewish communities referred to supportive and crisis care offered by lay and ordained members of these religious communities." The adjective "pastoral" refers to the image of the shepherd found in biblical text and Christian traditions. This definition was adopted and applied throughout this study.

1.10.3 Trained pastoral counsellor

Masenya (2014:53) defines a trained pastoral counsellor as a "Christian pastor who has acquired formal training in pastoral counselling and he or she practices under the auspices of the body, such as his/her church or other body that has oversight upon the pastoral counsellor." I align myself with this definition because it fits well within this study, and it will therefore be applied in this study.

1.10.4 Untrained pastoral counsellor

Carlson (2022:1) clarifies the meaning of an untrained Christian pastoral counsellor as a "person who does pastoral counselling and other church work but has no formal training from a recognized theological institute or Seminary and is viewed as 'unlettered, untrained and unskilled.'" This definition leaves me in no darkness because it clearly defines who an untrained pastoral counsellor is. This definition was applied throughout this study because of its lucidity.

1.10.5 Counselling and Counseling: The choice of spelling

Bachelor (2024) makes a distinction between counselling with two L's and counseling with only one L and explains which one is preferred in which country. The counselling with two L's is the one that is used in the United Kingdom (UK) and the counseling with one L is the one preferred in the United States of America. Consequently, the person conducting counselling is called counsellor according to UK English while the same person is spelled counsellor in American English. As indicated, the two words mean one and the same thing, but the spelling differs depending upon the preference of each country. Throughout this document, the researcher will use the counselling and the counsellor with two L's as used in the United Kingdom.

1.11 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

The term 'paradigm', as used in research is well defined by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017) as follows: The term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's 'worldview'. This worldview is the perspective, or thinking, or school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, that informs the meaning or interpretation of research data. A research paradigm inherently reflects the researcher's beliefs about the world that s/he lives in and wants to live in. "It constitutes the abstract beliefs and principles that shape how a researcher sees the world, and how s/he interprets and acts within that world." (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017:26). I concur with the view held by these authors in saying that a research paradigm is a lens through which a researcher looks at the world and examines the methodological aspects of their research project to determine the research methods that will be used and how the data will be analysed.

In this study, I choose the interpretivism approach to arrive at the answers that this study seeks to find. The premise of interpretive researchers is that access to reality is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings. As Kumatongo and Muzata (2021:18) claim, "interpretivism has to do with the way a person



interprets what he or she has seen or experienced.” It is about a full description of a phenomenon with all its variables that are well identified, interpreted, and described so that the whole truth can be said or seen. The interpretation of the above author regarding what interpretivism means is in congruence with that of Muhammad Chowdhury (2014). Chowdhury (2014:432) asserts that “interpretivism refers to the approaches which emphasise the meaningful nature of people’s character and participation in both social and cultural life.” The interpretive approach was suitable in this study because it guides and involves the researcher to interpret elements of the study in interpreting that which will be heard or observed in interactions with participants during semi-structured interviews.

1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.12.1 Research Design

For me to elicit relevant information regarding pastoral counselling by untrained pastors, I followed the qualitative approach. Creswell (2014:3) defines the qualitative research approach as “a method of inquiry that develops an understanding of human and social complexities by relying on data sources such as observations, interviews, and documents”. Since this definition fits well within this study, it was therefore the one that was applied throughout this research. This approach gives me an understanding of the topic under discussion from the perspective of those involved in the real setting of the phenomenon under discussion, namely, marriage couples counselled by pastors, individuals who received counselling from pastors, bereaved families who received counselling from pastors and pre-marital couples who were counselled by pastors. In this sense, the qualitative approach of investigation is understood to be grounded in the interpretivist philosophical position because, just as Pandey (2019:26) states, “the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced, or constituted from the perspective of these participants.’

1.12.2 Data Collection

A variety of data collection techniques were used to collect data. I used semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis because they were understandable and fitted well in this study. Sani (2013:40) defines research data as “facts that are collected for further investigation and view data as factual information used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.” Faculty Development and Instructional Design Centre (2022:1) summarizes the purpose of data collection in research as a “process in qualitative research that helps the researcher uses to answer stated research questions.” I concur with this definition of data collection as it is also confirmed by Kabir (2016:202) who defines data collection as follows:

“Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.”

1.12.3 Population of the Study

As Whitehead and Whitehead (2016) explain, participants who I played a role in this study were recruited according to pre-selected criteria because of their relevance to the study. This sampled population was, those who had information-rich cases, and have the required status, experiences, or knowledge of interest to this study. Because of their information-rich cases for this study and the required experiences, they were chosen to be part of the study so that the research questions could be well answered. These were untrained pastoral counsellors, trained pastoral counsellors, marriage couples, pre-marital couples, bereaved families, and survivors of rape ordeals.

The reason for choosing them was because they had information-rich cases that helped this study to reach its desired expectations. The categories of people above are those who reside in Capricorn District Municipality



Figure 1.9.1 Capricorn Municipality (in Red color), taken from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_Limpopo

The Capricorn District Municipality is situated at the core of economic development in the Limpopo Province and includes the capital of the province, the City of Polokwane. The district consists of four (4) local municipalities, namely, Blouberg LM, Molemole LM, Polokwane LM, and Lepelle-Nkumpi LM. The district covers an area of 185 222.27 Hectares which constitutes 12% of the total surface area of the province is made up of 113 wards and has 28 traditional authorities. The Capricorn District has a total population of 1 372 355 million people representing about 23% of the total population in the province and 2.3% of the population in South Africa. The most populated local municipality in the district is the City of Polokwane, while Molemole is the least populous municipality in the district.

1.12.4 Sample and Sampling Procedure

In their description of what sampling means, Lim and Ting (2012:2) wrote:

“A sample can be characterized as a subset of a particular population, whereby the process of sampling enables the researcher to estimate some unknown

characteristics of a target population. Often, a sample provides a reasonable means to research for gathering useful decision-making information that might be otherwise unattainable and unaffordable.”

This study used a purposive sampling approach in collecting data. The American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics (2016:2) defines purposive sampling as follows:

“The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by knowledge or experience. It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest”.

Guided by the principle of purposive sampling as explained above, I selected participants who possessed the most relevant information regarding the topic under investigation. I also strived to make my sample a correct representation of the population.

The following groups of participants aided in collecting data since data was solicited by using focus group discussions, structured and semi-structured interviews. Permission was requested in to use audio recording. The population of this study included untrained and trained pastoral counsellors, marriage couples, pre-marital couples, bereaved families, and survivors of rape ordeal.

1.12.5 Analysis of Data

Thematic analysis was used to analyse data in this study. Riger and Sigurvinsdottir (2016) define Thematic Analysis as a “method for analysing qualitative data that involves searching for recurring ideas (referred to as themes) in a dataset” (Riger & Sigurvinsdottir, 2016:33). Alhojailan (2012:40) note that “Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to

determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data.” In his claims, Alhojailan (2012:39) states that the “traditional manual use of data analysis is helpful and easy to use”. In their elaboration regarding how researchers should use Thematic Analysis to analyse data, Riger and Sigurvinsdottir (2016:34) draw the attention of researchers by showing that Thematic Analysis has been divided into 6 stages which they summarised as follows:

- Stage 1: Immersing oneself in the data/familiarizing yourself with your data (this stage involves transcribing interviews and reading the transcripts repeatedly)
- Stage 2: Generating initial codes (the researcher identifies an initial list of codes)
- Stage 3: Searching for themes (this stage involves considering how different codes may fit together into broader themes).
- Stage 4: Reviewing themes (identified potential themes need to be reviewed and refined. Some potential themes may not be relevant to the research question, while others might be combined into broader ideas or divided into separate themes).
- Stage 5: Defining and naming themes (identify the central idea in each theme and provide a name that concisely captures that idea).
- Stage 6: Producing the report (the report should now be written because themes and their interrelationships are fully identified. The report should present the analysis in a way that the reader sees as trustworthy).

The use of Thematic Analysis in this study was because of its suitability and clear guidance regarding how data should be analysed. Since it is user-friendly and understandable, it easily helped the researcher to arrive at the objective conclusion about answering the research questions.

1.13 MEASURE OF QUALITY CONTROL

1.13.1 Validity

Brigitte (2017:256) defines validity “as the state of being well grounded or justifiable, relevant, meaningful, logical, confirming to accepted principles or the quality of being sound, just, and well-founded”. In defining what research validity is, Heale and Twycross (2015:66) remark that validity is defined as “the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study.” The authors further gave a vivid example in which they argued that a survey designed to explore depression, but which measures anxiety would not be considered valid. In other words, if this study aims at investigating pastoral services offered by untrained pastoral counsellors but it focuses on preaching services by untrained pastors, this study would be declared not valid. It would have dealt with what it was not intended to deal with, which is pastoral counselling by untrained pastoral counsellors.

Merriam (1995) as used in Brigitte (2017:254), states that “the more times the findings of a study can be replicated, the more stable or reliable the phenomenon is thought to be.” In other words, it is the idea of replicability. Heale and Twycross (2015:66) noted that “reliability has to do with the consistency of results.” If the same method is used to solicit responses from the same group of people on a particular issue, and the same responses are received as the response received in the beginning, the findings or results of my study are reliable. In research like this, reliability will be important. If the same group of respondents are asked the same question and they give the same response as they did in the beginning, that will mean that there is reliability in the study.

1.13.2 Trustworthiness of the Qualitative Research

Pilot and Beck (2014) cited by Connelly (2016:435) assert that “the trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods

used to ensure the quality of a study.” Brigitte (2017:254) defines trustworthiness as “the quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of the findings of qualitative research.” It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence, readers have in results. It is a criterion to judge the quality of a research design.

1.14 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study aims to explore pastoral counselling interventions conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors. The researcher has no intention to advocate pastoral counselling or to criticize it in any way. The study zooms in on the services conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors to assess how beneficial their services are to their congregants. As with many studies, this study also has its limitations and delimitations in terms of its scope and boundaries. Although Limpopo Province has 5 District Municipalities, this study, however, focuses only on Capricorn District Municipality. Capricorn District Municipality was chosen because it is the capital city of Limpopo Province and has many churches and pastors. The choice of problem and objectives of the study are also limiting factors in the study because I could have chosen another perspective at which he would investigate this study. The population of the study is not every person but selected participants who assisted in providing needed information to answer the research question(s). The criteria of participants to enrol in this study are exclusive because only participants with certain qualifying criteria based on their situations were the ones who took part in this study. This study did not cover the pastoral counselling services of all pastors, nor covered the pastoral counselling services of trained pastors. It, however, covered the pastoral counselling services of untrained pastoral counsellors only at Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

1.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were observed in this study. This includes the following: confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. Bos (2020:164) defines confidentiality as follows:

“Any information relating to the private sphere of a person that they wish not to be shared with others is considered ‘confidential.’ This information is differentiated from ‘public information,’ which everyone has a right to access”.

Added to the above definition is the voice of Northeast Ethics Partnership (2012), which defines confidentiality to mean that identifiable information about individuals that was collected during the process of research should not be disclosed without the permission of that person. By this definition, the authors stated that in keeping confidential information of participants, the researcher will not disclose any information gained from an interviewee, deliberately or accidentally, in ways that might identify an individual. Petrova, Deweng and Camillery (2014) indicate that confidentiality in research is an important part because it enhances the quality of the study. In their remarks about confidentiality, they also highlighted the fact that the researcher needs to possess good personal and professional attributes such as honesty and respectfulness to the participants.

In this study, and with the guidance of these scholars, the researcher treated all information received from participants professionally and confidentially. Participants who might be vulnerable were empowered to control their information and the researcher assured them of the confidentiality of the information given to allay any form of fear that might try to get into them during participation. No information from participants would be disclosed at any stage by without permission from the participant.

Before fieldwork, the researcher got permission from the University of Venda at the University Higher Degree Committee. All participants were treated with respect and participants were offered a form that addressed informed consent. The form had a topic of the study as well as explaining the purpose of the study. The form also guaranteed the participants of their right to withdraw from participating if they so wish. This means that all participants who took part in this study did so voluntarily.

Regarding the privacy in research, Dimensions of Discovery defines privacy as the protection of an individual’s right to control access to their participation in a study. By this,



they refer to the extent, timing, and circumstances of their participation. In this study, the researcher carefully considered how to approach individuals who participated in this research. The researcher had to consider circumstances and settings where study participants might be contacted as well as where participant's information would be collected. This means that the researcher would not ask participants to share their information that was sensitive or personal in a public setting. I collected information in a private space where the discussion cannot be observed or overheard by others.

Bos (2020) defines anonymity as the degree to which the source of a message can be identified. Ryerson University Ethics Board (2015) states that anonymity has to do with concealing the identity of the research participants and that even those associated with the research project should not divulge the identity of the participants. In this study, the researcher endeavoured to anonymise the identities of participants, that is, their names were replaced by pseudonyms, and their addresses or anything that may make them identifiable was concealed.

1.16 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

The sections of this thesis were arranged and presented in five logical chapters as follows:

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This chapter introduced various aspects of this thesis to the reader. These are an introduction to this study, the problem and its background, research questions, research objectives, the aim of the study, significance, and justification of the study, research methodology, delimitation of the study, ethical considerations, theoretical framework, and explanation of key concepts. This chapter presented the reader with how this study was carried out.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW



In this chapter, a comprehensive overview of the literature was be given. This is not general literature but only literature in line with and relevant to this study. Among others, this chapter presents views and perceptions held in some parts of Western countries, Africa, and South Africa regarding the topic of this thesis.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents a description of the methodology used in this study. This description includes how the research was designed, the methods employed to gather data as well and how data was investigated and analysed.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, the presentation and discussion of data were expounded. The discussion was a brief reference regarding data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The chapter mainly focused on presenting the findings of the study and their analysis as answers to the research questions.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter comprised a summary of the findings of this study, conclusions, recommendations as well and limitations. It also made suggestions for further research on the topic of this study



CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims at providing an overview of the pastoral work in its entirety and in relation to the operations each concept brings in the pastoral work. While the research is about pastoral care and counselling, this chapter hopes to delve deeper into their fundamental difference and sameness with all other forms of care in the pastoral work. This review of literature and concepts around pastoral work is done with the purpose to give direction and meaning to this current study and its problems being addressed. As this is done, it hopes to bring closer to the African context the need for this pastoral work and for the church to make use of these forms in service to humanity. Therefore, this chapter explores the field of pastoral work, how it is understood by theories, and their significance to the ministry in our different contexts. It also deals with the sciences attached to each concept in the box of pastoral work.

2.2 EXPLAINING THE FIELD OF PASTORAL WORK

The field of pastoral work is generally located in the field of practical theology, where issues pertaining to the realities of people on the ground are addressed in praxis. Heyns (1990:87) reflecting on the history and development of practical theology, states that “Fredrich Schleiermacher remains an important figure in the field and the way in which the field is developed.” Heyns (1990:87) explains that “Schleiermacher whom Karl Barth called a church father and Disterweg described him as the Socrates of the nineteenth century, saw practical theology not only as a subject responsible

with teaching the church how to exercise its government, but to also know to keep the community of faith together through its diversities of its work.” This creates a road map for pastors to understand that the ministry is not just a field, but it is one that ought to comprehend the reasons why ministry exists as it does in the church and society. In understanding Schleiermacher’s ideas of developing the fields of practical theology, is to understand the need to serve the people of God with diligence and the professionalism the field requires.

While Schleiermacher is appreciated as the father of practical theology, the field has further developed to create many components that contribute to the functioning of the ministry in totality. This includes among others, pastoral work (see, Clinebel 1984), empirical work (see, Van der Ven 1994) liturgy and preaching (Pieterse 1994; 1998). In other words, this field has grown broadly as an artform that enables to the church to function in the task of caring for the community of God with all available techniques made available in practical theology. Part of the sub-discipline of practical theology that enables to church to function, is its pastoral work. However, for this to be employed as tool in the ministry, one must first understand their dynamics and the techniques that go with each form of caring in the pastoral work box.

2.3 FORMS OF PASTORAL WORK IN PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

2.3.1 Mutual Care

Mutual care is the primary level of pastoral work, the most basic and probably the most important in the church society, or community. For Hugo (2013:44), “mutual care is when church members care for each other through what in the African context, is called the spirit of ubuntu.” In other words, this form of care enables people to extend Christian love to care and look after each other.

As seen in the New Testament, the community offered mutual care to neighbours who

had experienced bereavement or terminal illness and other challenges that threatened their lives. In the context of Black South African societies, people grew up knowing that they had a responsibility to care for others as the community was understood as carrying people that were one. An example of this is that the whole village or community would offer mutual care to a bereaved family from the time of death till burial. Furthermore, constant visits would be made to neighbours facing many other challenges of life including sickness in their homes or hospitals as a sign of care. Many scholars have viewed this form of care differently where Africans call this Ubuntu. Fowler (1987:20) refers to the community of faith as an “ecology of care” because of the multiplicity of relationships in the interdependent community which is a congregation. A situation of mutual care may gradually develop into pastoral care and perhaps into pastoral counselling, or the other way round.

2.3.2 Lay Care

Lay care is care by volunteers with the necessary gifts, knowledge, and skills who have been officially sanctioned to participate in pastoral care and counselling to assist and complement officials, Hugo (2013:45). Detwiler-Zap and Dixon (1982:5–6) write as follows, “Pastoral care remains the most neglected area of lay participation in the church. Pastors have mobilised the talents of the laity in nearly every other area of church life. In most churches, lay people are found teaching in the church school, managing financial campaigns, working with youth, supervising the maintenance of buildings and grounds, actively working for community change, and leading in worship.

Pastoral care, on the other hand, often has been seen as a ministry exclusive to the clergy. In the area of caregiving, lay people are often unrecognized, frequently unappreciated, and usually neglected. Yet they have an abundance of undeveloped resources for caring. Lay people are the greatest untapped potential of the church (see, Hugo 2013). Stone (1996:12–13) on the other hand echoes this by saying:

“Pastoral care is not performed only by the pastor. It is a task also for the laity. Taking seriously Luther’s belief in the priesthood of all believers, pastoral care empowers the laity to strengthen the caring done by a congregation.”

In other words, the pastoral work has a responsibility to educate the lay people in the field and to empower them with the kind of ministry needed for the community of God. This, however, should not be confused with other specialised forms of care that requires not only deeper theological training, but psychological techniques in dealing with human souls.

2.3.3 Pastoral Care

The second level of care or pastoral work is pastoral care. This is mainly a matter of officially strengthening and caring for the people of the congregation. Its aim is to “build up” the people, primarily through a dialogical caring action. This second level requires more expertise than mutual care. It therefore, “requires some selectivity – not everyone can be allowed to do this work”, writes Hugo (2013:47). By this, pastoral care requires some basic training in the understanding of pastoral work and what it means to care spiritually. It becomes an entry point into the space where one must deal with different human challenges from a pastoral aspect. Clebsch and Jackle (1967:4) in this regard write that:

“Pastoral care consists of helping acts done by representative Christian persons, directed toward the healing, sustaining, guiding, and reconciling of troubled persons, whose troubles arise in the context of ultimate meanings and concerns.”

Pastoral care is an expression of human concern through activities; recognises transcendence; and entails multivariate forms of communication with the motive to love and care for other people in the community. Emmanuel Lartey (2003: 26-30) agrees that “pastoral care aims at creating a bridge of love and care between humanity in a sympathetic and empathetic manner.” Lartey (2003:153) states that “pastoral care

requires a broad and deep engagement with living persons in their universal, cultural and unique characteristics.” One must be able to understand the dynamics of the people within which the ministry ought to care. Beyond this, to understand some basic skills needed in the space of pastoral care to care for others in way that promise new life and sense of direction.

In agreement with the above authors, McClure (2012:270) defines pastoral care as “a form of practical theology specified as an intentional enacting and embodying of a theology of presence, particularly in response to suffering or need, as a way to increase among people the love of God and of neighbour”. According to her, the term ‘pastoral care’ comes from the Latin *Pastorem*, which, as she asserts, means shepherd and that it includes in its deep etymology, the notion of tending to the needs of the vulnerable people. According to McClure (2012), pastoral caregivers have four functions which are aimed at ministering to those who are hurting and in need of care and concern. The four functions are healing, sustaining, guiding and reconciling. Pastoral caregivers have the spiritual responsibility of healing where there are spiritual wounds. They also should give guidance in matters that relate to relationships, family life, marriage related matters between husband and wife, as well as spiritual and general matters in life. The ministry of reconciliation as part of the pastoral caregiver, was part of the services of both Jesus and apostle Paul during their lifetime on earth. Reconciliation is one of the services that pastoral caregivers engage in. In his definition of what reconciliation means, Etukumana (2016:38) highlights that “reconciliation is the elimination of hostility between God and sinful man and also that it is an elimination of hostility between man and man.” According to him, reconciliation is an act of creating friendship between two parties which were not in agreement and were not in peace with each other. He asserts that it is a wilful exchanging of enmity for friendship which in his own terms there is horizontal reconciliation (man reconciling with man) and a vertical reconciliation (man reconciling with God).

For pastoral caregivers to be effective in the helping services, McClure lists three skills that she termed basic elements of pastoral care, which according to her are a key for success in this ministry. Her assertion is that pastoral caregivers need to possess and utilise these three skills for successful ministries. McClure posits that pastoral caregivers need to know the following:

- how to give attention (to observe and listen);
- how to make a diagnosis (to be able to interpret theologically the cause of suffering and to discern what is needed); and
- how to intervene (to offer accompaniment, guidance and support).

McClure (2012) postulates that without possessing and the use of the above skills, pastoral caregiving will not yield good fruit to its beneficiaries. The definition of pastoral care and the roles of pastoral caregivers as laid out by these authors, are relevant for this study, and I, therefore, unequivocally align my thoughts with these views.

2.3.4 The Need for Pastoral Care

Life crises such as sickness, death, divorce, and separation disrupt the normal flow of life. Gous and Heerden (2006:5) write that “one of the reasons why life crises cause so much distress, is that they widen the gap between hope and experience.” Two opposing reactions to crises seem logical; suffer stoically, or whine about the situation. However, more options come into play.

The effort to help people deal with life crises has led to numerous approaches to pastoral care and practice have been employed and some have been more successful than the others. David Olsen advocates for integrated family therapy to pastoral care and counselling. “This method introduces major schools of family therapy, proposes a tested model that integrates the various approaches, illustrates how this model functions both for both assessing and treating family problems” (Olsen 1993:13-15). Although this method was not feasible for this study, idea was borrowed from Olsen’s work. Emmanuel

Lartey introduced what he termed the Intercultural Approach to pastoral care and counselling. Lartey (2003:13) explains that “This book offers a critical introduction to the practice and study of pastoral care and counselling. Its characteristic feature is that it adopts an intercultural approach to this field.” Lartey continues to explain the need to use a holistic approach in this complex and important field of study. He had a feeling that most books on offer in universities did not adequately address the field of pastoral care and counselling hence the need for the introduction of this holistic approach to pastoral care.

Although books on counselling seem to be increasing in number by the month, there are relatively few books available on pastoral care that go beyond mere suggestions for pastoral practice in specific situations of need. The relevance of and need for this one, quite apart from the fact that it treats both pastoral care and counselling, is that it offers an approach that relates to the multicultural context in which pastoral practitioners now recognize how they live” Lartey (2003:13). Lartey’s views present a satisfactory approach to caring for students at schools since this approach is very holistic as shall be explained in the next paragraphs.

“Pastoral care, especially in the black church tradition has to do with mobilizing the resources of the total community in caring for the needs of individuals” Lartey (2003:24). “The prevailing form of care will depend on the culture or society. Thus, individualistic Western communities will require more pastoral therapy, while mutual care is more common in traditional African society with its corporate lifestyle and social sensitivity” Hugo (2014:23). This, however, does not suggest the need to neglect western therapeutic interventions as they too offer special kind of remedy into the fields of helping professions.

The church ought to remember its mandate as laid out in Isaiah (61:1-3), which state that, “the Spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to poor and to bind up the brokenhearted.” But the preaching has been accompanied by some understanding of pastoral care methodologies to create a healthy space for the God’s in people’s heart. Such pastoral methodologies could bring persons and families

out of crisis through a total caring resource available in the church. This requires some level of training to understand the dynamics of human crisis and be able to bring methods relevant and practical in managing their crisis. This is closer to what Emmanuel Larthey suggests in his writings.

Larthey (2003:153) unapologetically states that “pastoral care requires a broad and deep engagement with living persons in their universal, cultural and unique characteristics. Practitioners of pastoral care must be aware of the symbols and signs present in different cultures and be willing to learn from each other about what caring for people might mean in different contexts. Training for pastors in the church of today is a must as to equip them with modern methods and theories of caring for people who are victims of many circumstances in society. Larthey (2003:176) goes on to argue that “pastoral care arises out of and responds to the experiences of persons-in- context.” Therefore, the need for contextual analysis is very important in the space of helping professions to avoid misdirection people’s lives. To do this work very well, one may need to also understand the most advanced form of care and its dynamics, which is pastoral counselling.

2.3.5 Pastoral Counselling

Pastoral counselling is one of the forms of care that is used in the field of the ministry of care for the people of God. Pastoral counselling falls within the category of the advance and effective method of counselling used in the Christian space of counselling. Pastoral counselling has been defined by many scholars and in many ways, that focuses on the caring for others in a deeper way. Odeleye (2017)¹ defines pastoral counselling as:

“...a helping relationship in which a trained therapist (pastor or minister) assists individuals, couples and families resolve their emotional, relational and psychosocial issues, utilising the Bible as primary manual. Pastoral counselling

¹ Odeleye, D.A. (2017a) Soft Skills for Superior Counselling Services Delivery. Skills Training Presentation at 2017 Annual Conference of Oyo State Chapter of Counselling Association of Nigeria (CASSON) March 14-16, 2017 LAUTECH Ogbomosho, Nigeria

is a unique form of counselling which utilizes spiritual and psychological capital to help individuals to understand possible options to attain the balanced life.”

Odeleye’s understanding and definition of pastoral counselling shows deeper significance of the science in the helping profession. Pastoral counselling is one of the Christian art forms that brings healing and wholeness in human individuals. For Snodgrass (2015:5-6), pastoral counselling is methods design to deal with the “spiritual well-being of the person” and in search of the wholeness. Clinebell (1984: 20) understand pastoral counselling as:

“Pastoral counselling is the utilization, by a minister, of a one-to-one or small group relationship to help people handle their problems of living more adequately and grow toward fulfilling their potentialities.”

Counselling is a process involving a professional relationship between two people in which the counsellor uses various procedures of appraisal and therapy to understand and to assist the client to a better level of self-understanding and to a self-determined solution of his problem or need.

Hugo (2013: 49) explains:

“Counselling is an action where the caregiver uses conversational skills to help people cope with the ordinary problems, as well as helping people with decisions and plans to fulfil their potential irrespective of whether they are sick or well... As a rule, pastoral counselling includes some kind of contract or agreement in which an appeal for help is expressed and a fixed time and place set for the meeting.”

Hugo’s description of pastoral counselling as “action” is also to show the deep need to have some kind of hermeneutical lenses to read the human crisis in a way that provides variety of solutions or healing. This describes the level of professionalism involve in the space of pastoral counselling which also require some form of knowledge in psychological methods of dealing with human crisis.

As the Jungian analyst, James Hollis (1996:9) state:

“It is the swamplands where soul is fashioned and forged, where we encounter not only the gravitas of life, but its purpose, its dignity and its deepest meaning. To experience some healing within ourselves, and continue to heal the world...”

As stated by the Jungian analyst, healing should take place in people undergoing a crisis. Pastoral counselling can help in putting brakes to the widening gulf between hope and experience. For Clinebel (1984:15) this is an “instrument of healing and growth” which helps people to develop and rearrange their lives into whole again. This takes lots of effort from the caregiver in that the pastoral counselling journey might require a long term as opposed to short term intervention.

Studies that were previously conducted by researchers revealed that pastoral counselling is an intervention that is being utilised both internationally and nationally by people who experience life’s challenges. Europe, America, Africa as well as South Africa have been cited by scholars regarding how they view and use pastoral counselling as an intervention when they face challenges of life.

As noted by Louw (2011:155), pastoral care and counselling are among the science that falls within the field of Pastoral Theology but are different in terms of their methodological approach. These are the science that deals with the care of human souls also known as *cura animarum* (see, Magezi, 2019:1). During the earliest development of pastoral work, Patton (1983:16) defined the concept of pastoral counselling as “a type of pastoral care that is performed by one who has been trained theologically in ordained ministry and with the identity and accountability of a clergyperson”. While this role of pastoral counselling is played by the clergyperson, it requires specialised skills in dealing with more complicated issues surrounding the mind, body and soul/spirit. Both Louw (2011) and Patton (1983) give clear and congruent definition of what pastoral counselling is as well as the fact that it deals not only with the mental part of the person but also soul of the person. I find their definition important because they give a holistic view of what pastoral counselling is. The mentioning of spiritual well-being of the person by these scholars plays a crucial role in this concept because this is what makes pastoral counselling to stand out

as a specialization in addition to the other conventional forms of counselling.

Pastoral counselling is distinct from other forms of counselling that are offered by professionals like social workers and psychologists. This distinction found in the fact that it is rooted in the biblical approach which aims at addressing the spirituality and the soul of the troubled persons. At the centre of their scientific difference, lies connecting objective that is to deal and heal a human person. As Meyer (2020:5-7) states that “Pastoral counselling uses tools of faith such as Bible verses, meditation, and confess in, which are not used in counselling conducted by social workers and psychologists.” This demarcates those methodological difference pastoral counselling and psychology, but still puts the human as the sole subject needing the interdisciplinary attention.

Streets (2014:1) notes that pastoral counselling is a constituent of practical theology. Practical and pastoral theology (as they are interchangeably used) are mentioned by Atkinson and Field (2014:47) as the “study of all aspects of the care of persons in the church. Pastoral theology, from where pastoral counselling emanates, focuses mainly on pastoral counselling, also known as the care of souls.” To be a pastoral counsellor, Townsend (2009) adds that one must be set aside for that specialised ministry by one’s own denomination because this helps in keeping pastoral counsellors accountable for ministry in their home. In agreement with Townsend above, pastoral counsellors who are accountable to their denominations are likely to do their work with care and caution for they are aware that they are being monitored and should give an account of their counselling activities to their denominations.

Jackson (2012) brings another shade of meaning for pastoral counselling which adds value to the definitions given by other authors as mentioned above. In his definition of what pastoral counselling means, Jackson (2012:5) notes that “Pastoral Counselling is a specialization engaged in by clergy people who have had special training in counselling under supervision.” Having said that, there is strong need to engage in these issues and promote the need to study to understand fully the science of care and the correct



hermeneutical methods in addressing human crisis on the ground.

2.4 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND OTHER FORMS OF COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS

To spell out how pastoral counselling differs with psychological and social work interventions, the following points should be considered:

- Psychologists are trained to diagnose and treat mental health disorders using evidence-based therapies, while social workers are trained to address the social, economic, and environmental factors that contribute to mental health issues.
- The focus in psychological counselling is on the individual's internal psychological experiences, such as thoughts, emotions, and behaviours. Social work counselling takes a broader perspective, addressing the social, cultural, and environmental factors that impact an individual's mental health.
- Psychological counselling uses a range of therapeutic techniques such as cognitive-behavioural therapy, psychodynamic therapy, and humanistic therapy. Social work counselling may also use these techniques, but they also focus on practical problem-solving and skill-building techniques to help clients overcome social barriers.
- Psychological counselling is typically provided in private practice settings, such as, but not limited to, mental health clinics, or hospitals. Social work counselling is often provided in community-based organizations, schools, or government agencies.

To sum it up, the three interventions as mentioned above, are focused on helping individuals overcome mental health issues, but they differ in their focus of treatment, therapeutic techniques, and settings.

Carrol (2021) notes that pastoral psychotherapy embraces and integrates the disciplines of theology, spirituality, and faith. He also highlights that this theory uses traditional religious resources such as prayer, reading of Scripture, meditation and worship and that the pastoral psychotherapy is mostly loved because of its responsiveness to the spiritual values and beliefs of the clients. The concept, pastoral, from where pastoral counselling stems, was well demystified by Oates (1974) as he was making a distinction between pastoral counselling from other forms of counselling. Oates (1974:11) mentions that pastoral counselling becomes pastoral when the counselee or the counsellor focuses the relationship upon the relation of God to the process of their lives. According to Oates' theory, God becomes the third person in the relationship. Oates remarks that instead of counselling being simply a dialogue between the counsellor and the counselee, it becomes triologue because there is now God as the third person in this relationship. I find this theory very helpful regarding pastoral counselling. The American Psychological Association (2021) asserted that this theory uses insights and principles derived from theology and behavioural sciences to help individuals, couples, families, and groups to achieve healing and growth in the challenges they encounter. Cooper-White (2007:5) claimed that pastoral psychotherapy heals painful psychic wounds and long-standing self-defeating relationships with self and others. Pastoral Counselling was found to be the right theory to be used in this research because it is in line with what this research seeks to explore

2.5 PASTORAL COUNSELLING IN THE CONTEXTS OF AMERICA, EUROPE, AFRICA AND SOUTH AFRICA

2.5.1 Pastoral Counselling in the Contexts of America and Europe

Townsend (2009:3) noted that pastoral counselling had its origin by Protestant pastors in

North America, now known as United States of America (USA) as a twentieth-century phenomenon. They incorporated psychological information, making it a ministry specialty that required distinctive training, to deal meaningfully with the human souls. According to Townsend (2009), pastoral counselling claims a genealogy anchored in ancient Hebrew and Christian understanding of care which expanded through the history of the Western Christian Church and the Protestant Reformation. Pastoral counselling later focused on the confluence of modern theology and behavioural sciences in Europe and USA. As Townsend noted, between 1920-1940, in both USA and Europe, physicians and psychologists welcomed pastoral counsellors, addressing them as partners in treatment and viewed pastoral counselling as moral education or suggestive therapy. Besides the fact that pastoral counselling is viewed as a professional field in Europe, Radoja (2015:148) remarked that pastoral counselling is considered by some Europeans as one of the most anticipated activities by patients and health personnel.

Pastoral counselling in the United Kingdom (UK) has been and is still the practice that is on the increase even now (see, Savage 2021). For Savage (2021:3), chaplaincy and pastoral care in the United Kingdom are of great worth among the people, even by non-religious people. He noted that pastoral care (of which pastoral counselling forms the major part) in UK has increased in importance in the period 2011 to 2019. His study highlighted that chaplaincy departments (the department that deals with pastoral care and counselling) are experiencing an increase in the number of chaplains in prisons and a shift in terms of the services that are conducted by chaplains. He highlighted that chaplains' time at work is no longer conducting specific religious activities such as worship, prayer, and sacraments, but to do works of care and pastoral counselling in prisons and health care facilities and that this was noted as the primary role of chaplains in the United Kingdom.

2.5.2 Pastoral Counselling in Africa

Machinga (2019:151) asserts that "before the African continent was occupied by

adherents of the Christian and Islamic religious traditions, native Africans had their own beliefs, thoughts, interventions and worldviews.” Writing about Zimbabweans’ views of God, he added that Zimbabweans had their own spirituality, which consisted of attitudes, beliefs, practices and rituals that enabled them cope with day-to-day realities. Machinga points out that Africans believe there is God, addressing God in their different languages and that according to Africans, one cannot directly approach God when one encounters difficulties in life. Africans believe that God is supreme and that the only way of approaching God is through the ancestors. Machinga states that the people of Africa do not have a problem with pastoral counselling, except that the Western approach of it should not be forced on the people of Africa. In his own words and with a tone of caution to pastoral counsellors, Machinga (2019:152) remarks that:

“Pastoral counsellors operating in a particular location need to respect and honor the location, i.e. the identity, attitudes, and positions of a people. For pastoral counsellors operating in Zimbabwe, although the client may be a Christian, the client’s religious location, as well as how the client experiences and lives the Christian faith, is deeply informed by indigenous African thoughts.”

Conducting Pastoral counselling in Africa requires the counsellor to understand the worldview of Africans regarding their interpretation of where problems come from and how problems should be solved. Louw (2011:155) posits that any theory of counselling people in Africa, even a definition of care and counselling, should deal with an African worldview, philosophy, and spirituality. Louw (2011:150) further states that that “in African societies, herbalists, priests, and diviners are seen as specialists in dealing with personal and interpersonal problems. He observes that in Africa, healing is ritualistic and communal and that the source of healing is attributed to the ancestors. Although pastoral counselling is acceptable to the people of Africa as an intervention to assist those who seek help with their problems, as Louw asserts (2011:150), “ancestral worship with its various forms of rituals is viewed as the most effective way of solving problems in an African perspective.”

2.5.3 Pastoral Counselling in South Africa

In his argument regarding the South African perspective on pastoral counselling, Phaswana (2008:18) argues that pastoral counselling could become meaningless if counsellors ignore the South African cultural context.” Regarding how the Zulu people in South Africa view pastoral counselling and care, Phaswana (2008:60) mentions that both the Zulus and Vhavenda people accept and apply pastoral counselling when they go through problems in their lives. According to his observations, South African people maintain that in their use of pastoral counselling, certain behaviours and cultural practices should not be neglected, which according to him if they are neglected, pastoral counselling and care would be superficial and irrelevant. Phaswana’s study has reveals that in addition to pastoral counselling, some people in South Africa hold that the ancestors have answers to their problems because the ancestors are in touch with the spirits and if they are well pleased, they will heal the problems that individuals and families encounter. In the above section, Phaswana’s comments are about problems of life in general, not those that are because of crime in the country.

Findings of the study by Davies and Dreyer (2014) presents reasons that prompt South Africans to turn to the pastor for answers. These scholars have found that South Africa is a country in which various forms of crime are experienced by its citizens in the cities as well as in townships. They single out domestic violence and abuse, rape of infants and toddlers, child abuse, maltreatment of children, spousal abuse and human trafficking. These scholars indicate that the effects of these violent situations, leave South Africans with hopelessness, self-hatred, guilt, despair and self-annihilation. Davies and Dreyer (2014:2) remark that because of these difficult situations, South Africans find themselves with escalated and complex emotions which prompt them to turn to pastors for counselling and restoration of hope in their lives. In their search for pastoral counselling and hope, they do not make any distinction regarding who is a trained pastor and who is not. They often fall into the hands of untrained pastoral counsellors.

2.6 REASONS SOME PASTORAL COUNSELLORS CONDUCT PASTORAL COUNSELLING WITHOUT TRAINING

The study by Lua (2009) in the Philippines Islands about reasons why many pastors were found pastoring churches without formal training in theology and ministry, revealed reasons which, according to me, answers one of the questions which was not answered before. Lua's (2009:2) study revealed that out of every 236 pastors, 100 of them do not have formal theological or ministerial training. It has been established that Bible Colleges in that country is sufficient but that even if efforts of training them were made, they ended unsuccessful. One of the reasons why churches are pastored by untrained pastors in that country was found that pastors were not able to financially support their families and as such, were unable to pay for their theological training. That indicates that a significant number of pastoral counsellors in that country enter pastoral counselling without being trained in it. It also came clear in that study that the willingness for pastors to be trained is there but that economic reasons serve as a hurdle for them to jump to the required theological levels.

To answer the question as to why some pastors, do ministry without formal training, Handley (2022) drew an analogy between the speed of a bullet train with that of a bicycle. Handley (2022) asserts that newly founded churches are growing in numbers far more than the number of pastors. Whereas the speed of growth of churches in number is likened to that of a bullet train, training of pastors is at the speed of a bicycle. This analogy paints a picture which indicates that these churches are led by pastors with no formal training in theology and ministry and who may conduct pastoral counselling without being training. This assertion is supported by Chrispal (2022) whose study claims that "2.2 million Protestant pastors in the Majority World lack formal biblical training" (Chrispal, 2022:180). According to me, another reason why some pastors enter ministry where they find themselves conducting pastoral counselling even before they are trained, is partly the result of being overtaken by circumstances in their church environments. Church growth in quantity is far faster than the training of its ministers.

2.7 INTERVENTIONS AND QUALIFYING CRITERIA FOR PASTORAL COUNSELLORS (TRAINED AND UNTRAINED)

2.7.1 Trained pastoral counsellors

Trained pastoral counsellors have acquired Theological training and have a minimum requirement of a Diploma in Theology, as noted by Masenya (2014) and Jackson (2012). The American Association of Pastoral Counsellors (cited by GoodTherapy, 2022) clarified the requirements for one to become a trained pastoral counsellor. The Association stated that one must meet the requirements of their religious group, which is being ordained, receiving graduate-level training in both theology and psychology, and earn one of the following graduate degrees:

- Master's degree in Divinity;
- Graduate or Doctoral degree in Biblical Studies, Theological studies, or Spiritual Studies; and
- Graduate or Doctoral Degree in Pastoral Counselling.

In addition to that, the trained pastoral counsellor must also complete 375 hours of supervised counselling experience and a self-reflective clinical pastoral education (CPE) experience. This supervised clinical pastoral experience should be done with classroom instruction and discussion to ensure candidates fully integrate their learning in theology and behavioural science. After meeting the training requirements and practical experience, the association expects the candidate to take part in a 90-minutes interview conducted by a certification committee to finalize the process.

Trained pastoral counsellors have affiliated with credible regulatory bodies like the Association for Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP), the Association for Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP), and the South African Council of

Churches (SACC). The ACRP and ASCHP are professional regulatory bodies that are constantly monitored by and submit to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) for quality practices by members of these associations. Members of these associations undergo further trainings in their programs called Continuous Professional Development which earns members credits on successful completion. This is not happening with untrained pastoral counsellors. As a professional body, and in addition to registering and regulating the operations of other counsellors, ASCHP registers also members of Faith-Based organisation. These are pastoral counsellors who are in the ASCHP list of counsellors that are periodically submitted to SAQA. ASCHP (2022:1) indicated that it “provides a code of conduct and operates a disciplinary mechanism for the reporting and investigation of members who are alleged to have contravened the code.” It further indicated that one of its mandates is to ensure that its members practice within their professional scope of practice, which is not the case with untrained pastoral counsellors. Trained pastoral counsellors are accountable to a regulatory body. Their churches are under the auspices of the South African Council of Churches, and they are therefore accountable to the SACC. Their interventions and services are to restore life and hope to the souls of those who suffered abuse and or problems in their lives. They sign a code of ethics that prohibits them from having sexual relations outside of their marriages.

2.7.2 Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

For the definition of the term ‘untrained pastoral counsellor’, I prefer the one used by Carlson (2022:1) who states that “an untrained pastoral counsellor is a person who does pastoral counselling and other church work but has no formal training from a recognized theological institute or Seminary and is viewed as ‘unlettered, untrained, and unskilled.” There are conflicting views about interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors. Some authors have written in favor of untrained pastoral counsellors and mentioned that their services are helpful. Other authors, however, wrote not in favor of untrained pastoral counsellors. They have indicated that there is a potential harm that could befall beneficiaries of pastoral counselling which is conducted by untrained pastoral

counsellors.

2.7.3 Views in Favor of Interventions by Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

The effectiveness of interventions by untrained pastoral counsellors in conducting pastoral counselling is an issue of controversy among scholars. Whereas some argue that untrained pastoral counsellors cannot offer good pastoral counselling, and that they are not licensed, yet there are those who argue in favour with the notion that untrained pastoral counsellors are conducting helpful pastoral counselling to communities and their congregants. Monroe (2023:1) asserts that “untrained pastoral counsellors play an important role in offering counselling to people who encounter life’s challenges.” He claims that many of these untrained pastoral counsellors are people whom he termed as ‘well-seasoned’ and that they have been helping people who are depressed, anxious, angry, and some of whom were on the verge of divorce and that untrained pastoral counsellors have been doing this just like licensed professionals, except that untrained pastoral counsellors cannot give DSM diagnoses and bill health insurance companies.

Monroe’s claim that untrained pastoral counsellors help communities and their congregants, is supported by Church Property Insurance. The Church Property Insurance (2023:1) asserts that “untrained pastoral counsellors conduct pastoral counselling without holding a professional license and gives an admonition that they should continue doing this without engaging in activities reserved for licensed counsellors such as diagnosing mental health disorders.”

2.7.4 Views that do not Support interventions by Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

Those who are not in favour with interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors gave some reasons for not supporting that. Some of their reasons are those we read about in newspapers as well as in some published material. Due to being untrained in pastoral counselling skills, pastoral counsellors may fall into the temptation of relying on their own

personal beliefs and experiences rather than evidence-based practices, which can lead to limited or ineffective treatment. They may also lack knowledge of ethical guidelines and professional standards for counselling, which can result in boundary violations or other forms of unethical behaviour.

For an example, Hyman (2021:1) asserts that “a tendency of untrained pastoral counsellors in which a mention is made that they tend to rape their own church members, especially young girls within their churches.” Radebe (2021:1) laments the “unbecoming practice of some pastoral counsellors who lured female congregants into their offices in the pretext of giving them pastoral counselling but in the course of that they threaten them with death if these ladies refuse to have sexual intercourse with them.” Without formal training in pastoral counselling, untrained pastoral counsellors may also inadvertently do harm to individuals by giving inappropriate advice or failing to recognize the signs of serious mental health issues.

Trained pastoral counsellors abide by professional values which they receive from Boards that hold them accountable. Two of the core professional values of the American Counselling Association (2023:1), revealed that “untrained pastoral counsellors are often reported to be in conflict with are core professional values 4 and 5.” Core Professional value 4 states that a counsellor should safeguard the integrity of the counsellor-client relationship and that core professional value 5 emphasizes that counsellors should practice in a competent and ethical manner. These two core professional values are found to be important as they fit well within this study, and they offer information that is relevant and helpful about counselling intervention. I concur with these core professional values of the Association because without the guidance of professional values, practitioners are likely to do the unexpected things. Untrained pastoral counsellors are often found to be lacking regarding these two core professional values.

It is a known fact that untrained pastoral counsellors do not account to their churches or to any professional body about their counselling activities. This poses fear to some who



think that there might be a likelihood of harm in their practice because they are not accountable, and they are not registered with any regulatory body for their practices.

2.8 DISTINCTION BETWEEN INTERVENTIONS OF TRAINED AND UNTRAINED PASTORAL COUNSELLORS

In their code of ethics for pastoral counsellors who enter counselling ministry within their communities, the National Association of Evangelicals (2012:1) demands that “pastoral counsellors should sign this code of ethics. One of the ethical lines within the code states that the pastoral counsellor should at all costs and always avoid sexual relations with the people that he/she helps.” This is not so with untrained pastoral counsellors since there is no code of ethics that they sign.

Whereas trained pastoral counsellors have undergone training in relation to the ministry of pastoral counselling, untrained pastoral counsellors are not trained (as indicated by the authors above). Trained pastoral counsellors are not surrounded by scandalous reports of raping those they help. But untrained pastoral counsellors are surrounded by such disturbing reports which are in the CRL Commission report (as stated above).

Whereas trained pastoral counsellors are accountable to their churches as well as to their regulatory professional bodies, untrained pastoral counsellors are not accountable to any regulatory body because they have no formal qualification that qualifies them as professionals, and they are not under any regulatory body that governs their pastoral counselling interventions. Trained pastoral counsellors undergo Continuous Professional Development carried out by their professional bodies as mentioned by ACRP and ASCHP. Untrained pastoral counsellors do not take any Continuous Professional Development studies.

2.9 THE FOCUS OF PASTORAL COUNSELLING



As an intervention, pastoral counselling integrates spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. Common elements of how pastoral counselling is done are as follows:

- **Relationship building:** The pastoral counsellor works to build a strong and trusting relationship with the client (or counselee). This may involve active listening, empathy, and validation of information told to the pastoral counsellor.
- **Assessing the needs of the counselee:** The pastoral counsellor assesses the client's needs by conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the client's emotional, psychological, and spiritual health. This may involve reviewing the client's history and discussing current concerns.
- **Element of Spirituality:** Pastoral counselling is unique from other forms of counselling in that it integrates spiritual and religious beliefs into the counselling process. The pastoral counsellor helps counsees to connect with their faith and to find meaning and purpose in their lives.
- **Evidence-based techniques:** While pastoral counselling involves spiritual and religious aspects, it is still based on evidence-based techniques used in traditional counselling.
- **Pastoral counsellor and counselee confidentiality:** in both clinical and pastoral counselling, confidentiality is an important virtue that should be maintained and the relationship between the counsellor and client is built on trust and mutual respect.
- **Goal setting and evaluation of goals by both pastoral counsellor and the counselee:** The pastoral counsellor and client work together to set goals for the counselling process. As Egan (2010:304) in his Skilled Helper Model guides, this may involve developing a treatment plan that is tailored to the unique needs of the

individual. Egan asserts that goal setting on itself helps clients focus their attention, mobilize their energy and directs their efforts to deal with their problems.

- Follow-up sessions: The pastoral counsellor may follow up with the counselee after the counselling sessions to monitor progress and make any necessary adjustments to the treatment plan.

2.10 EFFICACY OF PASTORAL COUNSELLING

As a discipline that differs with other forms of counselling such as the ones offered by psychologists, psychiatrists and social workers, pastoral counselling integrates spiritual and religious perspectives with traditional counselling techniques to help individuals cope with various emotional, mental, and spiritual issues.

Carrol (2021) notes that pastoral counselling distinguishes itself from other forms of counselling disciplines by its character of embracing and integrating the disciplines of theology, spirituality, and faith. He also highlights that this theory uses traditional religious resources called tools of faith which are prayer, reading of Scripture, meditation and worship. It is further believed that pastoral counselling is mostly loved because of its responsiveness to the spiritual values and beliefs of the clients. The concept, pastoral, from where pastoral counselling stems, was well demystified by Oates (1974) as he was making a distinction between pastoral counselling from other forms of counselling. Oates (1974:11) posits that pastoral counselling becomes pastoral when the counselee or the counsellor focuses the relationship upon the relation of God to the process of their lives. According to Oates' theory, God becomes the third person in the relationship. Oates remarked that instead of counselling being simply a dialogue between the counsellor and the counselee, it becomes a triologue because there is now God as the third person in this relationship. The American Psychological Association (2021) asserts that pastoral counselling uses insights and principles of theology and behavioural sciences to help individuals, couples, families, and groups to achieve healing and growth in the challenges

they encounter. Cooper-White (2007:5) claims that pastoral counselling heals painful psychic wounds and long-standing self-defeating relationships with self and others.

2.11 SCREENING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF PASTORAL COUNSELLORS BEFORE ASSUMING OFFICE

In some parts of the world, Europe, to be specific, malpractice of clergy, especially sexual abuse by pastoral counsellors, has become so much of a problem that efforts were made to perform psychological screening and assessment of new clergy applicants who want to become pastoral counsellors. One may ask whether it is appropriate to psychologically assess servants of God who are willing to serve God by serving the community. Conversely, someone may as well ask if it is the will of God for a pastoral counsellor to be found having done what is called breach of fiduciary duty. Young and Griffith (1995:6) define a fiduciary as “a person having a duty, created by his undertaking, to act primarily for the benefit of another in matters connected with the undertaking”. A pastoral counsellor’s primary duty is for the benefit of parishioners and community members who come with problems and are hoping to be assisted. In this case a pastoral counsellor presents himself as a clergyperson and marriage counsellor, meaning that this person acquires a duty to exercise reasonable care, skills and high level of caution not to worsen the problems that the parishioner comes with to the counsellor. It is therefore an expected norm that the fiduciary (the pastoral counsellor in this case) will be responsible for any harm resulting from a breach of fiduciary trust that the community member may incur.

I therefore, concur with efforts by the Catholic Church in the United States of America when they carry out psychological assessment of new clergy applicants who would become pastoral counsellors. Isacco, *et al.* (2020) wrote extensively about the importance of psychologically assessing risk factors to avoid potential harm when new clergy applicants submit their applications to be trained as pastoral counsellors. The scholars highlight reasons why such assessment of men of cloak had to be carried out as well as expenses that are paid by pastoral counsellors and their churches to ask victims of sexual

abuse to stop their lawsuits against them (pastoral counsellors). It has been reported that such expenses are counted in billions of American Dollars. It should be borne in mind that these efforts of psychological screening did not just come but was a result of repeated reports of clergy malpractice in which sexual abuse by pastoral counsellors was found to be rife.

2.12 CONCERNS ABOUT CLERGY MALPRACTICE AND SUBSEQUENT LAWSUITS

The Encyclopedia.com defines clergy malpractices as follows:

“A breach of the duty owed by a member of the clergy (e.g., trust, loyalty, confidentiality, guidance) that results in harm or loss to his or her parishioner. A claim for clergy malpractice asserts that a member of the clergy should be held liable for professional misconduct or an unreasonable lack of competence in his or her capacity as a religious leader and counsellor.”

This definition is the one that will apply in this document because of its clearness and the kind of meaning it gives regarding term “clergy malpractice.” It is the trust that the parishioner has in the clergy that makes the parishioner confide in the clergy and seek guidance from the clergy in times of need. Parishioners view the clergy as helping spiritual guide and professionals in their field and this makes them to go with no expectation of any doubt that the opposite might happen upon their lives.

It is commonly known that medical practitioners, social workers, psychologists, legal practitioners and other professionals have binding code of ethics to be rigorously adhered to by all members of that profession. The Encyclopedia of World Problems and Human Potential (2023:1) share about “legal malpractice, medical malpractice and other forms of malpractice as instituted by those professional board.” These authors also raised a concern that should not be ignored. This is about clergy malpractice. Various forms of clergy malpractice were listed by these scholars which include:

- Abuse of religious office

- Intimidation by priests
- Spiritual manipulation
- Misappropriation of church funds
- Sexual abuse by priests
- Breach of confidentiality
- Church collaboration with enemy forces
- Defrauding parishioners
- Negligence in pastoral care
- False claims or doctrinal malpractices
- Failure to report crimes
- Ethical violation

The Encyclopedia of World Problems & Human Potential (2013) agrees in listing same malpractices as the above authors did about clergy malpractice. The above clergy malpractices are all painting a bleak picture about the work of pastoral counsellors. Delving into each of them would be good, but since doing that would take me out of the intention of this study, I will however, not comment about them but rather focus on clergy malpractices that are having to do with the relationship between the pastoral counsellor and the client or the person who receives pastoral counselling from the pastoral counsellor.

All the malpractices of the clergy as listed above are a disgrace and degradation not only to the churches in which they happen, but also to the communities wherein they take place. Of particular interest is the malpractice of sexual abuse of clergy, which others call sexual impropriety. The graveness of this malpractice is clearly painted by the words of Garland and Argueta (2009:5) who indicated that “victims of sexual abuse by pastoral counsellors are left with an indelible psychic hurt such as self-blame; shame; loss of community and friends if forced to relocate either to escape the community’s judgment or to escape an angry offender who has been discovered or reported; spiritual crisis and loss of faith; family crisis and divorce; psychological distress, including depression and

post-traumatic stress disorder; physiological illness; and failed or successful suicide attempts.”

2.13 THE UNWILLINGNESS OF AUTHORITIES TO ATTEND TO SEXUAL IMPROPRIETIES DONE BY PASTORAL COUNSELLORS

The report of the Independent Inquiries in Child Sexual Abuse, which was commissioned by the government of United Kingdom, found out the clergy sexual abuse of children is on the increase. Records were stated in which both the Anglican Church and the Catholic Church were aware of this scourge and that this impropriety dates back from 1940 to date. According to this report, Independent Inquiries In child Sexual Abuse (2022:v), from 1940 to 2018, 449 cases of sexual impropriety by clergymen were not only reported, but offenders were convicted. It has also been noted in the report that whereas churches and communities know of these improprieties, the church failed in all these years to take such disclosures of these children seriously.

Other writers have indicated that there is unwillingness by courts to take on the clergy perpetrators who engage in these heinous activities. Among other reasons cited by legal fraternal as to why they were unwilling to take on cases of clergy malpractice, especially sexual abuse by pastoral counsellors were that the courts had no precedence in matters of that nature, and that courts were unwilling to prosecute the clergy. It was also amazing to note that churches also showed unwillingness to take the matter of clergy sexual issues seriously.

- Who should be sued for malpractice: the pastoral counsellor or their organisations?

Among the eight malpractices that are usually reported to have been done by pastoral counsellors, one of the outstanding is the malpractice of sexual impropriety by some pastoral counsellors. Someone may find it unnecessary to ask as to who should be sued and or blamed in cases of malpractice. The argument raised by Young and Griffith

(1995:7) should serve as one of the guiding facts to policy makers. In their document, *Regulating Pastoral Counselling Practice: The Problem of Sexual Misconduct*, these scholars discuss whether lawsuits should be brought against the perpetrator, in this case the pastoral counsellor, or should be brought against the local church of the perpetrator or the perpetrator's free-standing organisation in which he serves as a pastoral counsellor. Their argument goes even deeper as to suggest whether lawsuits could be brought against the regional administration of the perpetrator such as the diocese under which the perpetrator serves. It has also been found by the authors that victims of clergy malpractice who insist on bringing lawsuits to the organisation or regional administration rather than to the perpetrator is because of their claim that the organisation itself was negligence in its hiring procedures. As a result of that perceived negligence, victims have a feeling of somehow punishing the organisation that hired the perpetrator.

The suing of the organisation or the state in cases of malpractices of its staff seems to be a normal practice in South Africa. Some individuals have sued the state for medical malpractices of either nurses or medical doctors. The report by Dayimani (2021) serves as one example among others that the suing of the perpetrator is not preferred but rather the suing of the hiring body is the one that is more preferred to that of an individual who committed that malpractice. Dayimani reported the case in which a woman sued the Eastern Cape provincial department of health R3 000 000.00 because the doctor had removed her womb without her consent. The negligence was not done by the hospital or by the Department of Health, but by an individual professional in this case and this professional knows that a patient consent form must be filled in before such undertakings are done. But the suing part were directed to the hiring body, the state. It is, therefore, not surprising that some victims of sexual improprieties and other forms of clergy malpractices direct their lawsuits to the organisation (the church or diocese) of the perpetrator rather than to the perpetrator himself.

2.14 ISSUES ABOUT PROFESSIONALISING AND REGULATING PASTORAL COUNSELLING

The work of pastoral counsellors is regarded as one of the helpful interventions in both communities and churches alike. As to whether pastoral counsellors are under a professional body or regulator statutory body or under both, is well answered by Meyer (2020) in her paper entitled: *Developing pastoral therapy as a professional qualification in South Africa: Rationale and motivation*. To establish a professional body, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) has laid down some requirements to be followed when an organisation wishes to become a professional body in a particular field. In attempting to distinguish the difference between a professional body and a statutory regulatory body, I employed the work of Meyer (2020) who clarified a professional body as follows:

“A professional body is a membership organisation which acts in the interest of a single profession and its registered members. Such bodies are usually independent of control by a government and focus mainly on maintaining the professional standards of people who are granted entry to a specific profession. A professional body is mainly concerned with regulating the educational standards of the profession, by certifying specific courses and providing opportunities to its members in obtaining continuous professional development (CPD) credits, which meet the standards of an approved curriculum (Meyer, 2020:2).”

This explanation lays a solid foundation regarding what a professional body is. The main mandate of a professional body is to regulate the educational standards of a single profession and it performs other duties as indicated in her definition above. According to this definition, which I aligned my thoughts with, a professional body has nothing to do with legal matters of the members of that profession or criminalising the practices of its members in cases where there is no adherence of standards of that body. I fully concur with her definition and for the purpose of this study, I used this definition as the basis for our interpretation of the term “professional body.” The question that comes quickly to one’s mind is: Do pastoral counsellors have a professional body which has oversight of

their educational standards. To this question, Meyer's answer is in the positive because she gave a history of attempts of professionalising pastoral counselling in which she narrated efforts of some organisations which made efforts in professionalising pastoral counselling. These are organisations such as Association for Clinical Pastoral Work; the Association for Pastoral Psychology; the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education in Southern Africa. She mentioned that these associations culminated in the formation of the big body called the Southern African Association for Pastoral Work (SAAP). The SAAP, which later changed into Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors (CPSC), applied to SAQA to be recognised as a professional body and that application was approved in 2017 in which SAQA put them to operate under the auspices of Association for Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP). Both the ACRP and the CPSC are not statutory bodies, but professional bodies for religious practitioners, among whom are pastoral counsellors. As a professional body under SAQA, ACRP has 4 designations that it confers to its members which as listed by Meyer (2020:3) are:

- Religious Practitioner (ID 841);
- Advanced Religious Practitioner (ID 842);
- Religious Professional (ID 843);
- Religious Specialist (ID 844).

A conclusion can be made that pastoral counsellors can function under a professional body and that they may further their studies with the help of their professional body. But it should also be noted that a professional body is not a regulatory statutory body. In making a distinction between the two bodies, Meyer (2020) defines a regulatory statutory body as a legal body that is appointed by the Act of the parliament. A statutory body can legally defend its members in legal battles, and it is also there to defend the public from any unethical practices by its member. As noted by Meyer (2020) a professional body like ACRP can give practice number to its practitioners but that practice number is not legally binding because this is a professional body and not a regulatory statutory body. A practice number that members of a statutory body have, is not given by that statutory body, but

by the Board of Healthcare Funders (BHF). Before a member of a regulatory statutory body receives a practice number, that member should write a board exam and satisfactorily pass it. It should also be noted as contended by Meyer (2020) that members who hold practice numbers at Council for Pastoral and Spiritual Counsellors as well as at ACRP, their designation does not say “counsellor” but, practitioner and that designation does not rest with BHF or any regulatory statutory body, but with ACRP.

We can therefore conclude that as of now, pastoral counsellors are not regulated by any statutory body, but by only a professional body (which has no statutory powers). Maybe this is why Meyer (2020) suggests that religious practitioners may approach the BHF and the parliament and formulate a regulatory statutory body for religious practitioners which will, like other bodies such as statutory body of legal practitioners, dentists, social workers, and the list is long. Until such is done, pastoral counsellors will continue to practice only under professional bodies and not legal bodies such as a regulatory statutory body. The sentiments of Meyer were echoed by the report of CRL Commission (2017:35) when they suggested in one of their recommendations that the parliament of South Africa should consider licensing and regulating religious practitioners.

2.15 APPARENT INCREASE OF PASTORAL COUNSELLORS WITHOUT FORMAL THEOLOGICAL TRAINING

The issue of increasing numbers of pastors (and of course pastoral counsellors), missionaries, other Christian leaders, is not an assumption, but a reality that cannot be denied. Re-Forma, cited by Richard (2022) recorded huge figures of pastors who are urgently needed in churches because of mushrooming of churches among protestant cycles and the figures are suggested as follows:

“Studies show that over 90% of all pastors do not have a formal theological education. According to statistics, that equates to well over 2 million Protestant pastors worldwide. In addition, every year thousands of new Protestant churches are established, very often without a trained pastor or preacher. The biggest crisis

facing the evangelical, global church today is the fact that most pastors, missionaries, and Christian leaders are undertrained or not trained at all.”

When Richard speaks of most pastors, missionaries and Christian leaders who are undertrained or not trained at all, he refers to training in theology and ministry. Training in theology and ministry involves working with and helping people in their day-to-day spiritual and family-related forms of assistance which involves counselling and there is no way one may separate such kind of guidance and assistance from pastoral counselling. That in short, means that the undertrained or untrained pastors enter pastoral ministry without knowing what to do. This leaves us with no doubt but to conclude that the numbers of untrained pastoral counsellors will keep increasing among the protestant churches both in Africa and other parts of the world as suggested by Richard. This increase in numbers of pastors or pastoral counsellors who assume their duties without formal training, brings with it a challenge to see how they could be assisted with formal training in theology and ministry because their willingness is apparent, but lack of knowledge becomes an obstacle.

This increase in numbers of untrained pastors is also supported by Chrispal (2022:180) who in his views claims that “50,000 people accept Christ every day in the Majority World, and that, according to him this creates an urgent need for 1,000 new pastors daily.” The creation of 1,000 pastors every day, who will pastor these newly accepted souls into the family of God, means that the issue of offering them formal training in Theology and Ministry, which includes pastoral counselling becomes impossible. Therefore, this becomes obvious that they too, will enter ministry without formal training and it is impossible for a pastor to do ministry without conducting pastoral counselling to congregants. The Christian world is therefore, faced with the challenge of increasing numbers of both undertrained as well as untrained pastors who are currently in the service of both churches and communities alike.

Added to the concern raised by the above authors regarding increasing numbers of untrained pastoral caregivers, is the voice of Richard (2015). According to Richard (2015)

more than 2.2 million pastoral leaders presently minister without any formal training. The study claims that only 5% of pastors globally are trained for pastoral ministry. This means that untrained pastoral caregivers perform the work of ministry without training in pastoral care and counseling. Richard further asserts that more than 2 million pastoral leaders need immediate training for their pastoral ministries. The claims of figures of untrained pastoral care givers as made here, are an indication that the existing needs that people have (both congregants and community people who do not attend church) do not match the present human resources or pastoral caregivers.

2.16 REPUDIATING PSYCHOLOGY IN PASTORAL COUNSELLING AND CARE

Arguments which question whether pastoral counselling should go alone without principles of psychology, or psychological counselling should be done without consideration of the religious worldviews of the client have been raging from time immemorial. In the area of counselling, psychology and religion were viewed as enemies for a long time, as claimed by MacArthur (2005) and Masters (2010). The study by Eseadi *et al.* (2015) revealed that psychologists need to be empowered with knowledge and information about the impact of religion on the problems of the client. Eseadi *et al.* (2015) wrote in support of the fact that in addition to psychology, the religion of the client should be considered. They base their arguments on the fact that people are vocal about their religious orientations and demand therapists who understand their religious viewpoints. They wrote to encourage psychologists to apply a therapy which is called religiotherapy. Religiotherapy is a concept which Eseadi *et al.* (2015) define as a combination of resources of religious teachings, psychological principles and theories as well as counselling skills and techniques to assist individuals resolve their worries with respect to their religious faith. According to Eseadi *et al.*, (2016), the therapist should incorporate the client's faith into the process to help the client progress towards wholeness. Religiotherapy promotes that religious issues of the client be dealt with in such a way as to respect the client's right to make a choice without looking down or demeaning the religion of the client. Religiotherapy, as asserted by these authors, involves a step-by-

step psychosocial and culturally sensitive approach that transforms the client's way of viewing the world, and ultimately, their very way of being. According to Eseadi *et al.* (2015), it is not easy to assist a client who has religious challenges without first understanding the spiritual views and religion of that client. Eseadi *et al.* (2015) therefore, are in favor of the fact that biblical counselling (or pastoral counselling as they are used interchangeably) without the use of principles of psychology might not competently be of help to clients. They also support the fact that psychology alone, without considering the religious factors in the life of the client is not sufficient. They promote religiotherapy to psychologist and psychotherapy to pastoral counsellors in order that clients might be holistically assisted in their lives.

While Eseadi *et al.* (2015) promote the holistic empowerment of psychologist MacArthur (2005), repudiates the use or addition of psychology into pastoral counselling. According to MacArthur, psychology or secular psychology as he termed it, is enemy of biblical counselling. It becomes apparent when one reads MacArthur's book that MacArthur was reactionary in his writing because he was angered by how Sigmund Freud viewed the mind of a human being. In rejecting views held by Sigmund Freud, MacArthur holds that psychology, as taught by Freud, is based on godless assumptions and evolutionary foundations and that it is therefore dealing with people only superficially and on a temporal level. He contends that psychology is comprised of fundamentally antibiblical and myriads of conflicting theories. In his views, MacArthur (2005:7) holds that Freudian teaching is damaging to the church of God. The notion that Scripture alone is practical and sufficient to solve the problems of people without the use of psychology is not getting support from other authors. I do not align my thoughts with what MacArthur teaches. Again, I find it difficult for MacArthur (2005:5-8) to speak of "secular psychology" because it implies that there is religious psychology." Maybe he should consider using other terms and avoid the use of 'secular psychology' because of how it could be interpreted by some of us.

One of the objectives of this study is to assess the efficacy of counselling and care of untrained pastoral caregivers. Based on what Eseadi *et al.* (2015) promotes, which is

holistic empowerment of counsellors, the question that comes to one's mind is, how can counselling and care be efficacious if principles of psychology are repudiated. I therefore do not concur with views held by MacArthur but with those of Eseadi *et al.* (2025) because when counsellors are empowered with various relevant skills, their counselling will be efficacious.

2.17 ADDITIONAL CONTENT OF TRAINING FOR PASTORAL CAREGIVERS

The study conducted by Ubong (2024) about pastoral counselling and trauma-responsive healing for managing victims of terrorism in Northeastern Nigeria unveiled yet another important aspect in the field of pastoral care. Ubong did not only indicate the need for them to be trained, but he brought to our attention the issue of content of their training, adding to the voices of other authors who highlighted about the curriculum for the training of pastors when in their Bible colleges. His voice came because of pressing issues that confronted his country, like terrorism which leaves the people of Nigeria in fear and hopelessness. The three points which Ubong (2024) recommended, and which are important and are in line with this study are:

- Trauma-focused education must be integrated into theological institution for the empowerment of pastoral caregivers so they could also offer trauma counselling.
- Pastoral caregivers should be developed professionally.
- Access to pastoral services must be made easy and accessible to trauma survivors in the affected Nigerian communities.

Ubong's (2024) main concern in his study was that since Nigerians are faced with unending traumatic incidences from terrorists, the availability of pastoral caregivers could bring a great deal of assistance if they could be trained, not only in theology, but also in trauma counselling because many people go to them for help. Whereas many traumatised people go to pastoral caregivers for assistance, according to Ubong (2024), the pastoral caregivers are not well equipped in how to conduct trauma debriefing to the



traumatised people of Nigeria. Lack of professional development for pastoral caregivers hampers the work that they do, and this leaves traumatised people not fully helped.



CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research design underpinning the study. It also presents the methodology utilised in this study. It outlines the road map through which the process of data collection and analysis was followed. This chapter also aims to unpack the qualitative method and all its associated techniques as the suitable choice of methodology employed in this research study.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kothari (2004) refers to research as a search for knowledge as well as a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic. The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, cited by Kothari (2004) lays down the meaning of research as a careful investigation or inquiry specially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge. As a systematised effort of gaining knowledge, research is viewed as a voyage of discovery. According to Kothari (2004), the aim of research is to help the researcher in defining and redefining problems, formulating hypothesis or suggested solutions; collecting, organising and evaluating data; making deductions and reaching conclusions; and that at last research tests the conclusions to determine whether they fit the formulated hypothesis. As asserted by Kothari (2004), research is the pursuit of truth with the help of study, observation, comparison, and experiment.

Other scholars such as Swinton & Mowat (2006) provides definitions that are more accurate in terms of the discipline of practical theology. Such definitions are more helpful as they could connect both the theory being studied and the phenomenon being



investigated. Swinton & Mowat (2006: 33) write that “the knowledge of the other occurs when the research focuses on a particular individual or group and explores in-depth the ways in which they view and interact with the world.” In agreement with the above, this study hopes to utilise the Mowat and Swinton’s methodological approach to gain more depth into the problem of lack of knowledge in pastoral counselling.

3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.3.1 Method

The study employed qualitative research method. Qualitative research method recognises the world as being the locus of complex interpretive processes within which human beings work towards making sense of their experiences. This also is correct about researchers who yearn to understand the broader scope of epistemology (how knowledge is generated and how we make use of that knowledge). This method is helpful and relevant in this research as it helps with the comprehension of the phenomenon being investigated and the rationale for why it exists. In this regard, Creswell (2014:3) defines qualitative research approach as “a method of inquiry that develops understanding on human and social complexities by relying on data sources such as observations, interviews, and documents”. Creswell’s definition helps this study to delve into the world of realities through scientific lens for the purpose of designing a response to resolve the problems.

3.3.2 Epistemological Foundation

This concept of epistemology deals with the nature of knowledge and such knowledge is generated in any research activity. Mason (2006:16) state that “the concept of epistemology is born from a Greek word “episteme” (that is, knowledge) and logos (words/speech).” It is a branch of philosophy concerns with the nature and scope (including limitations) of knowledge (see, Mason, 2006:16-17). According to Swinton and

Mowat (2006: 32), “the epistemology of qualitative research relates to the particular theory of knowledge that underpins this approach.” This becomes an imperative concept to understand in any research that intends to generate knowledge through scientific investigation. In essence, McLeod (2001: 3) states that the concept deals with:

- What is our knowledge of the study?
- How is knowledge acquired?
- How do we know what we know?

McLeod provides a basis within which to follow in search for knowledge in pastoral work as defined in this study. Knowledge can be divided into *a priori* knowledge, or knowledge that is automatically known, and knowledge that is gained through human experience. In the context of this study, the knowledge being perused here is influenced by the reality on the ground in the field of pastoral ministry.

This approach gives the study a sound understanding of the topic and the method of approach relevant to the field of pastoral work. It does so from the perspective of those involved in the real setting of the phenomenon under discussion, namely, the extent of their knowledge in offering pastoral counselling on issues that affects the peace of humanity² and society. Epistemology as a scope of generating knowledge is also parallel to qualitative research, in that it contributes a lot to the process of collecting data from human experiences on the ground. In practical theology, listening and observing are some of the most important components in making sense of the realities on the ground.

For the richness of study, it becomes important to take in to account the voices, to make sense of reality and thereby make significant contribution in line with McLeod’s questions above. In this sense, the qualitative approach of investigation is understood to be grounded in the interpretivist philosophical position because, just as Pandey (2019:26)

² By peace of humanity in this context, I refer to the erosion of the quality of the institution of marriage, the pain arising from death and dying in the family and society, and many other life challenges that robs individuals from living the beauty of life in fullness.

stated that “the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced or constituted from the perspective of these participants.”

3.3.3 Data Collection

One-on-one, in-depth interviews was used as part of the data collection techniques. The research also employed semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis because they are understandable and fit well for the purpose of this study. The purpose for using these techniques is to enable the researcher to understand the phenomenon being investigated from the perspective of the people who are experiencing it on the ground. According to Struwig and Stead (2001: 12), “it is generally in the nature of qualitative research to be interested in understanding the issues from the perspective of the research participants”.

Sani (2013:40) defines research data as “...facts that are collected for further investigation and views data as factual information used as a basis for reasoning, discussion, or calculation.” However, the collected data remains meaningless without the application of proper methods of analysis to make sense of what has been gathered. Kabir (2016:202) who defines data collection as follows:

“Data collection is the process of gathering and measuring information on variables of interest, in an established systematic fashion that enables one to answer stated research questions, test hypotheses, and evaluate outcomes.”

Contributing to the body of research requires newness using acceptable instrument in the collection of data and making sense of the information through analysis methods.

3.3.4 Population of the study

As Whitehead and Whitehead (2016:112) explained, participants who plays a role in this study were recruited according to the pre-selected criteria based on their relevance to the

study. All participants in the study were selected based on their knowledge in the areas of pastoral ministry and the experience in the filed pastoral counselling. The research hoped that the participants could enrich the study with information, and having required status, experiences, or knowledge of interest to this research. These are pastoral counsellors who, some received training and did not receive training. At the heart of the investigation, is to taste the extent of their understanding of the different field of the helping profession in pastoral ministry and their approach. This also include areas such as training, marriage therapy, pre-marital counselling, dealing with bereaved families, and survivors of rape ordeals. There are many areas in which pastoral counselling should play a role, but the above are just but few examples.

The categories of people above are those who reside in Capricorn District Municipality.



Figure1.9.1 Capricorn Municipality (in Red color),
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_municipalities_in_Limpopo

The Capricorn District Municipality is situated at the core of economic development in the Limpopo Province and includes the capital of the province, the City of Polokwane. The district consists of four (4) local municipalities, namely, Blouberg LM, Molemole LM,

Polokwane LM, and Lepelle-Nkumpi LM. The district covers an area of 185 222.27 Hectares which constitutes 12% of the total surface area of the province and is made up of 113 wards and has 28 traditional authorities. The Capricorn District has a total population of 1 372 355 million people representing about 23% of the total population in the province and 2.3% of the population in South Africa. The most populated local municipality in the district is the City of Polokwane, while Molemole is the least populous municipality in the district.

3.3.5 Sample and Sampling Procedure

In their description regarding what sampling means, Lim and Ting (2012:2) wrote:

“A sample can be characterized as a subset of a particular population, whereby the process of sampling enables the researcher to estimate some unknown characteristics of a target population. Often, a sample provides a reasonable means to research for gathering such useful decision-making information that might be otherwise unattainable and unaffordable.”

This study will use a purposive sampling approach in collecting data. The American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics (2016:2) defines purposive sampling as follows:

“The purposive sampling technique, also called judgment sampling, is the deliberate choice of a participant due to the qualities the participant possesses. It is a non-random technique that does not need underlying theories or a set number of participants. Simply put, the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience. It is typically used in qualitative research to identify and select the information-rich cases for the most proper utilization of available resources. This involves identification and selection of individuals or groups of individuals that are proficient and well-informed with a phenomenon of interest”.

Guided by the principle of purposive sampling as explained above, I selected participants who possess the most relevant information regarding the topic under investigation. I also

made my sample a correct representation of my population.

The following groups of participants aided in collecting data solicited by the from focus group discussions, structured interviews as well as semi-structured interviews. Permission was requested in case audio recording was done. Information was solicited from untrained and trained pastoral counsellors, , marriage couples, pre-marital couples, bereaved families and survivors of rape ordeal.

3.3.6 Analysis of Data

Thematic analysis was used to make sense and draw conclusion in this study. This also means that some themes were categorised and thereby discussed in to bring out more sense from the data collected on the ground. Riger and Sigurvinsdottir (2016) define Thematic Analysis as a method for analysing qualitative data that involves searching for recurring ideas (referred to as themes) in a dataset. Therefore, this becomes an important tool to use in dealing with the data for this research. It is also relevant as the aim is to search for understanding as opposed to numbers using quantitative method.

Alhojailan (2012:40) noted that Thematic Analysis allows the researcher to determine precisely the relationships between concepts and compare them with the replicated data. In his claims, Alhojailan (2012:39) indicates that “the traditional manual use of data analysis is helpful and easy to use.” In their elaboration regarding how researchers should use Thematic Analysis to analyse data. Riger and Sigurvinsdottir (2016) draw the attention of researchers by showing that Thematic Analysis has been divided into 6 stages which they summarized as follows:

- Stage1: Immersing oneself in the data/familiarizing yourself with your data (this stage involves transcribing interviews and reading the transcripts repeatedly).
- Stage 2: Generating initial codes (the researcher identifies an initial list of codes).

- Stage 3: Searching for themes (this stage involves considering how different codes may fit together into broader themes).
- Stage 4: Reviewing themes (identified potential themes need to be reviewed and refined. Some potential themes may not be relevant to the research question, while others might be combined into broader ideas or divided into separate themes).
- Stage 5: Defining and naming themes (identify the central idea in each theme and provide a name that concisely captures that idea).
- Stage 6: Producing the report (the report should now be written because themes and their interrelationships are fully identified. The report should present the analysis in a way that the reader sees as trustworthy).

The use of Thematic Analysis in this study was based on its suitability and clear guidance regarding how data should be analysed. Because it is user-friendly and understandable, it helped the researcher to arrive at the objective conclusion regarding answering the research questions.

3.4 MEASURE OF QUALITY CONTROL

Brigitte (2017) defines validity 'as the state of being well grounded or justifiable, relevant, meaningful, logical, confirming to accepted principles or the quality of being sound, just, and well founded' (Brigitte, 2017:256). In defining research validity, Heale and Twycross (2015:66) remarked: Validity is defined as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study. The authors further gave a vivid example in which they argued that a survey designed to explore depression, but which measures anxiety would not be considered valid. In other words, if this study aims at investigating pastoral services offered by untrained pastoral counsellors but it focuses on preaching services by

untrained pastors, this study would be declared not valid. It would have dealt with what it was not intended to deal with, which is pastoral counselling by untrained pastoral counsellors.

Merriam (1995) as used in Brigitte (2017:254), states that “the more times the findings of a study can be replicated, the more stable or reliable the phenomenon is thought to be.” In other words, it is the idea of replicability. Heale and Twycross (2015:66) note that “reliability is having to do with consistency of results.” If the same method is used to solicit responses from the same group of people on a particular issue, and the same responses are received as the response received in the beginning, the findings or results of my study are reliable. In research like this, reliability was important. If the same group of respondents were asked the same question and gave the same response as they did in the beginning, that would mean that there is reliability in the study.

3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS OF THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Pilot and Beck (2014) cited by Connelly (2016:435) asserted that “trustworthiness or rigor of a study refers to the degree of confidence in data, interpretation, and methods used to ensure the quality of a study.” Brigitte (2017:254) defined trustworthiness as “the quality, authenticity, and truthfulness of findings of qualitative research.” It relates to the degree of trust, or confidence, readers have in results. It is a criterion to judge the quality of a research design.

3.6 DELIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to explore pastoral counselling interventions conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors. The researcher has no intention to advocate pastoral counselling or to criticise it in any way. The study zooms in on the services conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors with a view to assess how beneficial their services are to their congregants. As with many studies, this study also has its limitations and

delimitations in terms of its scope and boundaries. Although Limpopo Province has 5 District Municipalities, this study, however, focuses only on one District Municipality which is Capricorn District Municipality. This District Municipality was chosen because it is in the capital city of Limpopo Province, and it has many churches and pastors. The choice of problem and objectives of the study are also limiting factors in the study because the researcher could have chosen another perspective to investigate in this study. The population of the study is not every person, but selected participants who assisted in providing needed information to answer the research question(s). The criteria of participants to enrol in this study is exclusive because only participants with certain qualifying criteria based on their situations were the ones who took part in this study. This study did not cover pastoral counselling services of all pastors, nor did cover pastoral counselling services of trained pastors. It, however, covered the pastoral counselling services of untrained pastoral counsellors and only at Capricorn District Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa.

3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical considerations were observed in this study. This includes the following: confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of participants.

3.7.1 Confidentiality

Bos (2020:164) defines confidentiality as follows:

“Any information relating to the private sphere of a person that they wish not be shared with others is considered ‘confidential.’ This information is differentiated from ‘public information,’ which everyone has a right to access”.

Added to the above definition is the voice of NorthEast Ethics Partnership (2012), which defines confidentiality to mean that identifiable information about individuals which was collected during the process of research should not be disclosed without the permission

of that person. By this definition, the authors stated that in keeping confidential information of participants, the researcher could not disclose any information gained from an interviewee, deliberately or accidentally, in ways that might identify an individual. Petrova, Deweng, and Camillery (2014) indicate that confidentiality in research is an important part because it enhances the quality of the study. In their remarks about confidentiality, they also highlighted the fact that the researcher needs to possess good personal and professional attributes such as honesty and respectfulness to the participants.

In this study, and with the guidance of these scholars, the researcher treated all information received from participants in a professional and confidential way. Participants who might be vulnerable will be empowered to control their own information and the researcher will assure them of the confidentiality of the information given so to alley any form of fear that might try to get into them during participation. No information from participants will be disclosed at any stage by the researcher without permission by the participant.

3.7.2 Permission to conduct research

Prior to field work, the researcher sought permission from the University of Venda at the University Higher Degree Committee. After permission was granted I applied for a Ethical Clearance at the University Research Committee and was granted. Data was collected after the Ethical Clearance was issued.

3.7.3 Informed consent

All participants were treated with respect and participants were offered a form that addresses informed consent, and this form had a topic of the study as well as explaining the purpose of the study. The form also guarantee the participants of their right to withdraw from participating if they so wish. This means that all participants who took part in this study did so voluntarily. This aided in collecting data that was suitable to answer

the research questions.

3.7.4 Privacy and anonymity

Remarkings about privacy in research, Dimensions of Discovery defines privacy as the protection of individual's right to control access to their participation in a study. By this they refer to the extent, timing, and circumstances of their participation. In this study, I considered how to approach individual who participated in this research. I considered circumstances and setting where study participants might be contacted as well as where participant's information was collected. This means that the researcher did not ask participants to share their information that is sensitive or personal in a public setting. I collected information in a private space where the discussion cannot be observed or overheard by others.

Bos (2020) defines anonymity as the degree to which the source of a message can be identified. Ryerson University Ethics Board (2015) states that anonymity has to do with concealing the identity of the research participants and that even those associated with the research project should not divulge the identity of the participants. In this study, the researcher endeavoured to anonymise the identities of participants, that is, their names were replaced by pseudonyms, and their addresses or anything that may make them identifiable was concealed.

3.8 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this chapter outlined the research design and methodology used to investigate pastoral counselling interventions by untrained pastoral counsellors in Polokwane Local Municipality, Limpopo Province, South Africa. The study utilised a qualitative research design, employing data collection techniques such as semi-structured interviews, focus group interviews, and document analysis. The population of the study included untrained pastoral counsellors, trained pastoral counsellors, marriage



couples, pre-marital couples, bereaved families, and survivors of rape ordeals within Capricorn District Municipality. Data analysis relied on Thematic Analysis, aiming to uncover recurring themes and concepts within the dataset. Quality control measures were implemented to ensure validity and reliability, while trustworthiness in qualitative research was priority to maintain the authenticity and truthfulness of the findings. The study had specific delimitations, focusing only on untrained pastoral counsellors in one district municipality, and it aimed to explore their services without advocating or criticising pastoral counselling. Ethical considerations, including confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity of participants, were observed throughout the research process.



CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to give an overview of the findings of this research. It should be remembered that the findings were based on research questions that this study had to answer. The data that form the findings of this study was gathered by way of survey questionnaires, focus group discussions as well as one-on-one semi-structured interviews.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis transforms raw data into meaningful insights, allowing the researcher to draw conclusions and answer research questions. As Bhatia (2017:166) submits that “the main aim of data analysis is to convert the available, gathered and cluttered data into a format which is easy to understand, more legible, conclusive and clear in how research questions are answered by these findings.” As data was gathered using the above data collecting methods, the focus was to explore deeply the opinions, attitudes, perceptions, and expectations regarding services that are offered by untrained pastoral counsellors to congregants. The aim of scrutinising the responses from participants was not only to hear their perceptions but also to contrast their available data with the current existing literature about the research topic of this study. It was, therefore, important for the researcher to get responses from both congregants and untrained pastoral counsellors.

The two categories of participants, namely, congregants and pastoral counsellors, were interviewed and their responses have been captured as appears below. The research questions to which participants responded are as following:

- What are the pastoral counselling interventions that are conducted by trained and untrained pastoral counsellors?
- Why are some churches allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it?
- How are congregants and communities affected by pastoral counselling interventions conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors?

4.3 PROTECTING THE IDENTITY OF PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR INFORMATION

While collecting data from willing participants, ethical consideration was adhered to most strictly to conceal the identity of all participants. In doing so, the following were put as matters of high priority: confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. Confidentiality with information received from participants is crucial in a research-related matter. Bos (2020) submits that any information relating to the private sphere of a person that they wish not to be shared with others is considered 'confidential.' Therefore, the researcher will under no circumstances disclose any information gained from an interviewee, deliberately or accidentally, in ways that might identify that individual. As indicated by Petrova, Deweng, and Camillery (2014), confidentiality in research helps in enhancing the quality of the study. The researcher treats all information received from participants professionally and confidentially. The researcher applied the principle of anonymity as a form of keeping participants' information confidential. Ryerson University Ethics Board (2015) posits that anonymity has to do with concealing the identity of the research participants and that even those associated with the research project should not divulge the identity of the participants. In this study, the researcher endeavoured to anonymize the identities of participants, that is, their names were replaced by pseudonyms, and their addresses or anything that may make them identifiable was concealed.

4.4 DATA ANALYSIS

To get responses from participants, I used following instruments:

4.4.1 Survey Questionnaires

The use of survey questionnaires was a tool for collecting large volumes of responses and sufficient data. The questionnaires were designed in a way that they had a set of preconceived closed questions that were not difficult to answer. At other times, participants had to tick their responses from a list of choices, but some required a brief explanation according to the understanding of the participants.

These survey questionnaires were distributed to participants who were relevantly qualified to give answers because of their selected background. These were congregants who were members of various churches and who received pastoral counselling from a pastor because of the painful situations from which they suffered. They were purposely selected because of the ordeals through which they had passed.

The researcher distributed these survey questionnaires to participants by way of requesting the pastor of the church to allow him to explain the qualifying criteria of people he needed as relevant participants for this study. Upon explaining to the congregations, participants willingly came forward to pick questionnaires. Because the researcher needed 60 responses from pastoral counsellors and 60 from congregants, he distributed survey questionnaires in greater numbers to each category than the exact number. The reason was that the responses were supposed to have an allowance in such a way that if others did not to return the questionnaires, there would at least be a sizable number of responses so that the required number could be achieved. Some answered them right at that place at that time and handed them back to me, but others took them and promised to bring them back later. Not all distributed questionnaires were brought back as

promised. The tables below show the number of survey questionnaires that were distributed and those that were brought back with responses from participants.

A total of n=130 participants from various churches within Polokwane Local Municipality participated in this research study. A total of n=65 (50%) participants who were members from different churches and n=65 (50%) pastors from different churches were selected to participate in the study. Of the n=65 members of the church, only n=48 we able to respond to all the questions. These participants were selected based on their suitability and knowledge of the topic being investigated. The figure below provides a breakdown of the participant's numbers. The breakdown does not provide information on the race of the participants but only knowledge generation to help the study.

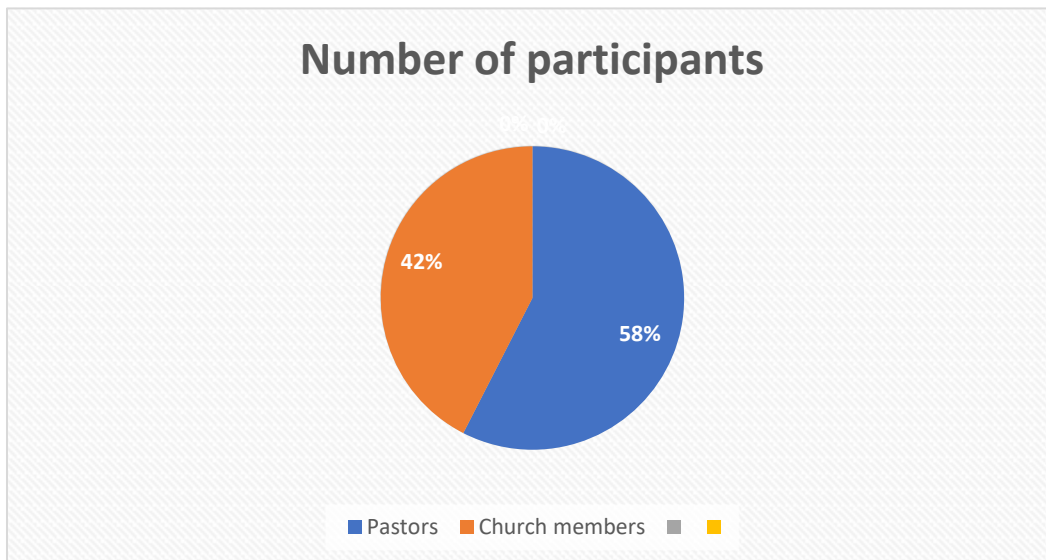


Figure 1: The description of total number of participants in the study. n=113

Table 1 below shows the number of participants who received the questionnaires and the total number of those who responded positively or returned the forms. Only pastors were able to return all questionnaires that were distributed to them. Congregants who responded positively were only n=48 in total.

Table 1: Breakdown number of those who responded positively

Distribution of survey questionnaires and number of responses per category		
Category of participants	Number of survey questionnaires distributed	The number of questionnaires returned answered
Congregants	65	48
Pastors	65	65

The section and the figures listed below deal with or provide biographical information of the participants. Figure 2 below provides information on the pastor's years of experience in the ministry in terms of percentage. Of the total $n=65$ pastors who responded, $n=23$ (35%) have less than 5 years, $n=14$ (23%) have 5 years, $n=20$ (31%) have 10 years and $n=7$ (11%) have 15 years of experience.

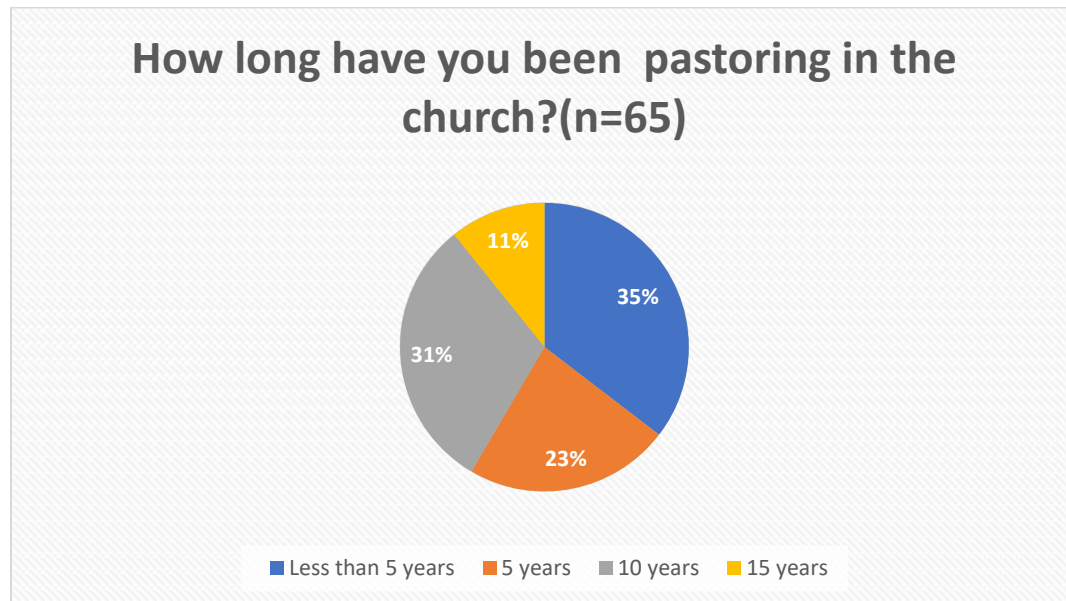


Figure 2: Response to the question: How long have you been pastoring in the church?
N=65

Figure 3 below provides a picture of how participants have responded to the question, what level of formal theological training do you have? A total of n=65 pastors responded to this question and their responses are captured in the figure below. The figure also records a high number n=39 (68%) of pastors who have not received formal theological training. Those who have been trained at different NQF levels constitute a small component of the figure below.

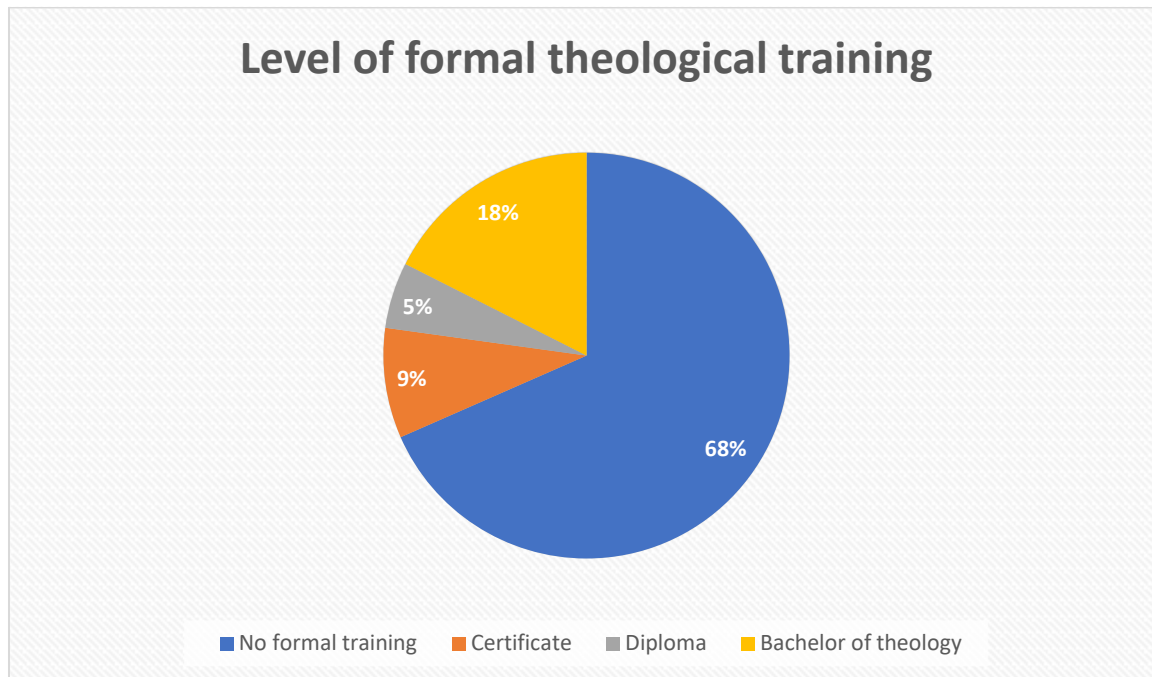


Figure 3: Response to the question: What level of theological training do you have? N=65

It has been clear from the responses of participants that, in addition to their day-to-day pastoral, most of the pastors are faced with dealing with issues that they are not capacitated to handle. While preaching, burying the dead, solemnising marriages, and doing church administration and management, are basic services to be rendered to the congregants and society at large, specialized ministry is very important.

Survey questionnaires which were distributed to both congregants and pastoral counsellors to elicit needed information were designed in a simple and straight forward way so that they could be answered with ease by both congregants and untrained pastoral counsellors.

Following the response in Figure 3 above, participants were also asked to respond to the question about their understanding of pastoral counselling and how it differs from pastoral care. A total of n=65 pastors responded to the question framed as follows: Are pastoral care and pastoral counselling the same? Of the total n=65 pastors, n=38 (58%) indicated

that the two are the same, while n=16 (25%) pointed out that they are different and only n=11 (17%) were unsure.

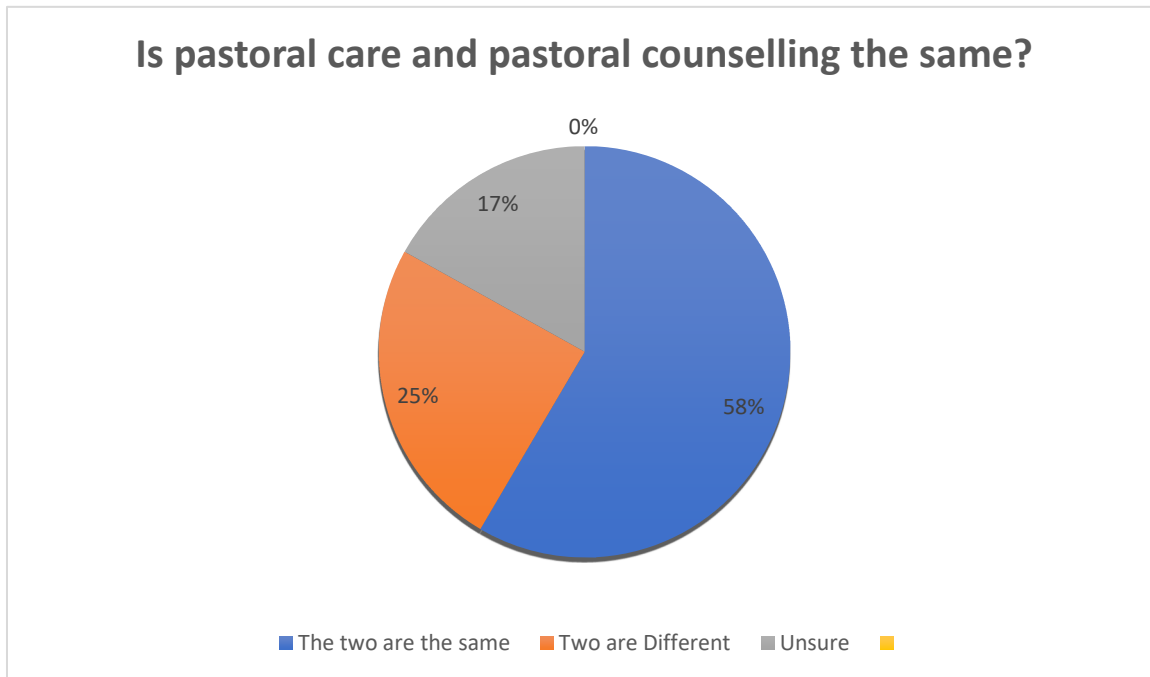


Figure 4: Response to the question: Are pastoral care and pastoral counselling the same?
N=65

A follow-up question was asked to all participants to unpack their responses captured in figure 4 above. The majority of those indicated that the two are the same, arguing that both pastoral care and pastoral counselling are about caring for the members of the church. However, in their submissions, they do not have a clear scientific answer to support this. An example of this is taken when Pastor John (not his real name) said during the follow-up interview:

“In my view, the two are the same because they both talk about caring for the people. I mean, when one delivers a sermon on Sunday, or during bereavement, we are dealing with their souls. Even broken souls find healing from that sermon.”

This above interview report shows a lack of scientific understanding of the difference between pastoral care and pastoral counselling. Many pastors have pointed to the use of sermons, bibles, and prayers as the best way of counselling a broken soul. This also provides an example of how this can mislead many pastors in the field of counselling an individual or group of people.

Another participant name Pastor Thembi (not her real name) had this to say during the interview:

“For example, when I give premarital counselling, my focus is mainly on the emphasis that marriage is created by God for people to respect it. The rest of the marital challenges can be defeated by first acknowledging and respecting marriage as an institution of God. Those who fear the Lord will learn to listen to one another with respect.”

This shows another example of how basic principles of counselling are misunderstood in the process. In marriage, the aim is not necessarily to instill fear but to unpack the dynamics of marital life through counselling methods. To help the couple understand what marriage is, what are the requirements in helping build longevity of marital union, and the science of communications as fundamental in marriage?

A direct question was asked if some have provided counselling to members dealing with complicated and life-threatening crises (e.g., suicide attempts, hallucinations, marital challenges, etc.) and what were their concluding assessments. Most of the participants answered “yes” to the first part of the question. However, most pastors concluded that the majority of help seekers who had suicidal and hallucination challenges were demon-possessed.

The following Figure 5 provides descriptions of their response. Of the total n=65 participants, n=50 (77%) have dealt with complex life issues, while n=15 (23%) have not dealt with them.

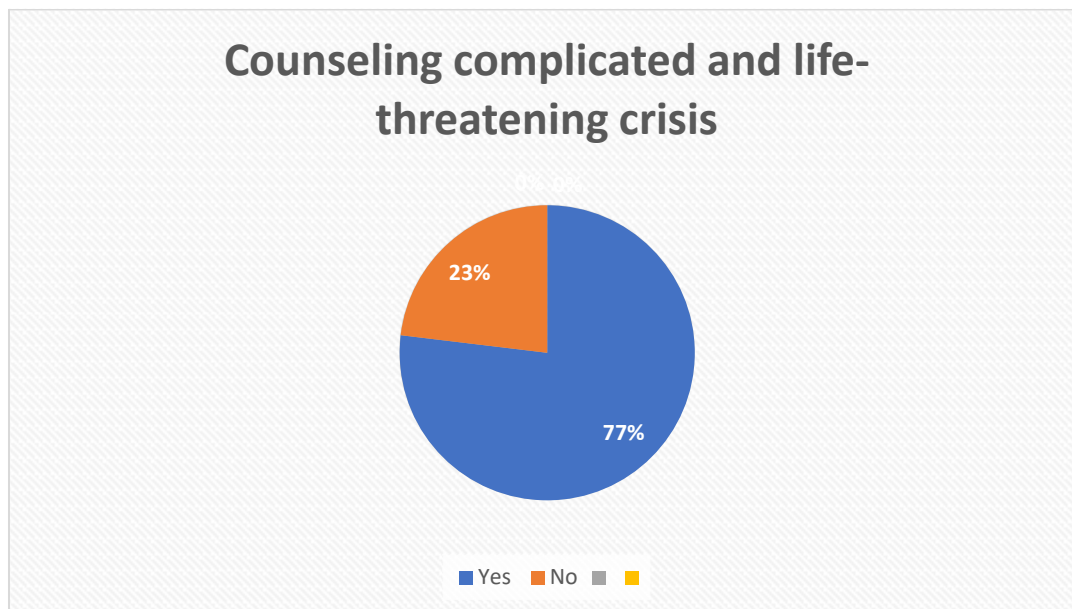


Figure 5: Response to the question: Have you provided counselling to people dealing with a complex and life-threatening crisis (e.g., suicide attempts, hallucinations, marital challenges, etc.)? N=65

Figure 6 below responds to the question of whether the pastor had even referred/advised help seekers to more professional and clinical practitioners for help. Here, of the total n=65 pastors, n=57 (88%) never recommended all those needing help to any professional for clinical assistance. Issues that are very psychological and complex have been dealt with using untested methods and in some cases bible verses. The point of the emphasis here is that many pastors do not acknowledge that they do not have the right skills to address certain complex issues.

While there are human challenges that require the use of the bible and prayer, there are certain issues that require the use of tested methods in clinical and other counselling professions. A case that relates to suicide as an example, requires both spiritual and clinical interventions. However, from the responses in this regard, members are being treated without the knowhow in the field of pastoral counselling. Pastoral counselling as an advanced form of care, knows its limits and boundaries. In other words, the pastor will

know when to refer the person to professionals who are trained in dealing with more complex issues at a deeper level.

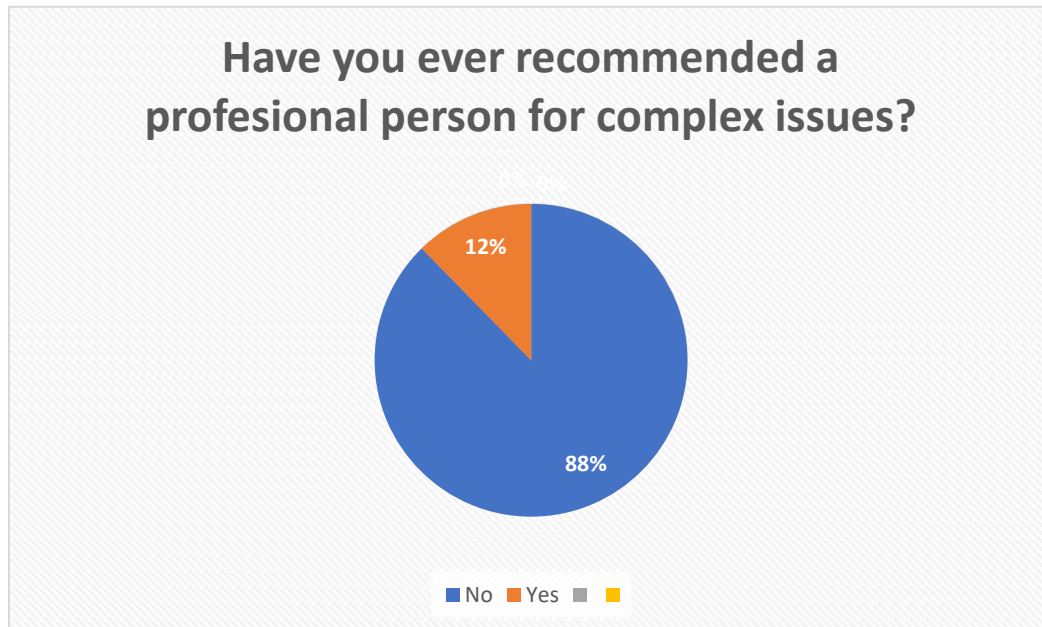


Figure 6: response to the question: Have you ever recommended a professional person for their complex life challenges? N=65.

4.4.2 Data from the second category of participants

This section now present data from participants who are not clergy/pastor but are in the church and have experienced the counselling process with the pastors as a pastoral caregiver. The emphasis is still made that, all names used in the sections are not real names but pseudonyms.

Participants were asked to mention the kinds of counselling interventions by pastors in the church. This question was given to both those who answered by way of survey questionnaires as well as those who were engaged in focus group discussions. Figure 7 below shows the responses to the question, how would you describe the counselling methods you have received from the church/pastor? The responses are summarised and

captured in terms of themes. Of the total n=48 church members who responded, n=29 (60%) shows that the counselling is based more on spirituality that dealing with actual issues to find long solutions. While n=19 (40%) has indicated that counselling needs to address issues at the deeper level and not just at the periphery.

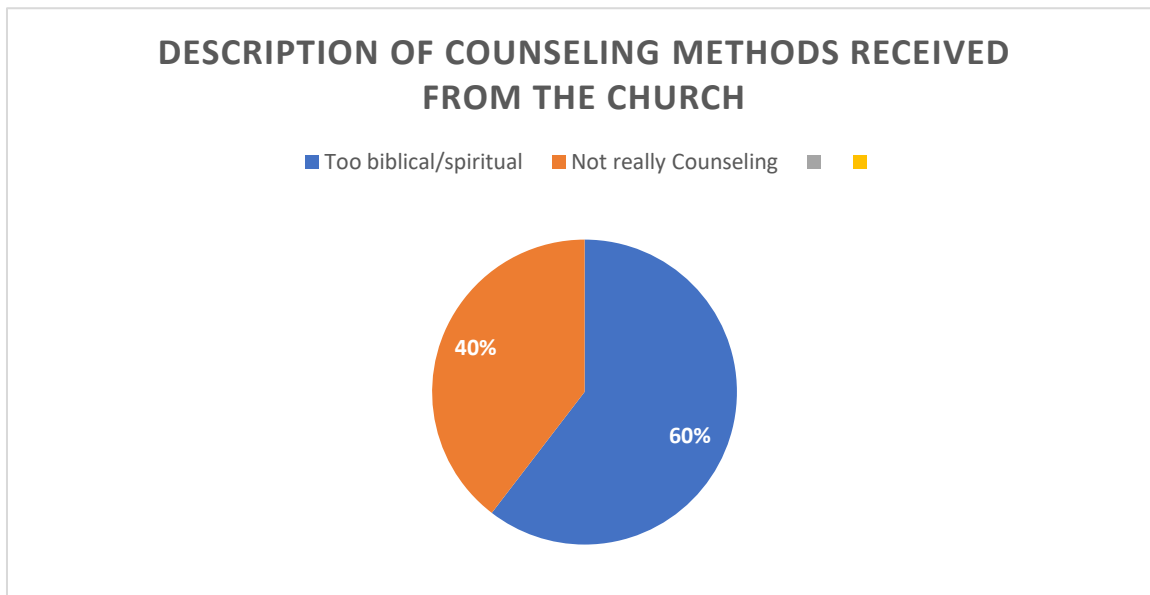


Figure 7: Responses to the question: how would you describe the counselling methods you have received from the church/pastor? N=48

On the general feeling and observation of pastoral work/ministry in the church by members, the emphasis and focus are put more on giving premarital counselling than anything else. Others emphasised that there is a great need for training to understand the broader approach to counselling in more complex issues than marriage. Figure 8 below captures the summary of the response to the question: How would you describe the general work of ministry in the church? N=30 (62%) are happy with the way the ministry is being done, while a small number are okay. The fact that more training is needed in areas of counselling, does not suggest that the entire ministry is not good. Training provides more content in the field where one can deal with issues professionally.

4.5 COUNSELLING INTERVENTIONS BY UNTRAINED PASTORS AS

CONSTRUED BY PARTICIPANTS

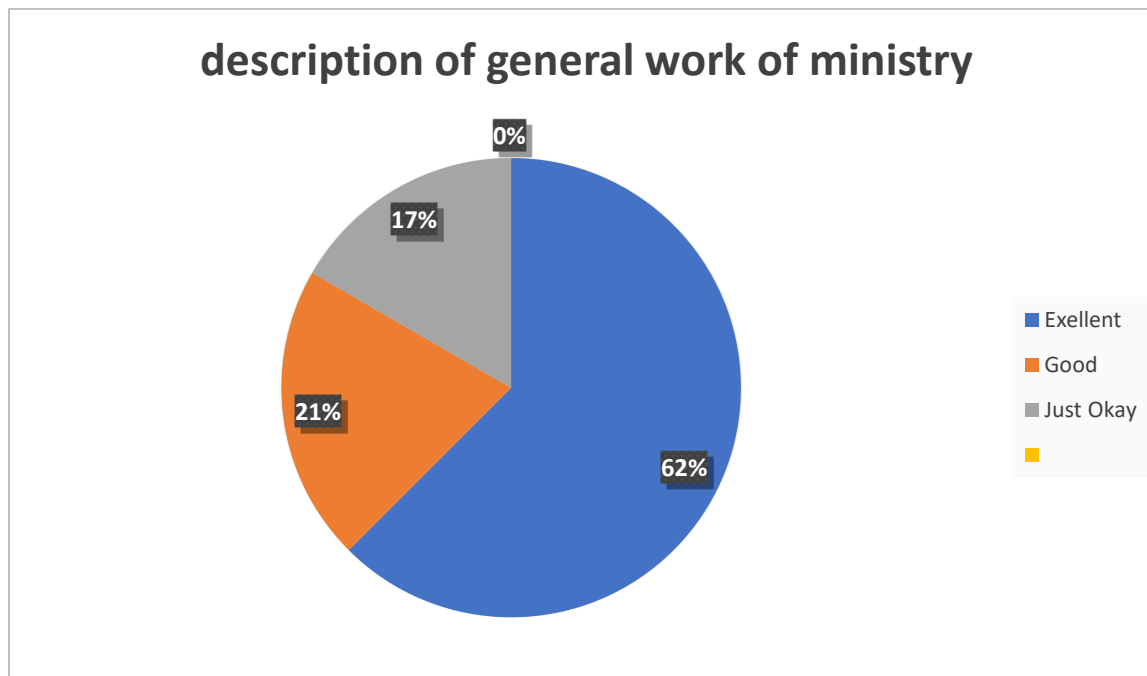


Figure 8: Responses to the question: How would you describe the general work of ministry in the church? N=48

One of the participants indicated that:

In the case where the church deals with pastoral counselling, they do well in matters of relationships. This may not be the feeling of most people out there.

While another participant indicated that:

“Caring for members should mean dealing with life issues in their entirety. But sometimes, our pastors do not address certain things in the church. They focus on deliverance, prophecy etcetera. They are very good at these things, but other crises that life brings, they are not able to resolve without pointing to magic.”

This reflects a deeper need for training to have broader methods of care and reflection on the lives of people in society. The following sections reflect on a variety of issues and

topics that came up during the interview process with participants.

4.5.1 Sustaining Marriages and Preventing Divorce

In an interview with Refilwe Moroka, she emphasized the importance of counselling by pastors by submitting that:

“When a couple is fighting and physically injuring each other, it is not the police who come first in that family to bring peace, but the pastor. The pastor is the first to be called, to talk with them, bring peace, read the Bible to them, and pray with them. And the people have respect for the pastor, which is why they listen and comply with what the pastor tells them. Since it takes ages for the police to come to the place where there is a problem, the pastor is always quick to attend to such problems. This is why if pastors were not there, more and more deaths of spouses and divorces would be there than current existing figures.”

Other participants indicated that even before couples could make an appointment with a psychologist or social worker, the pastor was the one who helped them first to be emotionally relieved so that they could speak to the social worker. The level of marriage problems among married couples was the main point that participants took turns to explain how pastors help in this regard.

Participants also indicated (also see Figure 7 above) that pastors are good at conducting pre-marital counselling to couples that are about to marry. They submitted that without pre-marital counselling it would be difficult for most marriages to survive the storms that usually bring down many marriages.

In emphasizing how pastoral counselling helps in sustaining marriages, Desmond Chauke (not real name) states:

“The prayer element in the counselling session of the pastoral counsellor plays a role that is not found in other counselling professionals. It is this prayer that breaks the difficulties that exist in marriages. Counselling without prayer for the couple is not as effective as one that has prayer and the reading of the Word of

God in it. When counselling is combined with these two elements – prayer and the reading of the Word of God by the pastoral counsellor, marriages are sustained.”

4.5.2 Guidance and Reconciliation Between the Parent and the Child

Some of the participants when asked about counselling services rendered by untrained pastoral counsellors, were quick to say that youths in conflict with their parents reconcile better with their parents in the presence of the pastor. Some of the participants who went through problems with their children, especially young ones, have related their painful experiences and that they tried all available avenues which yielded no result but that when they involved the pastor, they saw how their children paid attention and that this brought peace in their homes.

On the other hand, another participant Peter Rikhotso, who is a single parent, emphatically posits that:

“The pastor commands respect. Even if young people may not pay attention to their teachers at school, but when engaged in a talk by the pastor, they reconcile with their parents and forgiveness takes place between them in a way which would not have happened if it were not done in the presence of the man of God.”

4.5.3 Pastors are Good at Giving Bereavement Counselling

As the question, “What are the counselling services that pastors offer to their congregants?”.

figure 9 below shows how the participants responded to the question in terms of where the most focus of counselling goes. Of the total n=48 participants, n=38 (79%) point to bereavement, while n=10 (21%) shows that it goes to marriage. The small number showing the focus on marriage does not suggest that they did not mention bereavement, but marriage is on top of the list. Most pastor delegates church elders to deal with

bereavements while they (pastors) are hands-on in the matters of marriage.

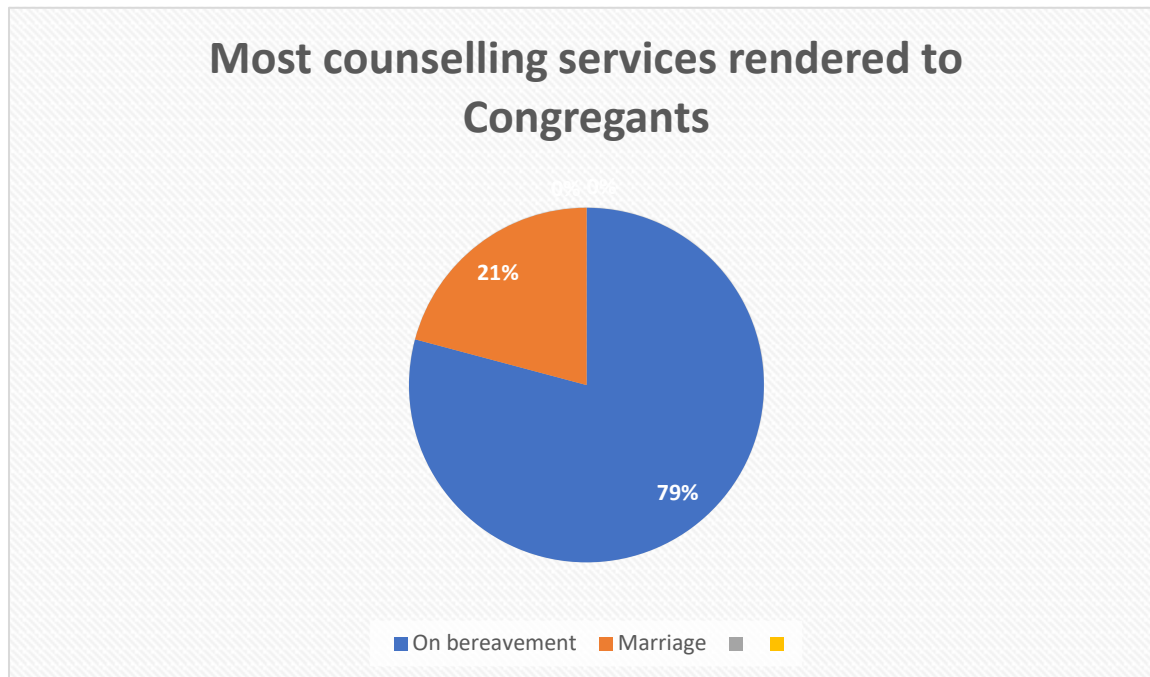


Figure 9: Response to the question: What are the counselling services that pastors offer to their congregants? N=48

Some participants have raised points on the importance of pastors during bereavement. In the discussion, it emerged that the first person that the family calls when there is a death in that family is the pastor. Participants also indicated that the last person to bid the family goodbye was the pastor. Some even went to the extent that even when the hearse arrives to bring the remains of the loved one home, the pastor is the one who accompanies the family to identify the corpse. It was elucidated by participants that the family counselling session, the reading of Scriptures, and the prayers conducted by the pastor before and after the funeral services have helped many bereaved families in such a way that they gained comfort and strength to face the hard realities of life that their loved one is gone.

4.5.4 Pastors can Handle Cases of Domestic and Gender-based Violence Effectively

During a discussion forum, attended by 21 congregants from various churches, the issue of gender-based violence as well as general domestic violence surfaced. Participants raised concerns about the prevalence of gender-based violence and how this social ill becomes a thorny matter in the communities. The cruelty, high levels, and effects of this scourge were raised as matters in which pastoral counsellors, were found to be the ones who play an essential role in bringing hope to the troubled souls of community members. In highlighting the role of pastoral counsellors, Mapula Seloga gave a commendation during the interview in that:

“When community members are overwhelmed with problems as a result of gender-based violence, the only hope is the pastor and pastors are good in that they can apply spiritual healing words, and pray with congregants and their families as well as read the word of God to the troubled people and by God’s power, people find healing from the pastor, whether the pastor is trained or not.”

Other participants highlighted the importance of the pastor during such challenges. Added to the voice of Mapula above was Siphso Seakamela, who elaborated during the interview in that:

“Pastors are quickly accessible and available, even more than an ambulance when such life-threatening challenges strike. Police are good but they take time to come to the aid of the victim but the pastor is only a phone call away. The prayer element by the pastor during this moment comforts and brings light to the life of the victim of gender-based violence.”

4.5.5 HIV & AIDS Counselling and Helping the Sick

Both respondents on survey questionnaires and during focus group discussions indicated that pastors are also as suitable to counsel people living with HIV and AIDS. One of the cited reasons is that the pastor can keep confidentiality of people. It was indicated in the discussion forum that people living with HIV and AIDS, still do not want their status

known and that they prefer having their health status unknown. Many participants unanimously agreed that the comfort the pastor brings during the counselling and the confidence they have in the pastor, make them feel at peace to go to the pastor for their HIV and AIDS-related matters.

In an interview with Siboniso Maluleke, the following was recorded:

“At first, people living with HIV and AIDS feared going to the pastor for counselling, due to the notion that pastors judge them and that pastors might divulge their confidential matters while preaching, but now the situation has changed because pastors are supporters and counsellors of those living with HIV & AIDS and they keep confidential matters of their HIV and AIDS. There is more peace and comfort to put their dirty linen to the men and women of cloak than to other helping people.”

4.5.6 Counselling Victims of Emotionally Abused, Raped, Suicidal, and Traumatized

The heading presents some of the most complex issues that whoever is to embark on the counselling process, should be well informed about. Participants were engaged to understand how the pastors are dealing with these kinds of complex issues. Three of the participants in the discussion forum requested to give what they termed ‘*kgodu ye e tšwago lerotseng*’ – meaning that they were the ones who personally had experiences in which they were near suicide and that with the counselling interventions by untrained pastoral counsellors, their lives were spared. One of them, Malesela Ramodipa, submits that:

“Counselling roles of untrained pastoral counsellors are even more helpful than those who are termed professionals because untrained pastoral counsellors do not have bureaucratic procedures to see them. Their availability and quick responses when needed make them more helpful than the professional ones because, with registered professional counsellors like psychologists, one has to put an appointment first through the secretary or reception whereas that is not so with untrained pastoral counsellors.”

4.5.7 Youth with Addiction Problems and Those Who Failed at School

Regarding a list of counselling services offered by pastors, some participants brought to our attention that they were helped with counselling by pastors during their hard moments in life when they failed at school. One participant stated that failing at school has devastating effects so much so that the only option seems to be committing suicide. It has been observed during focus group discussions that many young people commit suicides more easily than elderly ones and that when pastors intervene in such, more and more impending deaths are prevented. In support of that, Charles Maleka raised another point, showing that pastors do help even those young people who were engaged in drugs. Charles submits that:

“If parents work well and together with pastors, the problem of addiction in the communities could easily be conquered because young people have respect for the pastor. Some young people whose treatment might not have shown good results from other helping professionals will show good results if parents and pastors can together attend to addiction problems among young people.”

This view was also attested to by some parents who volunteered to share that during their frustration with addiction of their youths, they worked as a team in which they as parents, social workers, psychologists, and pastoral counsellors were there and that their youths were assisted because the pastor was involved.

4.6 CONTRIBUTING FACTORS FOR CHURCHES TO ALLOW UNTRAINED PASTORS TO CONDUCT COUNSELLING

This research sought to establish reasons why some churches allow untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it. The question which was put to participants was:

Why are some churches allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it?

From this question, many responses were given by participants in the form of survey questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and discussion forums. It has been established that many churches are allowing untrained pastors to conduct pastoral counselling for them for a variety of reasons. In the discussion forum, one participant, Florah Mehale, stood up and made some comments in response to the above question and her comments received the support of more than half of all participants. Florah commented:

“It is not possible to ask the pastor if he or she is trained in pastoral counselling or not. After all, you are the one who came to their church to fellowship with them. How dare you then, ask them whether they are trained or not? If you are the one who swims in the challenges of life and the pastor is there to help you, where do you get the guts to ask if he is trained or not?”

The following are responses that participants gave when asked reasons for them to allow untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without training in it.

4.6.1 Trust Relationship Existing Between the Pastor and Congregants

Participants responded to the above question by using a variety of words to express that the trust that they have in the pastor makes them not question the training of the pastor. Some of the phrases they used in response to this question include:

“My pastor knows me and knows my challenges. My pastor will keep my matters confidential. I believe in my pastor. I already have a relationship with my pastor. There is comfort and freedom when I am counselled by my pastor. God won't punish me when it is my pastor who counsels me. As long as my pastor can bring solutions to my problems, I don't need to ask if he is trained in counselling or not. The important thing is the solution to my problems.”

To this end, the researcher discovered that church members can't stop their pastor from counselling them based on issues of education or qualifications. It looked almost impossible for members to show any form of resistance when the untrained pastor conducted counselling on them. The comfort they have with the pastor, the trust, the faith, and the warmth they enjoy when counselled by their pastor is so exceedingly significant

that they cannot at any time try to question the academic achievements of their pastor.

The mentioning of “God won’t punish me when it is my pastor who counsels me”, came with a great surprise and a bit of shock to the researcher. That is why when clarity was asked, the participant in question elaborated by stating that only their pastor is God-appointed to counsel them and no one else is authorized to do that. The participant further clarified by stating that if counselling is done by their pastor, no punishment from God can come to them because they are counselled by a God-appointed person. This left me with connotations like, some people believe that it is wrong and punishable for them if they go to counselling to other helping people and not to their pastors.

4.5.2 The Pastor as the Messenger of God, the Calling, and the Anointing

The reverence that people have for their pastor, and the belief system surrounding who the pastor is to them, do have deeper meanings and interpretations that are usually not laid bare for us to understand. Some of the participants believed that as the messenger of God, there is no need for the pastor to go to school either for counselling or ministry or theology because the God who called this messenger is the same God who will teach this messenger everything needed by congregants who are led by this messenger. In an interview with James Sekgobela, the issue of a call and anointing of the pastor because the contributory factor around which many other issues found their basis. Sekgobela submits:

“When God calls a person, he gives that person all the necessary skills and endows him with the anointing which will help that person to deal with every situation that the person may come across. That is why it is believed that those who heard God’s calling in their lives will never fail to carry out any task of ministry, whether it is preaching, praying for the sick, doing pastoral counselling, or officiating marriages: none of such can be a mountain to them because they heard God calling them and they have the anointing of God in their lives.”

Sekgobela’s sentiments were echoed by the words of Mpho Sebothoma, who held the

view that the calling and anointing of the pastor have it all. Mpho elaborated:

“The anointing and the calling of God upon the pastor have it all. God who calls the pastor, anoints the lips of the pastor to bring all the answers to people’s problems.”

From these beliefs and sentiments of these participants, it became apparent that counselling by untrained pastoral counsellors is not in any way near its end. People value their pastor and from the look of things, they may do everything they are instructed to do for as long as it is their pastor who instructs them to do. The education of the pastor, whether general theology or theology with pastoral counselling, seems not to be a major bone of contention among church members. All they need is counselling from the pastor and the solutions to their problems.

4.6.3 Congregants are Overwhelmed by Problems

Participants gave a long list of problems and challenges which pushed them to turn to the pastor for counselling. They mentioned both known and unfamiliar challenges for them to go to the pastor for counselling. According to them, they are overwhelmed by problems, some of which are problems with spouses, suicides, divorce, depression, problems caused by crime in the country, drug addiction, human trafficking, kidnapping, gender-based violence, road accidents problems, failing of kids at schools which also leads them to commit suicide and many other problems. The important thing, as the participants noted, was not the academia of the men and women of cloak but their ability to solve these pressing problems of congregants. Mmatlou Radingwana related how people’s hopes are raised when they come into the presence of the pastor and that at times, they feel relieved even before the pastor could open her mouth to speak about their problems.

I was unaware of the fact that those who suffered miscarriages found the counselling of the pastor more helpful and that it brought hope to many couples who suffered from that problem. It has been noted during the group discussion that some participants attached

witchcraft to miscarriages and that going to the pastor with such a problem was found to be way far better than going to other helping personalities. This they said was largely because in the prayers and counselling by the pastor, demonic witchcraft which was understood to be the cause of the miscarriage, would be cast out and could not stand in the presence of the pastor. Both Gloria Sello and Gadifele Reabetswe agreed that going to the pastor for counselling after having lost your baby before birth is more powerful than if one had gone to another office with the same problem.

4.5.4 It is not Known by Some Churches if Pastors should be Trained

As the participant continued in answering the research question:

Why are some churches allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training?

The answer was not easy to give because the question itself raised their eyebrows because according to them, they do not know if pastors should be trained. They do not view the work of God as a service that requires a qualification, but rather as the Spirit of God. Some of them even went to the extent of claiming that if the pastor is trained in the things of God, that pastor will not listen to God but will listen to his education. According to them, God's calling and the Holy Spirit in the life of the pastor are enough to make a pastor be a pastor and that would even enable him to conduct pastoral counselling.

4.6.5 Spiritual Attention, Prayer, and the Laying on of Hands by the Pastor

The responses received from both survey questionnaires and interviews as answers to the research question have shown that people go to the pastor for counselling because of a myriad of reasons. To many of the respondents, the education of the pastor was not a major issue, and it could not prevent some of them from being counselled by a pastor. It became apparent that in the hearts of many of the participants, there were thoughts of

comparison between the counselling offered by the pastor and that offered by others such as psychologists and social workers. It was not within the scope of this study to run a comparison of the forms of counselling by the pastor and those by psychologists and social workers. It was, however, noted that in the depth of their minds, they had that. That made the researcher bring them back and channel them into what the research aim and questions were.

More than half of those who participated in focus group discussions and those who were interviewed on a one-on-one basis indicated that their spiritual needs were attended to when they were counselled by the pastor than when counselled by other counselling professionals. They unequivocally emphasized that in addition to normal counselling, the pastor understands spiritual matters, reads the Bible for the client, and prays for the client. It was during this that, participants indicated their joy when the pastor laid hands on them at the end of the counselling session. According to the participants, the fact that their spiritual needs were attended to, prayer was made for them, and the pastor laid hands on them – that makes it more important for them to have the pastor continue counselling them regardless of his or her training qualifications.

4.5.6 Availability and Accessibility of the Pastor

When participants were asked why they allow untrained pastoral counsellors to counsel them without formal training in pastoral counselling, they were quick to respond by mentioning that these pastoral counsellors are available and accessible. With a tone of disappointment and despair, Rhulani Mkhondo explained the disappointment of delays and the unavailability of helping agencies that are usually experienced when people require help. Examples were given of such disappointment like delays and unavailability of ambulances, fire brigades, and police services. Whereas these had nothing as answers to the research question, participants related this as examples of the unavailability of emergency services when help is needed in comparison with the availability of pastoral counsellors. Rhulani submits that:

“Pastors, especially untrained ones, are always available when needed and they are accessible at all times because they are just a phone call away. No pastor would mention that all cars are away or that the office has no staff. There is no delay when a pastor is called into the family where there is a problem or threat of murder or when the couple is fighting. The pastor is the quickest person and the first one to arrive before the police or any other helping people could come.”

4.7 ADHERENCE OF UNTRAINED PASTORAL COUNSELLORS TO LEGISLATION CONCERNING COUNSELLING

In South Africa, like in all other parts of the world, counselling is regulated by government legislation. There are both professional boards and regulatory bodies that set guidelines and codes of conduct for counsellors. If counsellors do not abide by those guidelines and ethical codes of conduct, these regulatory and professional bodies have the authority to confiscate or cancel the licenses of transgressors.

An overview of existing legislation related to a counselling profession within South Africa was shared with participants. Among them, the following form part: Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974). This legislation provides a framework for the establishment of professional councils, including the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA), which regulates registered counsellors, and psychologists. The HPCSA oversees various health professions, and practitioners (psychologists and counsellors).

Others are the Professional Board for Psychology, the Psychological Society of South Africa (PsySSA), and the South African Counselling and Psychotherapy Association (SACAP). These boards and professional bodies are in existence to have oversight on counselling professionals to safeguard the lives of clients who go to the counsellor for assistance. As indicated above, these associations and boards, exist because of the act of Parliament which promulgated the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974). This in essence means that the breach of guidelines and codes set by this Act is considered a criminal activity. Participants were also made aware of three other Acts with bearing on

the counselling profession. These are:

- Mental Health Care Act, 2002 (Act 17 of 2002);
- Children's Act, 2005 (Act 38 of 2005); and
- Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act 4 of 2013)

Only sections which are concerning counselling, in the above Acts were highlighted and shared with participants. Some sections of the Mental Health Care Act prohibit counsellors from taking advantage of the vulnerability of the client's health condition for the benefit of the counsellor. The Protection of Personal Information Act requires that confidential information of a person should not be disclosed without prior written consent of that person.

Because the research question wanted answers concerning what extent pastoral counsellors adhere to legislation, these sections were shared with them to familiarize them with relevant sections as they answered the research question. It was under this section that participants requested if they might talk about other pastors and not about their fathers (pastors who shepherd them in their churches). The researcher allowed them to share whatever experiences they encountered with pastors if it was in line with the objectives of this research and, even if these were pastors who are not necessarily the ones who pastor the participants. The research question which participants were asked to answer was:

Question: In which way does the adherence of untrained pastoral counsellors to legislation affect congregants and communities?

This research question sought to know to which extent the adherence or non-adherence of untrained pastoral counsellors affects both congregants and communities. Responses that were collected from participants have shown that congregants are affected by the way untrained pastoral counsellors conduct themselves concerning existing legislation.

4.7.1 Constant Demand for Payment for their Services

From all the answers that participants gave in response to this research question, the demand of payment by men and women for cloaks was less expected. It was pointed out during discussions that untrained pastoral counsellors do not bury only their members, but they bury and conduct matrimonial services in almost all families that need their services. This they do even to people who do not attend either their churches or any church. While rendering these two services, untrained pastoral counsellors demand large sums of money for their services. This demand for payment ranked second high as per the responses of participants.

Responses indicated that only a few untrained pastoral counsellors demand payment for their pastoral counselling services but for the services of funeral and matrimony, the demand for large sums of payments was mentioned by almost all participants in both survey questionnaires and discussion groups. Although it is not clear why they demand payment for these two services, Rebotile Molekwa reasoned that:

“Desperation from bereaved families makes them fall prey to such demands. The fact that pastors know there is money for funerals which comes from community claims of burial societies and claims from funeral policies, makes things difficult. Bereaved families are not in a space to negotiate lower rates because they are covered in grief. That’s why they just pay. The same applies to charges that pastoral counsellors make when conducting matrimony. They know very well that there is money for decoration, and running the whole even. So, knowing that the family needs blessings from God through the pastor, they will pay for what the pastor demands.”

Rebotile’s sentiments were echoed in the response by Thomas Ngwetjana who lamented the misconduct of untrained pastoral counsellors who were charged with serving their communities. Thomas submits that:

“Charging bereaved families a fee for assisting them during their hard moments of death seems to be heartless. The most painful thing is that they charge in the name of God. If they were receiving what the family thanked them for the

services they rendered, it would be good. But putting a price tag on the work of God, and sometimes charging even poor families, is a great concern that needs attention.”

4.7.2 Male Pastoral Counsellors have Sexual Encounters with their Female Clients

When participants were asked this question on adherence of untrained pastoral counsellors to counselling legislation, more than 80% of them answered with but one word. They all vehemently stated that clergy malpractice of sexual activity by a male pastoral counsellor with their female client is on the rise. They acknowledged that whereas some of them were done by threat, and force on the female client, not all of them were done forcefully. Some male pastoral counsellors developed a romantic love relationship with their female clients. This they did, having ignored the principle that in ethical counselling practice, establishing a romantic or love relationship with a client is generally considered highly inappropriate and unprofessional. The primary reason for this is the power imbalance inherent in the counsellor-client relationship. Clients come to counselling seeking support, guidance, and a safe space to explore their thoughts and feelings. The counsellor, in turn, holds a position of authority and is entrusted with the well-being of the client. With a tone of despair and aggression, Simon Chilowa stood up and warned that:

“Engaging in a romantic or love relationship with a client can compromise the integrity of the therapeutic relationship and potentially harm the client. It may exploit the vulnerability of the client and create significant ethical concerns, including issues related to consent, confidentiality, and the potential for harm.”

Some participants indicated how cruel and cunning some pastoral counsellors are. They related that some of the male untrained pastoral counsellors believe that one way of casting out demons from their female clients is to have sexual intercourse with those female clients. During a focus group discussion session, Betty Semenya related a shocking story in which two girls were spotted running naked in the street after storming out of the office of the pastoral counsellors because he was attempting to rape them. As

they were fleeing for their lives naked, the pastor chased after them screaming for help so that the girls could be caught. The pastor claimed that they had demons, and he was trying to cast the demons out of them, not realizing that they would overpower him and storm out his office. But when the girls were allowed to speak, they told their helpers that, the pastor was forcing them to have sexual intercourse with both and that when they refused, he started to use force. Realising that they had no other option, they had to storm out of his office and run for their lives.

The above clearly shows that the depth of this malpractice by untrained pastoral counsellor needs urgent and strict attention by authorities within the country. Not abiding by these codes of conduct poses a major threat to the communities because due to overwhelming challenges of life which are exacerbated by levels of crime in the country, congregants will never stop seeking help from the pastor. Matome Sebothoma lamented the ignorance of codes of ethics by untrained pastoral counsellors and the fact that the government's slap-on-the-wrist approach on this matter makes the situation even worse. Sebothoma stated:

“If professional codes of ethics, such as those established by counselling and psychotherapy organizations adhered to my untrained pastoral counsellors, criminal activities like these would never be heard because these professional codes typically prohibit romantic or sexual relationships between counsellors and their clients. These codes often emphasize the importance of maintaining clear professional boundaries to protect the well-being of clients and ensure the integrity of the therapeutic process.”

4.7.3 Divulging of Client Confidentialities by Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

The research question was:

Question: In which way does the adherence of untrained pastoral counsellors to legislation affect congregants and communities?

From the responses it became apparent that men and women of God should be assisted in one way or the other regarding matters of confidentiality. Participants responded to this question by mentioning with sadness that their confidential matters which were discussed between them and the pastor during counselling, were given as examples at the pulpit during the sermon.

The examples were so vivid that even if the pastor tried to hide the name of the person, congregants who were clients of the pastor could easily associate themselves with the example and this hurts people so deeply that many of them decided to stop going to church. At other times, problems shared with the pastor during the counselling session, become the basis of the pastor's sermon.

4.7.4 Untrained Pastoral Counsellors Do Not Account to any Board or Structure

Opinions were expressed by participants that tendencies of unethical practices that are usually practiced by untrained pastoral counsellors are a result of not being accountable to a professional body or a regulatory body. From all three sources that the researcher used to collect data, viz one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions, and survey questionnaires, it vividly came to the realization of the researcher that untrained pastoral counselling work needs to be managed. Frustrations and concerns were raised by participants when it was realised that the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) regulates only those that are registered with it, and not the untrained, unregistered pastoral counsellors. Participants expressed great frustrations when it became apparent that untrained pastoral counsellors do not fall under the jurisdiction of HPCSA. This means that they are not controlled by this regulatory body, and they do not account either to it or to any regulatory body. In essence, it means that untrained pastoral counsellors are left to themselves. The two big existing bodies – the Association of Christian Religious Practitioners (ACRP) and the Association of Supportive Counsellors and Holistic Practitioners (ASCHP) are not regulatory bodies, but professional bodies. A professional body does not have the authority to cancel the license of a practicing person

and does not have the power to stop a person who practices like these practicing untrained pastoral counsellors. Again, be it known that a professional body cannot sue such a practising individual because the untrained unregistered pastoral counsellor did not sign any binding legal document with the professional body, which means that the untrained unregistered pastoral counsellor did not breach any rule of the professional body. Suing, cancelling a license, and stopping a misbehaving practitioner can only be done by a regulatory body like the HPCSA or any other statutory body, and this they do to only those who signed binding legal documents or contracts with them. It is therefore very clear that in the absence of accountability, untrained pastoral counsellors may cause more damage and frustration to congregants and communities.

4.6.5 Beating and Harassing of Congregants

The beating, harassment, threats of death, and expulsion from church membership came as responses when participants were answering the research question on legal adherence by pastors. During discussions, it emerged that some untrained pastoral counsellors have become tyrants instead of servants of God. Participants shared cruel treatment by some of them stories were told of some pastors who claim to have heard from God demanded pension funds of the members to be brought to church and that God would bless them. Even if congregants had strong feelings that it was not God leading the pastor to say that congregants had no power to oppose what the servant of God instructed them to do. Some of the members of the church received such messages when they were in the office of the pastor to receive pastoral counselling. It became unfortunate that when these congregants refused to take early retirement to bring their pensions to the church, the pastor would threaten them with either expulsion from church or they would die mysteriously. Some of the participants who had first-hand information of such suffering said that they fled from the church after a great deal of loss of money and property. Harassment was not only in the form of private space like in the office of the pastor alone, but also in a public environment such as in a normal main Sunday church service. Episodes of threats were shared in which the pastor would mention people by

name while at the pulpit and tell the entire church that they were witches, and that God told the pastor that those people whom he labelled as witches were about to die or run insane because they disobeyed the instructions of the servant of God.

Some of those who did not succumb to the demands of the pastor were beaten and left brutally injured. Cases of police intervening in such matters were reported by participants and it was also told that some of these untrained pastoral counsellors are serving life sentences in prison in this province. The information derived from participants in the discussion and interviews as well as from the verbatim quotations of participants shed more light on their thoughts, feelings, ideas, and reasoning about pastoral counselling of untrained pastoral counsellors and has also shown how participants' desire that there could be some kind of legislations to regulate untrained pastoral counsellors meanwhile they render counselling services to communities and their congregants.

Interacting with participants in these interviews and discussions has left the researcher with the impression that these myriads of infractions by untrained pastoral counsellors require urgent attention because if such matters are left unattended to, they may cause further damage in the body of Christ as well as in our communities.

4.7.6 No Knowledge of Legislation Counselling

When the question of adherence to legislation by untrained pastoral counsellors was asked, and how that adherence impacts the congregants and communities, 98% of responses from participants had but same answers. From the activities, tendencies, and practices that participants experienced as they were counselled by untrained pastoral counsellors, participants were of the view that untrained pastoral counsellors either do not know counselling legislation or choose to ignore those rules. The following is a summary of opinions expressed by participants, while they were responding to the question of adherence to legislation by untrained pastoral counsellors. They submitted that if untrained pastoral counsellors knew and adhered to legislations, then they

(untrained pastoral counsellors):

- would not charge exorbitant fees for their pastoral counselling interventions and for the pastoral work of burying and officiating marriages they do;
- would not have sexual intercourse (either by force or mutual agreement) with those they serve as their clients, many of whom are their congregants;
- would not operate in dubious ways such as calling congregants into their offices, claiming to give them counselling that comes specifically from God and which requires to be given in a private space;
- would not mix the Word that comes from God with counselling activities

4.7.7 Inappropriate Titles

Some of the revelations that this study brought were in the form of titles that some of the untrained pastoral counsellors call themselves with. The study found out that the issue of titles among untrained pastoral counsellors is not a small thing. Among pastoral counsellors and pastors in general, titles play an important role. Not calling them by titles is a serious matter that caused divisions and splits which are visible and are in great numbers in our day. Biblical titles like Apostle, Evangelist, Prophet, Bishop, Pastor and Teacher are good and should be used with care. The title of a social worker, psychologist, pediatrician, marriage counsellor, professor are titles that those who addressed by them are qualified people who went to school and were found competent in their studies to be addressed as such. The study noted that many untrained pastoral counsellors like to be addressed as Marriage Counsellors by both the public as well as by their churches. When they were asked why they are addressed with these titles, their answers were found to be similar.

In an interview with Pastor Cathrene Halahala (not real name), Pastor Cathrene, who holds no formal training in Theology or Ministry, related that she felt honored to be addressed as the Marriage Counsellor because she has offered marriage counselling to

many marriages couples whose marriages were hitting the rocks and that those marriage are still healthy even today because of her services. She even submitted that only marriage cases are brought to her and that she does not attend to other problems except for marriage-related problems only. Pastor Cathrene opined that:

“It is God who appoints people as marriage counsellors because of the anointing that God gives to these people. People may go to school to become Marriage counsellors but it is not the education that solves people’s problems, but God in his servant and by his anointing that solves problems of people. Many couples who came to me were from counselling sessions with psychologists and educated marriage counsellors but their problems were not solved there in the offices of the marriage counsellors and psychologists. Their problems were solved here in my counselling sessions even if I did not go to school for counselling. For me to go to school of counselling or theology would just be formalities because I already know how to do counselling and I do it better than those who went to school.”

Pastor Cathrene’s opinions were so strong that she even indicated that she wants to advertise her marriage counselling services, more so that she is also invited to speak in many weddings and marriage seminars among Christian circles. The findings of titles, as noted by this study, was noted as an unfortunate scenario because if one is not trained and educated to be addressed as a Marriage counsellor, yet they address themselves as Marriage Counsellors, that was found to be a cause for confusion to the church and to the community as well. People may not distinguish who is a rightful Marriage Counsellor and who is an unschooled marriage counsellor.

To be a Marriage Counsellor, is not determined by counselling one or three marriage couples. In South Africa, becoming a marriage counsellor typically involves obtaining a relevant qualification and meeting certain regulatory requirements which untrained pastoral counsellors did not meet. These general steps and requirements of becoming a marriage counsellor are:

Education: Most marriage counsellors have at least a bachelor's degree in psychology, counselling, social work, or a related field. However, many pursue master's or doctoral



degrees for advanced training and specialisation in marriage and family therapy which untrained pastoral counsellors don't have.

Accreditation: Accreditation or licensure is often required to practice as a marriage counsellor in South Africa. This accreditation is typically obtained through professional bodies such as the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA). HPCSA recognizes various categories of counsellors, including psychologists, social workers, and counsellors, each with its own set of requirements. And all these requirements are not possessed by untrained pastoral counsellors.

Supervised experience: In addition to academic qualifications, aspiring marriage counsellors usually need to complete a period of supervised clinical experience. This might involve internships, practicum placements, or supervised counselling sessions. Untrained pastoral counsellors are not supervised by any recognized structure or a qualified person because they hold no qualification in line with that counselling profession.

Registration: After meeting the educational and experience requirements, counsellors must register with the appropriate regulatory body. For example, psychologists must register with the HPCSA, and it is known that HPCSA cannot accept an untrained person to be a marriage counsellor without proper training and meeting these standards.

Continuing education: Once licensed or accredited, marriage counsellors are typically required to engage in continuing education to maintain their credentials. This ensures that counsellors stay up to date with the latest research and best practices in the field. Untrained pastoral counsellors do not have Continuing Professional Development (CPD) because, how can they continue with something that they do not have?

Ethical guidelines: Marriage counsellors are expected to adhere to strict ethical guidelines in their practice. These guidelines are often set forth by professional organizations and regulatory bodies and include principles such as confidentiality, respect for clients' autonomy, and maintaining professional boundaries.

Cultural competence: Given South Africa's diverse population, marriage counsellors should also demonstrate cultural competence and sensitivity to the needs of clients from different cultural backgrounds.

The study has also found that some untrained pastoral counsellors gave themselves the title 'Pastoral Therapist' whereas they are not trained in professional counselling. By doing this, it was noted that they are in contravention with the laws of the country and that by calling themselves in that way they bring confusion to the public because the public knows what it means for one to be addressed as a therapist.

4.7.8 Becoming a Marriage Commissioner

When pastors were asked how they conduct their pastoral counseling, many of them expressed their desires of becoming Marriage Commissioners and be licensed to by the Department of Home Affairs to officiate and solemnize marriages. This study revealed that untrained pastoral counsellors do not know the difference between a Marriage Commissioner and a Marriage Counsellor. Almost all participants who are untrained pastoral counsellors requested the researcher to assist them in becoming Marriage Commissioners. Few of them requested to be trained only in pastoral counselling and among them, some specifically asked for pastoral counselling for marriage couples only. Many of the untrained pastoral counsellors thought that if one is a Marriage Commissioner, that person is a Marriage Counsellors. Their questions and deliberations revealed that they use these two terms interchangeably. It was, therefore, necessary for the researchers to assist them by clarifying the differences between the two terms.

The above criteria under the section 'inappropriate titles' in Section 4.6.7 explained criteria of becoming a Marriage Counsellor. Whereas becoming a Marriage Counsellor requires academic qualifications from the university as well as serving under supervision as a requirement by HPCSA for a certain period, becoming a Marriage Commissioner in South Africa is not as difficult as becoming a Marriage Counsellor.

In South Africa, marriage commissioners, also known as marriage officers, are individuals appointed by the Department of Home Affairs to conduct civil marriages. The criteria for being a marriage commissioner in South Africa typically include:

- **Legal Qualifications:** Applicants must be South African citizens or permanent residents and be at least 18 years old.
- **No Criminal Record:** Applicants must have a clear criminal record. They may be required to provide a police clearance certificate as part of the application process.
- **Good Standing in the Community:** Marriage commissioners are expected to be of good character and standing in their community.
- **Understanding of Marriage Laws:** Applicants should have a thorough understanding of South African marriage laws and regulations pertaining to civil marriages.
- **Communication Skills:** Effective communication skills are essential for marriage commissioners, as they need to interact with couples, witnesses, and other stakeholders during the marriage ceremony.
- **Ethical Conduct:** Marriage commissioners are expected to always conduct themselves ethically and professionally, adhering to the principles of confidentiality and impartiality.
- **Training:** Depending on the province, applicants may be required to undergo training or orientation sessions provided by the Department of Home Affairs to familiarize themselves with their duties and responsibilities as marriage commissioners.
- **Application Process:** Interested individuals typically need to apply to the Department of Home Affairs, along with any required documentation and fees. The specific requirements and procedures may vary depending on the province.
- **Passing the examination:** Marriage Commissioners are required by law to write an examination which is set by the Department of Home Affairs and they should pass it with 85% or above. The Department requires that any person whose examination results are lower than 85% be deemed to have failed and that he or she should

write the examination again until a pass mark of 85% is achieved.

This researcher, as a Marriage Commissioner, gave an in-depth classification about becoming a marriage commissioner because participants who are pastors requested to be assisted in this area.

4.7.8 Duties and Responsibilities of Marriage Commissioners in South Africa

Marriage commissioners in South Africa, also known as marriage officers, play a crucial role in conducting civil marriages and ensuring that the legal requirements for marriage are met. Their roles and duties include:

- **Conducting marriage ceremonies:** Marriage commissioners are responsible for officiating civil marriage ceremonies in accordance with South African law. This includes conducting the marriage ceremony, solemnizing the marriage, and ensuring that all legal requirements are met.
- **Ensuring legal compliance:** Marriage commissioners must ensure that the marriage complies with all legal requirements, including those outlined in the Marriage Act of South Africa, Act 61 of 1961. This includes verifying the eligibility of the parties to marry, ensuring that all necessary documents are completed and signed, and registering the marriage with the Department of Home Affairs.
- **Explaining legal rights and responsibilities:** Marriage commissioners may be called upon to explain the legal rights and responsibilities of marriage to the parties involved. This may include discussing issues such as property rights, inheritance, and marital obligations.
- **Maintaining records:** Marriage commissioners are responsible for maintaining accurate records of marriages they officiate. This includes completing and filing marriage registers and other necessary paperwork with the Department of Home

Affairs.

- Providing guidance and support: Marriage commissioners may provide guidance and support to couples as they prepare for marriage. This may include offering advice on marriage preparation, communication skills, and conflict resolution.
- Upholding professional standards: Marriage commissioners are expected to always conduct themselves professionally and ethically. This includes treating all parties involved with respect and dignity, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding conflicts of interest.
- Continuing education: Marriage commissioners may be required to participate in ongoing training and professional development to stay informed about changes in marriage laws and regulations and to enhance their skills as marriage officers.

The clarification that the researcher made to the participating pastor was appreciated by the participants, many of whom indicated that they were going to start with application at their convenient time. The study noted that the clarification given by the researcher to participating untrained pastoral counsellors created a desire for learning in the hearts of participants because prior to that, it seemed as if they had no interest in learning and or in becoming educated in areas that pertain to their Ministries.

4.7.9 Inability to Differentiate Counselling from Preaching and Exhortation

It emerged during discussions that many untrained pastoral counsellors do more preaching during counselling sessions than counselling. In a discussion session with a group of pastors from various churches, it became evident that they preach instead of conducting counselling. When they were asked as to how long their counselling sessions take, it was noted that they take more time than is required. Whereas some mentioned that their counselling sessions take 2 hours, others indicated that theirs go even as far as

4 hours in which they open the Bible to read more sections from Scriptures before they engage in long prayers for the couples. One of them in these interviews, Rev Sibongiseni Mthimkhulu (not real name) expressed strong opinions about the origin of problems in marriages. He submitted that:

“Since problems in marriages are a result of sin, reading many sections from the Bible and praying with the couple is necessary. The couple should even be led to accept Christ first and should not only look to the solution of the problem for which they came to the pastor. Reading Scriptures to the couple, leading the couple to accepting Christ and praying with them are necessary weapons to conquer their problems than just trying to counsel them whereas there are sins and unwanted traditional practices that the couple does. Taking 3 or 4 hours is not bad because within this timeframe, it is easier to do proper pastoral counselling. After all, how can it become pastoral counselling if there is no reading from Scripture and prayers by the pastor?”

Whereas the use of long time in counselling by untrained pastoral counsellors, such as 4 hours was supported by participating pastoral counsellors, but the opinions of the origin of marriage problems as held by Rev Sibongiseni did not find the support of the pastors who participated in this study. In another discussion with church members, the study noted that the long hours in counselling sessions, the preaching by the pastor during counselling and long readings of Scriptures by untrained pastoral counsellors was not appreciated by participants.

4.7.10 Doing Pastoral Counselling Without Following a Counselling Model

The view that untrained pastoral counsellors are helping communities by providing pastoral counselling was greatly supported by participants during group discussions as well as by responses from survey questionnaires. The study had, however, noted that untrained pastoral counsellors provide counselling without following any recognizable Counselling Model. Providing pastoral counselling without following any counselling Model and without being trained in how to use that Model may confuse and create problems in the lives of clients instead of helping them to cope with their problems.

Without a counselling Model, there is no structure, guidance in leading to coping, no knowledge of probing during counselling, no goal setting by the client and of course no listing of options as solutions to one's problems. Without listing of options, which Egan (2014) calls scenarios, there will be no evaluation of counselling options and there will also be no choosing and implementing any of the scenarios. Whereas the researcher does not imply that following a Model guarantees solution to every problem, it has, however become evident that following a Model in which one is trained, yields good results. Many professionals follow designated Models in their field of studies. For an example, in the Social Work training, following Carl Rogers Model is mandatory. Social workers are trained in Carl Rogers Model, the Person-centered Model. If untrained pastoral counsellors conduct counselling without following any counselling Model, clients might be left with frustrations than with answers. A counselling Model is a guiding tool that is trusted and applied by professionals. Without it counselling may turn out to be something else. Using no Counselling Model by untrained pastoral counsellors has the potential of adding frustrations to the people whom they offer counselling. The study noted that the apparent confusion about the two terms were because of not being educated in either as a marriage commissioner or marriage counsellor.

4.7.11 Untrained Pastoral Counsellors' Concession

Participants in the category of congregants (non-clergy) have indicated that pastors are good in offering bereavement counselling to families that have lost their loved ones to death. They stated so at section 4.4.3 of this paper. However, a closer attention at the comments that came from untrained pastoral counsellors, shows that pastoral counsellors need help in some of their services. Their comments, which turned into requests indicate that pastors conceded that they need training in the following areas:

- Bereavement counselling
- Pre-marital counselling
- Trauma debriefing

4.7.11.1. Bereavement Counselling

According to comments and requests of this category of participants (the clergy/pastors), there is a great need to deepen their knowledge around bereavement counselling. Bereavement counselling is a type of counselling or therapy provided to individuals who are grieving the loss of their loved one. The aim of bereavement counselling is to help people cope with their grief, understand their feelings, and navigate the various stages of mourning. Whereas it is acknowledged that bereavement counselling can be provided by licensed therapists, counsellors, psychologists, or trained professionals who specialize in grief and loss, the study has however revealed, as mentioned by participants (non-clergy ones) that pastors (even untrained pastoral counsellors) provide this type of counselling to the bereaved families.

During bereavement counselling sessions, individuals are encouraged to express their emotions, memories, and thoughts related to the deceased. Counsellors provide a supportive and nonjudgmental environment where clients can explore their grief, find ways to cope with the pain, and gradually adjust to life without their loved one. Bereavement counselling may involve various therapeutic techniques such as talk therapy, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT), mindfulness exercises, and support group participation. The duration and frequency of counselling sessions can vary depending on the individual's needs and the severity of their grief.

Overall, bereavement counselling aims to facilitate the healing process, of which pastors are good in it, as noted by participants in section 4.4.3 above. Bereavement counselling promote emotional well-being, and help individuals rebuild their lives after experiencing the loss of someone close to them.

The concession made by untrained pastoral counsellors about their need to be trained in bereavement counselling, as revealed by findings of this study, was an acceptable admission because as it stands, untrained pastoral counsellors do not follow steps and procedures of conducting bereavement counselling which are:

- Establishing a healing alliance: the counsellor should first build a trusting and supportive relationship with the client from the outset. Create a safe space where they feel comfortable expressing their emotions and thoughts. Most of the untrained pastoral counsellors ignore this area and this makes their counselling work not to achieve the required levels.
- Assessing of individual needs: the counsellor should conduct an initial assessment to understand the client's unique circumstances, their relationship with the deceased, cultural background, coping mechanisms, and any existing mental health concerns. Due to lack of proper training in this, most untrained pastoral counsellors expressed that they have a discomfort when the bereaved family relate their relationship with the deceased and talk more about the deceased during the bereavement counselling session.
- Normalizing grief reactions: the counsellor should help clients understand that grieving is a natural and individual process. Normalize their feelings and reactions, letting them know that there is no "right" or "wrong" way to grieve.
- Encouraging Expression: Encourage clients to express their emotions, memories, and thoughts related to the deceased. Active listening and validation of their experiences are crucial in this process.
- Providing Education: Offer information about the grieving process, common reactions to loss, and coping strategies. Help clients develop realistic expectations for their grief journey.
- Exploring Coping Strategies: Collaboratively explore coping mechanisms that are effective for the client, such as mindfulness techniques, relaxation exercises, journaling, or engaging in meaningful activities.
- Addressing Complicated Grief: Be vigilant for signs of complicated grief or co-

occurring mental health issues, such as depression or anxiety. Provide appropriate referrals or interventions if necessary.

- **Fostering Resilience and Adjustment:** Help clients navigate the process of adjusting to life without their loved one. Support them in finding meaning and purpose in their lives despite the loss.
- **Respecting Cultural Differences:** Recognize and respect cultural beliefs, rituals, and practices related to death and mourning. Adapt counselling approaches to align with the client's cultural background.
- **Maintaining Boundaries and Self-care:** Set appropriate boundaries to ensure the well-being of both the client and the counsellor. Practice self-care strategies to prevent burnout and maintain emotional resilience.
- **Collaborating with Support Systems:** Involve family members, friends, or other support systems in the counselling process if appropriate. Facilitate open communication and mutual understanding among all parties involved.
- **Assessing Progress and Adjust Interventions:** Regularly evaluate the client's progress in coping with grief and adjust counselling interventions as needed. Flexibility and responsiveness to the client's changing needs are essential.
- **Bereavement counselling** should be a client-centred process that honors the individual's unique grief journey while providing them with the support and resources they need to navigate through their loss.

For untrained pastoral counsellors to concede that they need a deeper training in the above areas was not something that the researcher thought of. Their earlier comments, opinions and stance during interviews were indicating as if they were self-sufficient to deal with every problem regardless of its complexities. This concession of needing assistance

was made by almost all untrained pastoral counsellors who wished to know from the researcher as to when could a school of counselling could be opened so that they could come for their training in the above areas.

4.7.11.2 Premarital Counselling

Untrained pastoral counsellors conceded that their content on premarital counselling was not good. Some of them privately made calls to the researcher to ask if the researcher could provide them with proper content of issues that they should discuss with the two who intend to marry.

On its basic meaning, premarital counselling is a form of counselling that aims to help couples prepare for marriage by addressing various aspects of their relationship, communication styles, expectations, and potential challenges. It typically involves sessions with a trained counsellor who facilitates discussions and provides guidance on topics relevant to marriage. Topics that should form the content of premarital counselling, and which could not all be done in one session, are:

- **Communication skills:** Couples learn effective communication techniques to express their needs, concerns, and emotions in a constructive manner. This includes active listening, assertiveness, and conflict resolution skills.
- **Conflict resolution:** Couples explore their conflict resolution styles and learn strategies for managing disagreements and conflicts that may arise in their relationship. They practice negotiation, compromise, and problem-solving skills.
- **Expectations and values:** Couples discuss their expectations, values, beliefs, and goals for the relationship and marriage. This includes topics such as roles and responsibilities, finances, career aspirations, family dynamics, and lifestyle preferences.

- Family of origin: Couples examine how their family backgrounds and upbringing may influence their expectations and behaviours in their own relationship. They explore any potential conflicts or differences arising from their respective family backgrounds.
- Intimacy and emotional connection: Couples explore the emotional, physical, and sexual aspects of their relationship. They discuss intimacy needs, desires, boundaries, and strategies for maintaining emotional connection and closeness.
- Financial management: Couples discuss their attitudes, values, and approaches toward money and financial management. They develop a plan for handling finances as a couple, including budgeting, saving, spending, and long-term financial goals.
- Roles and responsibilities: Couples clarify expectations regarding roles, responsibilities, and decision-making within the relationship. They discuss division of household chores, childcare, career aspirations, and other practical matters.
- Premarital assessment: Some premarital counselling programs may include assessments or questionnaires to help couples identify areas of strength and areas for growth in their relationship. These assessments can provide insights and facilitate discussions during counselling sessions.
- Marriage expectations: Couples explore their expectations and beliefs about marriage, including their commitment to each other, the meaning of marriage, and their vision for the future together.
- Coping with stress and life transitions: Couples discuss how they will support each other during times of stress, major life transitions, and challenges that may arise throughout their marriage.

The overall aim of premarital counselling is to strengthen the foundation of the relationship, enhance communication and problem-solving skills, and provide couples with tools and strategies to build a healthy and fulfilling marriage. It can help couples enter marriage with a deeper understanding of each other and with realistic expectations, ultimately increasing their chances of long-term relationship success.

This concession by untrained pastoral counsellors on this premarital counselling issue served as one of the revelations that this study had brought to light because it became evident, as the clergy participants indicated that they did not, in their sessions with the couple, talk about these matters. One of them, Pastor Jeff Semenya conceded:

“Many of the untrained pastoral counsellors, including myself, during premarital counselling just open the Bible and teach what it says to the wife as well as what it says to the husband. Allowing the couple to discuss was never done in most of our sessions. Our sessions with them are marked by preaching, talking about sexual matters after their marriage, praying for them and giving instructions to the couple. Many of us as untrained pastoral counsellors have only one session with the couple and that session is an all-inclusive session in which the couple says very less or nothing during it. Much of the talk is done by the pastor and the session is closed with long prayer. Deeper and helpful content which are necessary in marriage are not discussed.”

4.7.11.3 Trauma Debriefing

Participants in the category of untrained pastoral counsellor indicated that some of the people they offer counselling have experienced trauma such as car hijacking, burglaries, kidnapping, being held at gunpoint and many forms of trauma that they related. These clergy participants felt inadequate to handle complexities such as these ones and they conceded that they need help in these areas.

Trauma debriefing, or critical incident stress debriefing (CISD), is a structured intervention designed to assist individuals or groups in processing and coping with the emotional impact of a traumatic event. It typically occurs shortly after the traumatic event and involves a facilitated discussion led by a trained mental health professional or counsellor.



Because of its complexities, participants were advised to consult schools where a deeper understanding on trauma debriefing is taught. The advice came because of the request that the participants made to the researcher as they indicated that they needed to be empowered with skills in this line so that they could be of help to traumatized congregants and communities who experienced such incidents.



CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter (Chapter 4) that the researcher presented, the researcher gave a clear picture of the participants who played a role in this research. The researcher comprehensively gave a presentation of how they participated, their background, their numbers as well as reasons why the researcher decided to have them participate in this research. The information-rich cases that they possessed, their experiences with the pastors to whom they went for counselling, and their relationship with untrained pastoral counsellors served as conducive sources from where the research questions were answered. Data that was collected was presented in a way that would give the reader a full view of participants' experiences when counselled by untrained pastoral counsellors. For ease of having clear views and opinions that participants have about untrained pastoral counsellors, the use of tables and figures was considered. This chapter is a discussion of the conclusions of the chapters, and the research findings summary that comes from the comprehensive analysis of data which was gathered throughout some time. The findings of this research in Chapter 4, support the importance of training untrained pastoral counsellors, regardless of the anointing, calling of God, and their ability to comfort bereaved families as well as having founded big churches wherein they serve as founding pastors. As indicated by responses from participants in the preceding chapter, it became apparent that their training cannot be replaced by the call of God in their lives or by the anointing that they profess.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The research findings that were discussed in Chapter 4 answered the research questions that were stated earlier in this document. Literature on the topic of untrained pastoral counsellors and related aspects were discussed in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 concentrates on the methodology while the focus of chapter 4 is on data gathering and analysis. The findings of this research flow according to predetermined themes in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 gives a brief overview of the findings of this research but focuses mainly on the conclusion and recommendations.

A closer reflection on the findings in Chapter 4 of this study shows clearly that there is a great expectation by participants that pastoral counsellors should be empowered by going for formal training in pastoral counselling. The same sentiments were echoed by pastors who were interviewed in one-on-one sessions. In these interviews, many pastors who conduct pastoral counselling without training have indicated how desperately they need this training and that their lack of training in that area has left them inadequate and insufficient to serve as pastoral counsellors.

The following objectives served as the core points that guided this study. The investigation and findings of this study revolved around these objectives:

- To use the findings to build a recommendation for pastoral care in the context of African people and their complex challenges.
- To create an awareness of the dangers of doing counselling without formal training in relevant methods and field of studies.
- To assess the adherence of untrained pastoral counselling with the legislation
- To examine the efficacy of untrained pastoral counselling interventions on the counselees.

When participants were asked to list or mention counselling interventions conducted by

untrained pastoral counsellors, a long list was given as chapter 4 shows. It became apparent that they were aware of pastoral counselling interventions by untrained pastoral counsellors and that, to a certain extent, they benefited from these interventions.

On the question of allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct counselling without formal training, a variety of aspects were highlighted by participants. Participants said: Congregants are overwhelmed by problems. Untrained pastoral counsellors are available and accessible. The uneasiness of asking if the pastoral counsellor is trained or not. The relationship between the pastor and the congregants. The calling and the anointing of the pastoral counsellor. It is not known by some churches if pastors should be trained. Spiritual attention, prayer, and the laying on of hands by the pastor.

5.2.1 Overwhelmed by Problems

The above aspects were raised by participants as a response when asked why churches allow untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct counselling even when these pastors are not trained in it. A mention was made by participants as the compelling factors regarding why they are counselled by untrained pastoral counsellors. Participants related their painful situations like being overwhelmed by problems, which are the reason why they resort to going to the pastor, ignoring the education of the pastor. They listed relationship problems, especially between the man and his wife (whether married or not); many untimely deaths and that many families are child-headed families, left to be such by deaths of a parent; crime-related problems such as hijackings, human trafficking, burglary, theft, use of illegal firearms, rape, femicide, and kidnapping

5.2.2 Untrained Pastoral Counsellors are Available and Accessible

Availability and accessibility of untrained pastoral counsellors were mentioned as the contributing factors that make churches allow untrained pastoral counsellors to counsel them even if they do not have formal training in it. A concern was raised by participants

that accessing professionals, including trained pastoral counsellors, has not been easy. Participants mentioned long procedures such as securing an appointment which according to them is not that important because of the pressing challenges that they are faced with. The non-appointment sessions that they had with untrained pastoral counsellors, as well as the non-formal environment they encountered with untrained pastoral counsellors were some of the reasons cited by participants, stressing that even if they are not trained, they are of great importance to them as congregants.

5.2.3 The Uneasiness on Asking if the Pastoral Counsellor is Trained or not

Participants agreed that there is no comfort in asking for the training of the pastoral counsellor. However, they also indicated that they observed unprofessional elements in untrained pastoral counsellors as they interacted with them. Some of the unprofessional elements that participants observed were listed:

- not writing while the counselee talked their hearts out;
- non-formal setting;
- digging into matters that did not form part of the problem;
- not honoring meeting times; and
- at times preaching instead of offering pastoral counselling.

5.2.4 The relationship Between the Pastor and the Congregants

The findings of this research revealed that most congregants have a special bond with their pastors and that they have a great deal of respect for their pastors. As a result of that, they reported that they did not want to ruin their relationship with their pastors by asking questions that related to the pastor's academia. They felt it could impact negatively to talk about that because, to a certain extent, it became apparent that training on pastoral counselling was not done by their pastor.

5.2.5 The Calling and the Anointing of the Pastoral Counsellor

Findings of the research by Masenya (2014) have revealed that the notion of getting into Ministry as a pastor solely under a call only has been in existence from immemorial times. In the International Assemblies of God church, many pastors, as noted by Masenya (2014) got into ministry without proper training, basing their argument on the fact that they were called by God. Masenya lamented this minimal training of pastors and denounced getting into ministry only based on a call. This he largely said would impact negatively on the churches pastored by the improperly trained pastors because according to him, churches play a crucial role in the lives of citizens of various communities. Masenya enunciated:

“The official stance of the IAG is that a pastor should at least have a two-year diploma offered as the basic training by its colleges. The old belief held by some prospective pastors that “being called for ministry” is qualification enough to serve as a pastor was not supported during the investigation. Their views confirmed the seriousness and the importance that this Church attaches to its pastors being properly trained for their job, especially because churches play a crucial role in the lives of citizens of various communities. Masenya (2014:156).”

Views held by both Masenya and his participants during the investigation, which advocate that pastors should be trained, were also echoed by participants of this researcher. Participants have expressed strong views that anointing of God upon the pastor is needed but it should not serve as the only criteria that usher the pastor into the pastoring ministry. Some of the participants have even gone to the extent of not agreeing with anointing as criteria for pastors and of course, pastoral counsellors, to serve in churches. The education of the pastor was highlighted as the most important thing.

5.2.6 It is not Known by Some Churches if Pastors should be Trained

Whereas there was a clear expression by participants that pastors, and of course, pastoral counsellors, should be trained in Theology and Pastoral Ministry (which includes

pastoral counselling), some demonstrated a great deal of amazement, expressing that it was not clear to them whether the pastor should be educated or not. This was because this researcher conducted group discussions with congregants from various churches, some of whom held different views about the pastor and his training. Even those who did not know of the training of pastors have noted that the need for their training was there. They said this because of some improprieties that they have noticed being done by untrained pastoral counsellors.

5.2.7 Spiritual Attention, Prayer, and the Laying on of Hands by the Pastor

During interactions with participants in which a question was put to them as to why they allow untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct counselling to them without formal training in it, answers which were given by participants revealed three main points. Participants indicated that they enjoyed it when the pastor talked spiritual language with them and that their spiritual needs were well attended to. Reading Scriptural verses by the pastor during counselling was also highlighted by participants that it gave them comfort and joy. Another point those participants highlighted in their response was the laying on of hands by the pastor. It became evident from the observations, responses, and discussions with participants that the prayer by the pastor was one of the aspects enjoyed most by participants. As a result of the above factors, participants found it not necessary to deny untrained pastoral counsellors an opportunity to counsel them based on the training of the pastor.

5.3 ADHERING OF UNTRAINED PASTORAL COUNSELLORS BY LEGISLATION

Regarding the adherence of pastoral counsellors by legislation, and how that impacts congregants and communities, participants expressed a variety of views. The following aspects are expressions that participants gave when the question of adherence was asked:

- The constant demand for payment for their services.
- Male pastoral counsellors have sexual encounters with their female clients.
- Divulging of client confidentialities by untrained pastoral counsellors.
- Beating and harassing congregants.
- No knowledge of legislation in relation to counselling.

5.3.1 Constant Demand for Payment for their Services

The researcher, in Chapter 4 of this document, elaborated on this point in which participants noted that there are two services in which untrained pastoral counsellors charge excessive fees. These are services of conducting funerals as well as those of matrimony. It has been noted by participants during investigations that not all untrained pastoral counsellors charge a fee for their counselling services and that even those who charge for counselling were not charging much money. A concern was, however, raised by some participants that when it came to the services of conducting funerals and matrimony, the fees charged by untrained pastoral counsellors were not bearable. Although the reason is not known why they charge much for these two services, speculations were made in which participants suggested that it is because untrained pastoral counsellors realized that there are many paying avenues into the bereaved families as well as when the wedding ceremonies are to be conducted.

5.3.2 Male Pastoral Counsellors have Sexual Encounters with their Female Clients

It has been observed and shared by participants during discussions that many male untrained pastoral counsellors had sexual encounters with their female clients. Those who related this felt free to share their first-hand information, informing the audience (the discussion forum) that they suffered such ordeals at the hands of untrained pastoral counsellors. The problem, as they related, was that they went there with the thought of being counselled by the servant of God, not expecting that there could be forced sexual

encounters. Stories were related by participants who got involved in this that some of the untrained pastoral counsellors told their clients that one way to cure them from demon-oppression and demon-possession is for them (as pastoral counsellors) to have sexual relations with the clients because if that was not done, demons won't leave them (these clients). Whereas some of the clients yielded to what the pastor told them, not all of them succumbed to these demands. This is why some of the participants related situations in which they had to storm out of the pastoral counsellor's office and flee on foot for their safety.

None of the female pastoral counsellor was reported by participants to have done such to their male clients. Even in the responses from the questionnaires, there was no indication that untrained female pastoral counsellors forced or performed sexual encounters with their male clients.

5.3.3 Divulging of Client Confidentialities by Untrained Pastoral Counsellors

As the challenge of adhering to legislation by untrained pastoral counsellors was discussed, experiences were shared around this issue in which many participants lamented the fact that their confidential information was not kept as such by the untrained pastoral counsellors. The Protection of Personal Information Act, 2013 (Act No. 4 of 2013), which is commonly referred to as the POPI ACT, was said to have been breached extensively by untrained pastoral counsellors. The Protection of Personal Information Act is a piece of legislation that governs the law of data protection and privacy in South Africa. This Act, together with other pieces of legislation was the most breached one by untrained pastoral counsellors as participants submitted. They have indicated that most of their confidential matters were heard as sermon examples or otherwise and they put a blaming finger upon men and women of the cloak as the ones who leaked their personal information to the public or other church members. Regulations as set out by the Health Professions Act of South Africa and its subsidiaries, as elaborated in Chapter 4, were also found to have been breached by untrained pastoral counsellors. It was also noted

by participants that untrained pastoral counsellors share clients' confidential matters with their wives and that the wives fail to contain such confidential matters. This tendency of divulging confidential matters of clients by untrained pastoral counsellors was hotly denounced by participants who even made suggestions that untrained pastoral counsellors should sign a binding code of conduct concerning confidential matters of their clients.

5.3.4 Beating and Harassing of Congregants

Most of the participants who changed membership from one church to another due to reasons having to do with the pastoral counsellor's behaviour, have related how they were harassed by the pastoral counsellor who first called them into their offices to give them the Word from God in a private space. Participants related that in the course of delivering that message which was presumed to be from God, other demands were also brought forth by the pastoral counsellor, such as those in which the pastoral counsellor would claim that he heard from the Holy Spirit to tell the client to sell their property (house and cars) and that after doing that, God would bless them with more than what they currently have. When clients refused to do that, they were threatened with mysterious deaths, or losing their sanity. Some participants have reported that upon refusing in the private space (office of the pastoral counsellor), they were surprised to hear their matters being topics of the pastor's sermon. It was disturbing to note that many of the participants feared the pastor so much that they did not report their harassment matters to the police because they had an extreme level of fear for the pastor.

Radebe (2021:1) and Heyman (2021:1) have recorded incidences of some pastors of Capricorn District Municipality who lured female members of their churches into their offices to give them a prophetic word from God. They have reported that when these female members refused to sleep with them, these untrained pastoral counsellors threatened to kill their congregants or throw them out of their congregations.

Counselling legislation does not allow a counsellor to have sexual relations with their clients, let alone threaten them with death, loose of sanity, and throw them out of their congregations. This again emphasised the fact that untrained pastoral counsellors tend not to adhere to counselling legislation as noted by participants.

5.3.5 No Knowledge of Legislation in Relation to Counselling

In an interview with Rev Desmond Molwela who has been a pastor for 11 years and who has never been in a Bible College, Rev Molwela expressed shock and discomfort when he was asked if he obeys counselling regulations when he counsels his clients. In that interview, our talk with has revealed that Rev Molwela is either oblivious to counselling legislation or he has decided not to obey them. On the matter of confidentiality, Rev Molwela vociferously submitted that he has no problem sharing the confidentialities of his clients with his wife because his wife is also a pastor. On the issue of charging excessive fees for conducting services, he quoted Scriptures which suggests that he should not be muzzled when he eats while in the field. Rev Molwela submitted:

“I do not see any problem in charging a fee for conducting a funeral service for them because I did not go to them to ask to conduct it, but they are the ones who need my services. After all, a bereaved family in our Black society receives lots of money which comes from a variety of sources such as community funeral clubs, family collection sources, insurance companies, and offerings during services that run throughout the entire week. It is not in any way impoverishing the family, but we teach them by action that they should learn to appreciate the services that men and women of God render for them.”

This glaringly indicated to the researcher that the tendency of disobeying counselling regulations by untrained pastoral counsellors is an issue that requires serious attention.

5.4 MATTERS OF ACCOUNTABILITY OF UNTRAINED PASTORAL COUNSELLORS

Section 5.3 above is a list of non-compliant activities by untrained pastoral counsellors as listed by participants. These improprieties were observed from among churches which are termed African Independent Churches (AICs), which are also called African Initiated Churches (AIC'S) as distinct from churches which were initiated by missionaries from across the oceans. AICs are churches which in most cases are initiated by one person and which are marked by a management in which the powers and decisions are made by that one person and sometimes together with his or her spouse as noted by the report of The Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (2017).

It has been noted during group discussions that untrained pastoral counsellors of AICs do not account for any formal structure such as the South African Council of Churches (SACC) or any recognisable structure. This means that pastoral counsellors in the AICs do not account to SACC or their churches or any formal structure, either a regulatory body or a statutory body. Due to a lack of accountability in their counselling work, the risk of committing errors and damage to the communities is very high. The expectation, as also attested to by Masenya (2014:53), is that pastoral counsellors should operate under the auspices of a body that will have oversight on them to ensure that risks concerning counselling are eliminated. Masenya (2014) elaborates:

“a trained pastoral counsellor is a Christian pastor who has acquired formal training in pastoral counselling and he or she practices under the auspices of the body, such as his/her church or another body that has oversight upon the pastoral counsellor.”

This lack of accountability on the part of untrained pastoral counsellors poses a mental health risk in the communities and if it is left unattended, it may cause more damage in both churches and communities alike.

5.5 THE EDUCATION OF THE UNTRAINED PASTORAL COUNSELLOR

The low levels of education among pastoral counsellors are a great concern. Findings about their low levels in formal training, which are recorded in Chapter 4 of this study, and are repeated below are painting a bleak picture about the education of men and women of the cloak.

The figures below regarding their academic achievement are not good to look at. These are figures of only a sample which has only been cut from a bigger chunk of pastors in this Local Municipality. A closer look at this may even make one to doubt if pastors are serious about their God-called ministries:

No formal training	: 68%
Certificate	: 9%
Diploma	: 5%
Bachelor of Theology	: 18%

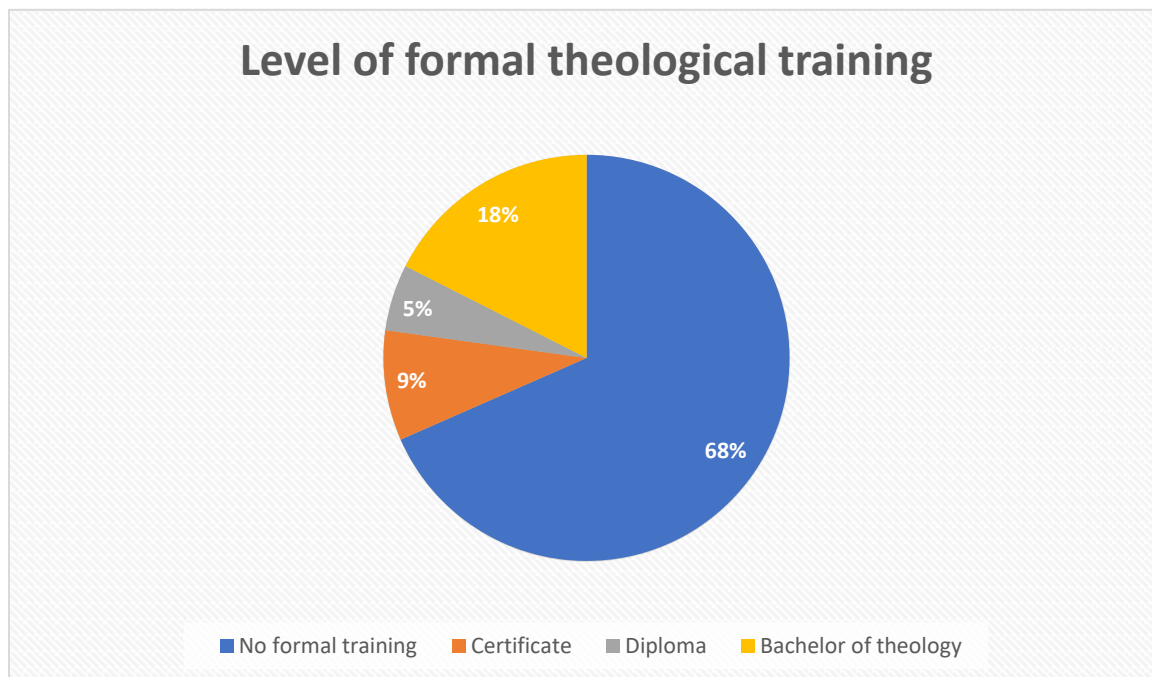


Figure 3: Response to the question: What level of theological training do you have? N=65

The analysis from the survey questionnaires, interviews with individual pastors as well as group discussions show that this lack of education by pastoral counsellors has a devastating impact on both congregations and communities in which they live and serve. It emerged during discussions that untrained pastoral counsellors do not know the legislations that govern counselling. The non-adherence tendencies that were observed served as sufficient evidence that without formal training in Ministry and Theology, untrained pastoral counsellors have the potential to cause more harm than good in their communities. Bitrus and Kinison (2021:147) address untrained pastoral counsellors as “unlettered, untrained, unskilled and ill-informed” pastors and that they are marked by the false gospel as well as mess and confusion in the communities where they practice their pastoral counselling. In the report of the CRL Rights Commission (2017), the Commission lamented the fact that pastors and pastoral counsellors are not educated in their fields, and it urged the government to institute regulations that will obligate pastors to be educated, registered, licensed, and be accountable in their operations.

If the willingness of untrained pastoral counsellors to be educated is as skewed as it shows, meaning that they expressed to be educated in only one side, which is becoming marriage commissioners and pastoral counsellors, then it means that churches will still be led by untrained leadership for many coming years. It would be good if pastoral counsellors desired to be educated in formal theological education, and not only in becoming marriage officers as it has been shown earlier. A full training in theology and ministry would help a pastoral counsellor with many aspects of his/her life and ministry because only this full theological training will equip pastors with a solid foundation in religious studies, scripture, theology, and pastoral care, providing them with essential knowledge, skills, and perspectives to effectively serve their congregations. This full theological training will help the pastoral counsellor with the following:

- Understanding of scripture: Theological training involves in-depth study of religious texts, including the Bible or other sacred texts depending on the faith tradition. This helps pastors develop a deep understanding of scripture, its historical context,

interpretation, and theological implications, enabling them to teach and preach with authority and insight.

- Theological framework: Pastors gain a robust theological framework through theological education, which helps them articulate and communicate the beliefs and doctrines of their faith tradition. This enables pastors to provide spiritual guidance, address theological questions and concerns, and offer meaningful interpretations of religious teachings.
- Critical thinking skills: Theological training fosters critical thinking skills, encouraging pastors to engage with complex theological concepts, ethical dilemmas, and contemporary issues facing their congregations and society. This equips pastors to analyse, evaluate, and respond thoughtfully to various theological and practical challenges.
- Pastoral care and counselling: Theological education often includes training in pastoral care, counselling, and pastoral theology. Pastors learn how to provide emotional support, spiritual guidance, and counselling to individuals and families facing challenges such as grief, illness, relationship issues, and spiritual crises.
- Community leadership: Pastors serve as spiritual leaders within their communities, and theological training prepares them for this role by providing insights into community dynamics, social issues, and interfaith dialogue. Pastors learn how to engage with diverse communities, promote social justice, and foster positive relationships within and beyond the congregation.
- Effective communication: Theological training helps pastors develop effective communication skills, including preaching, teaching, and public speaking. Pastors learn how to craft engaging sermons, lead worship services, and communicate religious teachings in ways that resonate with diverse audiences.

- Continued learning and growth: Theological education is a lifelong process, and pastors continue to grow and learn throughout their ministry. Theological training provides a solid foundation for ongoing learning, reflection, and spiritual development, enabling pastors to adapt to changing contexts and deepen their understanding of faith and ministry.

This study noted that without proper theological training, which includes pastoral counselling, the likelihood of causing harm is greater than that of doing good to the community.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are a result of an investigation into the interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors. As stated in Chapter 2 (Literature Review) of this paper, aspects of their interventions and operations were viewed in line with available current literature.

Interviews that were conducted with pastoral counsellors and the views held by them regarding their training and operations have shed light and guidance toward what is put here as recommendations. Survey questionnaires and focus group discussions brought to light aspects that were previously not obvious about the lives and operations of untrained pastoral counsellors.

The research questions that this study sought to answer were these:

- What are the pastoral counselling interventions that are conducted by trained and untrained pastoral counsellors?
- Why are some churches allowing untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it?
- How are congregants and communities affected by pastoral counselling interventions conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors?

On the question: What are the pastoral counselling interventions that are conducted by trained pastoral counsellors, the study found that congregants know the services conducted by untrained pastoral counsellors and to a certain extent, they benefit from those services.

Regarding the question of why some churches allow untrained pastoral counsellors to conduct pastoral counselling without formal training in it, responses that were received varied but shed light on meeting the objectives of this study. Reasons for that are noted in Section 5.2 above.

Research question 3 regarding adherence to legislations by untrained pastoral counsellors: responses from participants on this question revealed several aspects which form the bulk of recommendations below:

CHALLENGE	RECOMMENDATION
<p>Regulatory Body for pastors and pastoral counsellors and churches</p> <p>The South African Council of Churches has limited or no powers to deal with pastoral counsellors (it is not a statutory or</p>	<p>Since the existing bodies like the South African Council of Churches are not an Act of Parliament (which means, they are not statutory bodies), these existing bodies have little powers or no powers at all because they cannot control or stop pastors and untrained pastoral counsellors who are found acting against expectations of their clients.</p> <p>The government should look into appointing a regulatory Body and mandate it to register all churches.</p> <p>All pastoral counsellors should account for a regulatory body that should set standards and guidelines (like those of HPCSA) and enforce adherence by all pastoral counsellors.</p>

<p>regulatory body)</p>	<p>Failing to obey regulations set by the regulatory body should be regarded as a criminal activity by the practitioner (pastoral counsellor).</p>
<p>Pastors and pastoral counsellors are not registered or licensed by a statutory body</p>	<p>The HPCSA is mandated by the Parliament to have oversight of its subsidiary structures and to give guidance and have powers to control its members. This body, through its subsidiary structures, has the power to stop any of its members who are found in contravention of the law in his/her practice. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and other mental health care service providers (as per the jurisdictions of HPCSA) are serving communities. Their practices are monitored and if they practice outside their lines of duty or are found doing things against the law, they could be reported at HPCSA, and their actions could be accounted for.</p> <p>Pastors and pastoral counsellors also serve communities just as psychologists and psychiatrists do. However, the government of South Africa has no rule to govern training, qualifying criteria, registration, and guidelines for the operations of these community servants (pastoral counsellors).</p> <p>The South African Council for Social Service Professions (SACSSP) came through an Act of Parliament so that it could guide, regulate, register, deregister, and hold accountable any social worker or related workers who are found to be acting against guidelines set by this statutory body. Social workers are serving communities much as pastors do. But</p>

	<p>pastors do not have any guiding rule that comes from the government of South Africa, yet the community runs to the pastor when they have problems and at times, they even use the service of the pastor more than they do with that of the social worker. Whereas social workers are controlled by an Act of Parliament, the pastor is not controlled in his service by an Act of Parliament because there is no statutory body for religious practitioners. Professional bodies like ACRP and others do not have the same powers as statutory bodies, and they cannot stop erring pastors from practicing.</p> <p>Pastors and pastoral counsellors should be registered by a government-appointed Body, a statutory or regulatory body, and not by a professional body.</p>
<p>Pastoral counsellors have no formal training for their work or in Ministry/Theology</p>	<p>People in the service of the community, like police officers, medical doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists – the list is long, are first trained and attain a certain level of training before they offer services to the communities. They know their studies on how to render their services to the communities. Formal education for a person who will serve the community is very important.</p> <p>Pastors are known all over the world that their core services are those of serving communities. But in South Africa, it is allowable for a pastor to serve the community without any formal training in Ministry or Theology and the government of the Republic of South Africa is comfortable with that. The pastor is allowed by the government to serve without any</p>

	<p>formal training for those services. No social worker, police officer, or psychologist can serve without formal training in line with their services. They could be arrested and jailed if they can attempt to do that. But that is not so with the pastor.</p> <p>The calling of God into ministry and the anointing of the pastor with the Holy Spirit should not be the only criteria that make the pastor serve in the church and communities. There should be formal education in Ministry/Theology from a credible college or university.</p>
<p>Pastoral counsellors did not adhere to counselling legislation</p>	<p>Reports that pastoral counsellors demand huge amounts for the services they render; sleep with their clients; harass their clients; and divulge confidential matters of their clients to the public are an indication of no adherence to legislations that govern the counselling profession.</p> <p>Let pastoral counsellors be trained, and be academically qualified, and they should have a regulatory body that governs their practice. When that takes place in their lives, pastoral counsellors will be able, through the enforcement of this structure, to adhere to legislations that govern the counselling profession. When an Act of Parliament governs their profession like other professions that are governed by an Act of Parliament, pastoral counsellors will do their work of serving communities and their congregations with dignity and care.</p>

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Like many other studies that were conducted previously, this research also aimed at making a positive contribution to the field of research. There were, however, certain limitations and delimitations that this researcher experienced while executing this study.

It became evident during the study that the investigation of this topic was not published by scholars and as a new field in the existing research, very little information was available to the researcher. This study opened doors for further research for the benefit of both scholars and beneficiaries of the study in this line.

Participants were not conversant with the legal contents of counselling professionals and their request for me to share light on what the contents were, was not giving me comfort for fear that I might influence their responses in one or the other.

It was not easy to redirect participants to the objectives of this research because to a certain extent, they were quick to compare the counselling work done by psychologists with that of pastoral counsellors, and this was not the objective of this research. The researcher had to redirect them several times until it became clear that we were not running a comparative kind of investigation but rather exploring the counselling interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors.

Asking for permission to record investigations was one of the toughest things for participants because some of them expressed fears as to where the recording ended. The researcher had to reassure them of the principles of confidentiality and anonymity and that their audio would never in any way be used for any bad reasons that are not related to this research.

Requesting the untrained pastoral counsellors to speak with their church members was not an easy gesture because the researcher had to explain the purpose of this research

first to the untrained pastor. Fears and discomfort were experienced but were later conquered by the good motive and respect that the researcher had for the untrained pastors. Network connectivity disruptions were often experienced due to load-shedding problems in South Africa. Asking the interviewee to start all over again was a mountain to climb.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH ON THE TOPIC

The counselling interventions of untrained pastoral counsellors is a topic that has not been explored and there is little literature published in this field. This means there is an opportunity to further engage in this topic so that much could be known about it.

Further possible research areas are suggested below:

- Contributing factors for the South African government not to institute a statutory body for religious practitioners and pastoral counsellors. This might include registration and licensing of pastoral counsellors.
- Counselling services by untrained female pastoral counsellors (much was said about male pastoral counsellors).
- Factors that lead to the charging of exorbitant fees for services by untrained pastoral counsellors.
- Proper mechanisms to be used to curb the social ill of clergy sexual malpractice

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for congregants

Introduction and purpose of this project

My name is Elias Mashabela, a student at the University of Venda where I am doing PhD in Theology, focusing on Pastoral Counselling.

The aim of this study is to explore pastoral counselling interventions or services that pastoral counsellors conduct to their churches and communities.

I invite you to participate in assisting me to finish some sections of my studies and that requires me to talk with you on areas of pastoral counselling.

Your name will not be mentioned in this study.

The information you give me will be treated confidentially.

We will not mention the name or names of the pastor or pastors who conducted counselling to you and their churches will also not be mentioned for the purpose of confidentiality.

Please remember that participating in this project is voluntary. In other words, you are free not to participate. If you are participating and you feel to stop and discontinue to participate, you are free to do that.

A summarized version of some of the legislations that govern counselling practitioners are:

- a) A counsellor should keep confidentiality of counsellee at all times
- b) A counsellor should not have romantic or love relationship with their counsellee within a space of 10 - 15 years of having counselled them (RSA)
- c) Counsellors should not have sexual activity with their counsellee (whether by force or mutual agreement)
- d) If the counsellor is not eligible to charge a fee, a fee should not be charged
- e) Counsellors should avoid misrepresentation at all times
- f) It is required that counsellors be registered and governed by a professional or

Regulatory Body

g) Counsellors should report to authority if the counselee's life is in danger (for an example: suicide, infection, looming murder, physical violence, etc.)

1. **The problem** that made the pastor to give you counselling was (please cross/mark it):

- a) Gender-based violence (may or may not include rape, sexual assault, etc.)
- b) Domestic violence (physical, psychological, emotional, financial, etc.)
- c) Marital problem / Relationship problem
- d) Related to my children
- e) Death of our family member
- f) Workplace related
- g) Non-of the above. Briefly mention it

2. Briefly **mention counselling services** that pastors render to congregants and communities (use the space below to write)

3. Many **churches allow untrained pastors to conduct pastoral counselling** to congregants

And communities. What do you think reasons are, for churches to allow them to render these counselling services?



4. Up to which level do untrained pastoral counsellors **adhere by legislations** while they conduct pastoral counselling? Please choose below.

0 – 29%

30% – 59%

60% – 100%

4.1 The reason/s why you ticked the above answer are:

Please don't sign and don't write your name on this paper.



Appendix B: This Questionnaire is to be answered by pastors

Introduction and purpose of this project

I am a student at the University of Venda where I am doing PhD in Theology, focusing on Pastoral Counselling.

The aim of this study is to explore pastoral counselling interventions or services that pastoral counsellors conduct to their churches and communities.

I invite you to participate in assisting me to finish some sections of my studies and that requires me to talk with you on areas of pastoral counselling.

Your name will not be mentioned in this study.

The information you give me will be treated confidentially.

We will not mention the name or names of the pastor or pastors who conducted counselling to you and their churches will also not be mentioned for the purpose of confidentiality.

Please remember that participating in this project is voluntary. In other words, you are free not to participate. If you are participating and you feel to stop and discontinue to participate, you are free to do that.

A summarized version of some of the legislations that govern counselling practitioners are:

- a) A counsellor should keep confidentiality of the counsellee at all times
- b) A counsellor should not have romantic or love relationship with their counsellee within a space of 10 - 15 years of having counselled them (RSA)
- c) Counsellors should not have sexual activity with their counsellee (whether by force or mutual agreement)
- d) If the counsellor is not eligible to charge a fee, a fee should not be charged
- e) Counsellors should avoid misrepresentation at all times

f) It is required that counsellors be registered and governed by a professional or Regulatory Body

g) Counsellors should report to authority if the counselee's life is in danger (for an example: suicide, infection, looming murder, physical violence, etc.)

1. As a pastor, what counselling interventions/services are you rendering to the church and the community?

In short, whom do you offer counselling?

What are their situations which require you to offer them counselling?

What forms of counselling are you rendering to them?

2. Do you charge a fee when you render pastoral counselling to people?

Yes	No
-----	----

3. If, for an example, your client who is HIV positive, tells you he does not use a protection when sleeping with his partner and that the partner does not know about his HIV status, what do you do about that situation? (please briefly explain).

4. If your client (for example, a 17-year old girl), may come for counselling because she was raped and she knows the one who raped her and she did not open a police case for this, what do you do about this situation? (please briefly explain).

5. In which way do you ensure confidentiality of people who come to you for counselling?

6. In your view, what do you think the reason is, for churches to allow pastors to conduct pastoral counselling even if they are not trained in it?

7. Up to what level do pastoral counsellors adhere by legislations and ethical principles as they conduct pastoral counselling? Please use the following as a gauge of adherence:

0 – 29%

30% – 59%

60% – 100%

7.1. The reason/s why you ticked the above answer are:



Please don't sign and don't write your name on this paper.

Appendix C: Annual Progress Report: Supervisor

SECTION A – BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name of Candidate	E. Mashabela
Student Number	11565493
Faculty/Department	Humanities, Social Sciences and Education/ Human Sciences
Degree	PhD Theology
Date of first registration for this qualification	2021
Full-time or Part-time	Full time
Supervisor/promoter	Dr Mudimeli L.M
Co-supervisor/co-promoter	To be confirmed

SECTION B – RESEARCH COMPONENT

Has the candidate kept to the arrangements for consultations as specified in the Learning Agreement	YES X	NO
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On average, how often has the candidate had contact (telephone, letter, e-mail, one-on-one discussion) with you or the co-supervisor/co-promoter during the conduct of the research?

Weekly or more	Fortnightly	Monthly X	Other: Specify
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Do you consider contact amount satisfactory?

YES X	NO
----------	----

If NO, specify:

In your opinion, has the candidate worked consistently?	YES X	NO
---	----------	----

How is the student/candidate's progress this year?

Excellent	Good X	Poor	Non-existent
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To your knowledge, has the candidate experienced any personal, financial, academic or research problems that may have impeded progress?

YES	NO
-----	----



X	
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What is the anticipated date by when the candidate should complete the dissertation or thesis?	2024
--	------

Recommendation with respect to academic status for the forthcoming year (please tick one of the following):

Good standing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Conditional <input type="checkbox"/>	De-registration <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A (i.e., candidate will complete in current year) <input type="checkbox"/>
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Any other comments: Recommended for Registration of 2023 Academic Year.

Signature: 	Date: 06/04/2023
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