



Ministry orientation and ministry outcomes: Evaluation of a new multidimensional model of clergy burnout and job satisfaction

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In secularized countries, where the authority of religious institutions has declined, church ministers face pressures that may precipitate burnout and threaten ministry satisfaction. This study examined the relationship of ministry orientation to burnout and ministry satisfaction in a large sample of Australian clergy. The sample comprised 2,132 church leaders surveyed as part of the 2001 National Church Life Survey in Australia. They completed brief, alternative measures of ministry orientation, burnout, and ministry satisfaction. Data were analysed by means of confirmatory factor analysis, a multiple indicator multiple cause model, and structural equation modelling. Results supported the validity of three-factor models of ministry orientation and burnout as applied to clergy, with burnout mediating the relationship between an internal orientation to ministry and satisfaction in ministry. The independence of personal accomplishment from satisfaction in ministry was also established. The usefulness of ministry orientation as predictive of ministry outcomes in the context of secularization is discussed.

Burnout is recognized as a critical health issue for human service professionals, and has been widely researched since the mid-1970s (Freudenberger, 1975; Maslach & Jackson, 1976, 1986). Burnout is typically characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Consequences of burnout include impaired physical health (Melamed, Shirom, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2006), reduced job satisfaction/performance and higher turnover intentions (Fogarty, Singh, Rhoads, & Moore, 2000), negative communication with colleagues (Geurts, Schaufeli, & De Jonge, 1998), declining professional commitment (Lee & Ashforth 1993), reduced self-esteem (Golembiewski & Aldinger, 1994), and poorer overall life satisfaction

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(Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2000). Chronic work stress has long been considered a major contributor to burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Workplace characteristics contributing to high levels of stress comprise excessive job demands (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004; Zohar, 1997), including role conflict (Um & Harrsion, 1998) and role ambiguity (Manlove, 1994; Pretorius, 1994), and a lack of autonomy (Maslach *et al.*, 2001).

Although an extensive literature examining burnout across a variety of occupational groups has developed in recent years, relatively little work has been completed on clergy/ministry burnout. Nevertheless, it is recognized that, as providers of human services (Krause, Ellison, & Wulff, 1998; Weaver *et al.*, 1997), Christian ministers are subject to work-related stresses typical of other human service professions and occupations (Cotton, Dollard, De Jonge, & Whetham, 2003; Hall, 1997; Miner, 1996). In particular, ministry stress can result from rigid work schedules, excessive bureaucracy, irrelevant denominational structures (Grosch & Olsen, 2000), conflicts between personal and congregational needs (Kunst, 1993), high congregational expectations and mobility (Miner, 1996), and impoverished or conflicted personal relationships (Whetham & Whetham, 2000). Feelings of isolation and lack of social support are also related to ministry stress and burnout (Virginia, 1998). Moreover, burnout appears to be a widespread problem for clergy. One Australian study, for example, indicated that one quarter of clergy experienced burnout as an extreme or significant issue, whilst half were potential candidates for burnout (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001).

Job-person fit theory (Maslach *et al.*, 2001) suggests that ministers (or any other occupational grouping) who perceive that they do not 'fit' their job well will experience their work as stressful and be more likely to exhibit signs of burnout. Thus, the interaction between psychological perceptions of, and orientations to, work and work contexts is theorized to be a critical predictor of ministry burnout. Few studies examining ministry burnout, however, have included psycho-spiritual orientations to work as key predictors of clergy burnout (see Golden, Piedmont, Ciarrocchi, & Rodgers, 2004 for one related exception). In contrast, the present study examines psycho-spiritual orientation to work as a key predictor of ministry burnout.

Secularization as an occupational issue in ministry stress

Ministers in western countries currently work in the context of secularization, where the authority of religion and religious organizations is declining despite a rise in personal spirituality (Chaves, 1993, 1994). Secularization has been shown to contribute to ministry-workplace stressors such as excessive job demands, role conflict and ambiguity, and lack of job autonomy (Wells, 1992). Associated with secularization is greater attendee mobility (Kaldor, Bellamy, Powell, Correy, & Castle, 1994), and related pressures that congregations-as-consumers place on clergy regarding the content and structure of religious services. These pressures further undermine a minister's sense of autonomy (Daniel & Rogers, 1981), increase the ongoing workload of clergy, and contribute to the possibility of role conflict. In addition, as secularization progresses, religious organizations typically begin to replicate secular management structures, practices, and policies resulting in reduced autonomy for ministers in their work (Chaves, 1993). In sum, secularization increases ministry stress and the likelihood of burnout because secularization implies that clergy must function with diminished institutional legitimation and diminished job-related autonomy, whilst simultaneously dealing with a work context characterized by high expectations and congregational change.

Personal factors and clergy burnout

Previous studies of clergy burnout have demonstrated the importance of personality traits such as neuroticism and psychoticism (Francis & Rodger, 1994; Francis, Loudon, & Rutledge, 2004; Hills, Francis, & Rutledge, 2004), and religiously based personality styles such as spiritual transcendence (Golden *et al.*, 2004). However, in qualitative research directly relating to this study, a more targeted psycho-spiritual construct 'Orientation to Ministry' was developed, with those categorized as having an internal orientation to ministry scoring significantly lower on burnout measures than those categorized as having an external orientation to ministry (Miner, 1996). Ministers with an internal orientation relied on personal qualities and skills as sources of ministry legitimation, whereas externally oriented ministers relied on congregational support and encouragement for legitimation. Subsequently, a measure of internal orientation to ministry was developed and a three-dimensional factor structure of internality was established (Miner, Sterland, & Dowson, 2006). These dimensions were: a sense of spiritual relatedness, a sense of ministry competence based on training and ministry skills, and a perceived capacity to function in ministry in the absence of direct congregational support, indicative of personal autonomy. In this paper, we extend the initial qualitative work on ministry orientation and burnout by quantitatively investigating how the three dimensions of orientation to ministry contribute to specific dimensions of burnout.

Internal orientation to ministry and positive outcomes

The impact of an internal orientation to ministry on positive outcomes from ministry has not yet been examined. Assessing the impact of internality on positive ministry outcomes is important because many ministers report high levels of satisfaction with ministry (Cotton *et al.*, 2003; Dowson & McInerney, 2005; Goetz, 1997). Secondly, examining the relationship between positive and negative ministry outcomes and internality can assist in establishing the psychometric properties of internality, i.e. internality should be positively related to positive ministry outcomes (such as satisfaction with ministry) and negatively to negative ministry outcomes such as burnout and its constituent components.

Building on extant definitions of job satisfaction (e.g. Locke, 1976), in this study we define satisfaction with ministry as the extent to which ministers experience positive affect in relation to ministry, marked by contentment with the perceived conduct and outcomes of one's ministry work. We hypothesize that the dimensions of internality will be positively related to satisfaction with ministry because internality not only 'protects' ministers from burnout (which is negatively related to satisfaction with ministry), but also directly contributes to intrinsically satisfying and motivating psychological experiences (e.g. spiritual connectedness, the exercise of autonomy, and the demonstration of competence) derived in the context of ministry. Hence, internality becomes associated with ministry satisfaction because it provides a psychological mechanism for linking intrinsic satisfaction to the practice of ministry. Moreover, previous research (e.g. Christopherson, 1994; Goetz, 1997) has suggested that constructs similar to the dimensions of internality are also related to ministry satisfaction.

Relevance of the three-factor model of burnout for clergy

The Maslach three-factor model of burnout is based on the assumption that burnout results from the *emotional* demands of interacting with others (Maslach, 1993).

Hence, this model is particularly relevant to clergy who typically report stress from the emotional and interpersonal demands of ministry. Whilst factor analyses of the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI; Maslach & Jackson, 1986) generally indicate three dimensions of burnout, i.e. emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment (Cordes, Dougherty, & Blum, 1997; Evans & Fischer, 1993; Leiter & Durup, 1994; Richardson & Martinussen, 2004; Shirom & Melamed, 2006), a counter-argument suggests that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization constitute the 'core of burnout' and that personal accomplishment is an independent construct increasing the likelihood of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Shirom, 2003; Walkey & Green, 1992). Nonetheless, recent studies appear to support a somewhat revised three-dimensional model of burnout (Bresó, Salanova, & Schaufeli, 2007).

Models of clergy burnout, ministry orientation, and ministry satisfaction

The purpose of this study is to examine relationships between three dimensions of an internal orientation to ministry, three factors of burnout, and ministry satisfaction. There are at least two plausible ways to conceptualize these relationships. First, a direct effects model hypothesizes that ministry orientation independently predicts both burnout and satisfaction in ministry, but that burnout does not predict satisfaction in ministry. Second, an indirect effects (mediated) model hypothesizes that the relationship between internality and ministry satisfaction is mediated by burnout. Further, age, gender, and occupational level (in this case, ministry position) may affect relationships between internality, burnout, and job satisfaction in either the direct or indirect effects model. Thus, although age may be confounded with length of work experience, younger age has been associated with burnout more generally (Maslach *et al.*, 2001) and amongst clergy more specifically (Francis, *et al.*, 2004). Moreover, female clergy have been found to have higher job satisfaction than male clergy (McDuff, 2001), but score no differently on measures of burnout (Randall, 2004). Since job demands may vary across different ministry positions (e.g. senior minister, minister, and assistant minister), and job demands are associated with increased burnout in workers (Demerouti *et al.*, 2000; Maslach *et al.*, 2001), ministry position may also impact burnout and relationships between burnout and other variables.

Measurement issues

In targeted work on burnout amongst Australian clergy, an occupationally specific inventory was developed to measure the emotional exhaustion component of burnout (Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, & Lewis, 2004). The inventory was devised as a response to criticism that clergy objected to references to 'clients' in the MBI. Although primarily measuring emotional exhaustion, the Scale for Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) also includes items that measure depersonalization. A related scale, the Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS; Francis, Kaldor, Robbins, & Castle, 2005) measures personal accomplishment and ministry satisfaction.

This study draws on Maslach's theoretical model of burnout, but uses items from the SEEM and SIMS to measure constructs comprising the Maslach model. This strategy was necessary because the study draws on archival data using items other than those contained in the MBI. These alternative measures have, however, been used in large-scale studies of clergy burnout. Moreover, in order to determine the extent to which the SEEM and SIMS items could be appropriately used as proxy measures of the Maslach constructs,

we conducted a rigorous series of confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) investigating the psychometric properties of the SEEM and SIMS items under constraints imposed by the Maslach burnout model. Thus, these CFAs tested: (a) the specific hypothesis that the items drawn from the SEEM and SIMS fitted the Maslach theoretical framework, and (b) the more general hypothesis that a theoretical framework can be applied *post hoc* to combinations of items drawn from pre-existing measures, even if these items were not designed *a priori* to operationalize the specific theoretical framework in question.

As in all CFAs, model fit statistics and related modelling outcomes are used to determine the extent to which any hypothesis is supported by the data.

Method

Participants

Participants were 2,132 leaders surveyed as part of the Australian National Church Life Survey, 2001. A total of 3,220 questionnaires including variables of interest in this study were mailed to leaders of participating churches, and 2,132 were returned, comprising an overall response rate of 66%.

Of the sample, 62% were the sole minister of a congregation or parish, 21% were the senior minister presiding over additional staff, and the remainder were associates (5%) or assistants, lay leaders, or specialist ministers such as a youth ministers (12%). The majority were male, but 11% were female. Most participants were middle-aged: the median age was 51 years, with 14% under 40 years, 63% between 40 and 59 years, and 23% 60 years or over. Although most participants were married (84%), 12% had never married, with the remainder being separated, divorced, widowed, or in a *de facto* relationship (0.8, 2.1, 1.5, and 0.05%, respectively). Seventy-nine per cent indicated they were born in Australia, 13% in another English-speaking country and 8% in a non-English speaking country. Most respondents (89%) held some theological qualification (9% a basic bible college qualification, 25% a diploma in theology or ministry, 36% a degree in theology or ministry, and 19% a postgraduate diploma or degree). With respect to denominational groupings, 27% of the sample comprised Anglican leaders, 22% Uniting Church, 11% Baptist, 8% Catholic, 8% Pentecostal, 7% Salvation Army, with the remaining 17% spread between churches of Christ, Lutheran, or Presbyterian denominations and some smaller groups or independent churches.

Measures

Twenty-eight items were used to construct the models tested in this research. These items were drawn from a number of different scales specifically designed for use with clergy (see Table 1 for a list of items and their sources). The items were chosen because, in initial factor analyses, they displayed high factor loadings, low uniquenesses, and low cross-loadings on other factors.

The spiritual relatedness factor from the internal orientation to ministry cluster includes items with different response formats. Different response formats can, but not necessarily will (see Arnau, Thompson, & Cook, 2001), lead to problems in scale construction because differentially scaled items can display varying functional characteristics. Fortunately, the characteristics of differentially scaled items can be investigated through an examination of descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis), inter-item correlations (relationships between observed

Table 1. Dimensions, scale items and source

Construct/dimension	Item	Source
Internal orientation to ministry/spiritual relatedness	SR-1. I am frustrated with the lack of effect my private spiritual practices have in the rest of my life (R)	ODM-S 29
	SR-2. How satisfied are you with your own level of private devotional practice (e.g. private prayer, Bible reading, meditation)? (Response categories comprised: (1) very satisfied, (2) satisfied, (3) dissatisfied, (4) very dissatisfied, and (5) not applicable)	2001 National Church Life Survey (NCLS)
	SR-3. How often do you spend time in private devotional activities (e.g. prayer, meditation, reading the Bible alone)? (Response categories comprised: (1) every day/most days, (2) a few times a week, (3) once a week, (4) occasionally, (5) hardly ever, and (6) never)	2001 NCLS
	SR-4. With work pressures here I find it hard to maintain personal spiritual practices (R)	2001 NCLS
Internal orientation to ministry/autonomy	AT-1. Although it is nice to get praise, if I do not get it I can still continue on strongly	ODM-S 29
	AT-2. Without encouragement from others I find it really hard to keep going (R)	ODM-S 29
	AT-3. I feel annoyed when people do not treat me with the authority I am supposed to have as a minister/pastor/priest (R)	ODM-S 29
	AT-4. I feel pulled around by different people's expectations of me here (R)	ODM-S 29
	AT-5. There is unrest in my congregation/-parish so I do not feel much peace either (R)	ODM-S 29
Internal orientation to ministry/competence	CP-1. When I want something, I think I can make it happen	Primary Control Scale (Heeps, 2000)
	CP-2. When I really want to achieve something, I believe I can achieve it	
	CP-3. When something gets in the way of a goal, I believe I can overcome it	
	CP-4. I can easily do the tasks of ministry that make up my role here	2001 NCLS
Emotional exhaustion	EE-1. I feel drained in fulfilling my functions here	Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (Francis, Kaldor et al., 2004)
	EE-2. Fatigue and irritation are part of my daily experience	
	EE-3. I am invaded by sadness I cannot explain	

Table 1. (Continued)

Construct/dimension	Item	Source
Depersonalization	DP-1. My humour has a cynical and biting tone	Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (Francis, Kaldor <i>et al.</i> , 2004)
	DP-2. I find myself spending less and less time with attenders	
	DP-3. I am less patient with people here than I used to be	
	DP-4. I am becoming less flexible in my dealings with attenders	
Personal accomplishment	PA-1. I have accomplished many worthwhile things in my ministry here	Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (Francis <i>et al.</i> , 2005)
	PA-2. I feel that my pastoral ministry has a positive influence on people's lives	
	PA-3. I feel that my teaching ministry has a positive influence on people's faith	
Satisfaction in ministry	SM-1. I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from working with people here	Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (Francis <i>et al.</i> , 2005)
	SM-2. I feel very positive about my ministry here	
	SM-3. I am really glad that I entered the ministry	
	SM-4. The ministry here gives real purpose and meaning to my life	
	SM-5. I gain a lot of personal satisfaction from fulfilling my functions here	

Note. ODM-S 29, Orientation to the Demands of Ministry Survey (Miner *et al.*, 2006); SR, spiritual relatedness; AT, autonomy; CP, competence; EE, emotional exhaustion; DP, depersonalization; PA, personal accomplishment; SM, satisfaction in ministry.

variables), factor loadings (relationship between observed variables and latent variables) and uniquenesses. Moreover, in CFA and SEM analyses, it is possible to estimate completely standardized solutions that standardize both the observed variables and the latent variables in any given analysis. Completely standardized solutions are able to account for method variance at the item level, such as that which may be attributable to different response formats.

In the present study descriptive, inter-item and item-factor analysis did not indicate any difficulties with the spiritual relatedness items (e.g. out of range values or item characteristics substantially different from other items in the overall item pool). Moreover, all models involving the items terminated normally. Normal termination will typically not occur when individual items are collinear with other items, or when individual items contribute in other ways to a non-positive definite covariance matrix of variables. For these reasons, we suggest that the spiritual relatedness items may be taken as appropriate indicator variables of the spiritual relatedness factor. However, future studies using these items will need to recognize that differing response formats may

potentially affect item functioning, and so should incorporate investigations of item functioning as part of the research methodology.

Alpha reliabilities of the three scales measuring spiritual relatedness, autonomy and competence in the present study were .66, .68, and .73, respectively. Reliabilities for the burnout scales were .75 for emotional exhaustion, .63 for depersonalization, .59 for personal accomplishment, and .84 for ministry satisfaction. Moderate scale reliabilities may be attributable to the length of the scales involved in this study (i.e. longer scales tend to obtain higher reliabilities as measured by Cronbach's alpha regardless of other properties of the measures). Nevertheless, the moderate reliabilities of the Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment scales should be recognized as a limitation of the study.

Procedure

Australian church leaders from all major Christian denominations were invited to complete the questions individually via a mailed survey or on-line as part of their church's participation in the 2001 National Church Life Survey. From multiple responses, participants were asked to indicate which best represented their situation, perception, or evaluation. Participants were not identified in this survey, and participation in the study was voluntary.

Analysis of data

Responses to the 28 items as specified above were examined by means of CFA, a multiple indicator multiple cause (MIMIC) model and a series of nested structural equation modelling.

Confirmatory factor analysis

CFAs assess the extent to which observed indicators (items) reflect the hypothesized structure of underlying constructs (factors). CFAs allow the researcher to specify not only how many factors are (theoretically) measured by a given set of items but, also, which items function as indicators of which factors (Schumacker & Lomax, 2004).

MIMIC models

MIMIC models are useful for determining the effects of categorical moderating or confounding variables (e.g. age and sex) on (particularly) latent dependent variables in CFA or SEM models. MIMIC models may be considered to be the latent variable equivalent of (M)ANOVA models from the non-SEM context. In the current study, we estimated one MIMIC model to assess the effects of age, sex, and ministry position (senior or sole minister; associate minister; interim or lay minister) on the dimensions of an internal orientation to ministry. The categorical confounding variables in the MIMIC model in this study were coded such that higher values represented greater seniority with respect to position, older participants with respect to age, and males with respect to gender.

SEM modelling

We hypothesized that the dimensions of internal orientation to ministry would be positively related to personal accomplishment and ministry satisfaction, and negatively

related to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. There was also scope to suggest (as indicated above) that emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment would act as mediating variables between ministry satisfaction and the dimensions of an internal orientation to ministry (spirituality, autonomy, and competence). A series of structural equation models (i.e. a non-mediated model and a suite of mediated models) testing these hypotheses was conducted in this study. SEMs are superior to standard regression models because they allow for the assessment of relations between multiple independent and dependent variables – with measurement error at the item level extracted from the structural parameter estimates between these multiple variables.

Modelling procedures

Missing data were dealt with using the full information maximum likelihood (FIML) approach to missing data estimation (e.g. Arbuckle, 1996; Enders, 2001) available in the statistical software package for Linear Structural Relations, LISREL. FIML estimates a likelihood function for each individual case based on the variables present for that individual. Thus, all the available data are used to estimate missing values. The FIML approach has been shown to produce unbiased parameter estimates and standard errors under conditions where data are (at least) missing at random (MAR), i.e. data are either missing at random or missing completely at random (MCAR). However, even under conditions where data are not at least MAR, FIML may perform better than list-wise deletion in terms of both efficiency and bias (e.g. Schafer & Graham, 2002).

In the CFA, all items were specified as indicators of one factor only, and the uniqueness of each item was modelled to be independent of all other uniquenesses. The MIMIC model was identical to the CFA model with the addition of three confounding variables (age, sex, and position) modelled to affect the seven latent variables in the CFA model. The structural models used the seven latent variables from the CFA in different causal orderings corresponding to the various direct and indirect effects models.

All analyses were conducted using LISREL version 8.54, and all parameters were estimated using the maximum likelihood procedure. An underlying assumption of maximum likelihood estimation procedures is that responses are normally distributed (Hu, Bentler, & Kano, 1992). As is common in psychometric research, however, responses to the present survey items were not normally distributed (in general, responses to the survey items were negatively skewed and moderately leptokurtic). Fortunately, however, maximum likelihood estimation procedures appear to be robust with respect to violations of normality, particularly in relation to parameter estimates and goodness-of-fit indices (Loehlin, 2004; Schumacker & Lomax, 2004). In fact, to the extent that estimation problems are associated with non-normality, parameter estimates and observed goodness-of-fit measures tend to conservatively indicate a *poorer* fit if data are non-normally distributed (Hau & Marsh, 2000). For this reason, non-normality does not appear to be a significant problem with respect to maximum likelihood estimation procedures.

Model fit in CFAs, MIMIC, and structural equation models may be assessed through a combination of parameter examinations, a chi-squared test of model fit, and various descriptive fit indices. In this study, the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) was used as a descriptive-fit index as this is the only fit index currently available in LISREL under the FIML procedure for missing data. The RMSEA expresses model fit per degrees of freedom (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham, 2006).

Hair *et al.* (2006) suggest that values of the RMSEA ranging from .05 to .08 represent acceptable model fit, with values less than .05 representing good fit.

In addition to the above, nested SEMs can be compared by subtracting the chi-squared and degrees of freedom associated with a 'base' model from the chi-squared and degrees of freedom associated with an alternative, more restrictive, model. The resulting chi-squared/degrees of freedom difference between models can be statistically evaluated. This statistical evaluation allows researchers to determine the extent to which a nested model represents a worse fit to the data than its referent base model. In other words, the base model acts as the comparative standard against which alternative models may be compared. In the present study a full-forward non-mediated model was used as the base model against which a suite of partially and fully mediated models was tested.

Results

Overview of tested models

All model solutions converged properly, and all parameters in all models were plausible, i.e. there were no out of range or impossible values in any of the models. Table 2 indicates that all models met criterion values according to the RMSEA. These results suggest that each of the models was an acceptable fit for the data.

Table 2. Model fit statistics for confirmatory and structural models

Model	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	RMSEA	Model description
<i>Base models</i>					
M1	1853.34	329	5.63	.048	First-order factor model
M2	5438.38	416	13.07	.078	MIMIC model
M3	2184.94	335	6.52	.053	Full forward model
<i>Mediated models</i>					
M4	2197.67	338	6.50	.052	Fully mediated SEM model
M5	2190.82	337	6.50	.052	Autonomy and competence mediated
M6	2197.10	337	6.52	.053	Spirituality and competence mediated
M7	2190.65	337	6.50	.052	Spirituality and autonomy mediated
M8	2185.43	336	6.50	.052	Autonomy mediated
<i>Model comparisons</i>					
	χ^2	df	Significance		
M3 versus M4	12.73	3	$p < .01$		
M3 versus M5	5.88	2	ns		
M3 versus M6	12.16	2	$p < .01$		
M3 versus M7	5.71	2	ns		
M3 versus M8	0.49	1	ns		

Base models

The good fit of the first-order factor model (M1, RMSEA = .048) supports the existence of seven hypothesized factors underlying the total set of items, namely spiritual relatedness, autonomy, competence, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and ministry satisfaction. The full forward model (M3), which tested the impact of the three dimensions of orientation to ministry and the three dimensions

of burnout on satisfaction in ministry was an adequate fit for the data (RMSEA = .053). However, the MIMIC model (M2) displayed the poorest fit to the data – suggesting that, overall, age, sex, and position do not substantially impact variables in the model. Nonetheless, several bivariate relationships in the MIMIC model were statistically significant (see Table 6, and further discussion below).

Mediated models

The series of mediation models tested whether the three dimensions of burnout fully or partially mediated the relationship between the three dimensions of ministry orientation and satisfaction in ministry. All mediation models provided an adequate fit for the data (RMSEA \leq .053). However, the fully mediated model with no direct effects, M4 (χ^2 difference = 12.73, df = 3), and the partially mediated model with direct effects for Autonomy only, M6 (χ^2 difference = 12.16, df = 2), constituted a worse fit for the data when compared with the full forward model (M3). Hence, the best fitting mediation model (M8) indicates partial mediation where the direct effects of spiritual relatedness and competence on satisfaction in ministry are included, and the effect of autonomy is fully mediated by burnout.

Parameters of the models

All factor loadings in the tested models were substantial, with the range of factor loadings being 0.33–0.85, and average factor loading being 0.62 (see Table 3). Similarly, within-factor item correlations (shaded in Table 4) were moderate to substantial (ranging from 0.17 to 0.66), and were consistently larger than between-factor item correlations, also reported in Table 4 (ranging from 0.02 to 0.44).

Moreover, relationships between the latent factors in each of the models were highly interpretable. In the CFA model (see Table 5) all ‘positive’ scales (spiritual relatedness, autonomy, competence, personal accomplishment and satisfaction with ministry) were positively correlated with each other and negatively correlated with the ‘negative’ factors (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization). For example, satisfaction with ministry was correlated positively with spiritual relatedness (.36), autonomy (.60), competence (.38) and personal accomplishment (.69) and negatively with emotional exhaustion (–.55) and depersonalization (–.58). Also, as should be the case, the negative factors of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization were positively correlated with each other (.68). This pattern of correlations is precisely as predicted and all correlations were statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Results of the MIMIC model indicate that all three confounding variables (position, age, and gender – see Table 6) affected variables in the model. The most notable patterns are as follows. First, ministry position displayed no statistically significant effect on dimensions of an internal orientation to ministry (associations between –.01 and .04) or on depersonalization (.04), but type of position was positively related to emotional exhaustion (.15) and personal accomplishment (.31), and negatively related to satisfaction with ministry (–.05, although the size of the effect on satisfaction with ministry was small). Second, age affected spiritual relatedness (.18), autonomy (.23), competence (–.06) and the burnout dimensions of emotional exhaustion (–.10) and personal accomplishment (–.25), but was unrelated to depersonalization and satisfaction in ministry. Third, gender was positively related to autonomy (.07) and all

Table 3. Factor loadings, means and standard deviations

	SR	AT	CP	EE	DP	PA	SM	Mean	SD
SR-1	0.42							5.60	0.74
SR-2	0.58							3.62	0.85
SR-3	0.68							3.31	1.04
SR-4	0.64							2.53	0.66
AT-1		0.47						3.83	0.67
AT-2		0.51						3.38	0.94
AT-3		0.41						3.80	0.87
AT-4		0.67						3.45	1.11
AT-5		0.67						3.97	0.93
CP-1			0.33					3.44	0.91
CP-2			0.73					3.63	0.77
CP-3			0.85					3.87	0.67
CP-4			0.78					3.74	0.68
EE-1				0.75				2.71	1.11
EE-2				0.78				2.56	1.06
EE-3				0.59				1.75	0.92
DP-1					0.48			1.94	0.83
DP-2					0.40			2.40	0.90
DP-3					0.68			2.22	0.95
DP-4					0.67			2.08	0.78
PA-1						0.58		3.99	0.71
PA-2						0.61		4.10	0.54
PA-3						0.55		4.05	0.57
SM-1							0.65	4.12	0.78
SM-2							0.79	4.02	0.77
SM-3							0.61	4.38	0.72
SM-4							0.73	3.97	0.79
SM-5							0.81	3.99	0.72

Note. SR, spiritual relatedness; AT, autonomy; CP, competence; EE, emotional exhaustion; DP, depersonalization; PA, personal accomplishment; SM, satisfaction in ministry.

three burnout factors (coefficients between .07 and .13) indicating that males reported consistently higher levels of burnout than females.

The parameters in the preferred mediated SEM model (M8, see Figure 1), relating dimensions of internal ministry orientation to other variables are also highly interpretable. As predicted, spiritual relatedness, autonomy and competence were significantly and negatively associated with emotional exhaustion ($-.41$, $-.58$, and $-.13$, respectively) and depersonalization ($-.12$, $-.26$, and $-.05$), although the absolute size for the last path from competence to depersonalization is small). Also, spiritual relatedness, autonomy and competence were positively and significantly associated with personal accomplishment (.13, .16, and .34, respectively). Spiritual relatedness was significantly and negatively associated directly with ministry satisfaction ($-.14$) but competence was directly and positively associated with ministry satisfaction (.13). Further, the two negative dimensions of burnout (emotional exhaustion and depersonalization) were significantly and negatively associated with ministry satisfaction ($-.57$ and $-.61$), whereas the positive dimension of burnout (personal accomplishment) was significantly and positively associated with ministry satisfaction (.68).

Table 4. Zero order correlation matrix

	SR				AT					CP				EE			DP				PA			SM				
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	1	2	3	4	5
SR-1	—																											
SR-2	.24	—																										
SR-3	.28	.35	—																									
SR-4	.33	.36	.47	—																								
AT-1	.13	.21	.20	.19	—																							
AT-2	.08	.23	.20	.17	.53	—																						
AT-3	.04	.22	.14	.10	.17	.23	—																					
AT-4	.10	.28	.31	.19	.23	.27	.27	—																				
AT-5	.07	.23	.21	.15	.23	.26	.31	.52	—																			
CP-1	.05	.12	.18	.16	.22	.20	.04	.20	.15	—																		
CP-2	.02	.16	.06	.09	.18	.17	.05	.09	.08	.24	—																	
CP-3	.07	.20	.14	.14	.26	.20	.08	.15	.17	.27	.63	—																
CP-4	.07	.21	.14	.14	.26	.22	.08	.14	.16	.25	.56	.66	—															
EE-1	−.08	−.24	−.34	−.20	−.22	.24	−.22	−.44	−.35	−.24	.07	−.13	−.15	—														
EE-2	−.08	−.26	−.32	−.18	−.19	.25	−.24	−.42	−.37	−.20	.06	−.14	−.14	.61	—													
EE-3	−.09	−.27	−.18	−.13	−.21	−.26	−.19	−.33	−.35	−.11	−.11	−.15	−.16	.40	.45	—												
DP-1	−.09	−.22	−.11	−.08	−.16	−.16	−.17	−.19	−.23	−.08	−.08	−.11	−.13	.24	.30	.30	—											
DP-2	−.09	−.20	−.19	−.15	−.11	−.12	−.09	−.19	−.21	−.11	−.03	−.05	−.08	.27	.26	.20	.21	—										
DP-3	−.10	−.24	−.17	−.09	−.19	−.19	−.23	−.28	−.32	−.14	−.06	−.11	−.13	.30	.36	.28	.29	.24	—									
DP-4	−.10	−.24	−.16	−.11	−.22	−.22	−.20	−.24	−.28	−.17	−.09	−.14	−.14	.29	.31	.28	.30	.24	.50	—								
PA-1	.08	.16	.05	.07	.14	.10	.06	.10	.18	.11	.22	.18	.18	−.03	−.03	−.14	−.12	−.10	−.10	−.13	—							
PA-2	.14	.21	.07	.05	.16	.12	.09	.11	.15	.12	.14	.15	.18	−.09	−.08	−.12	−.20	−.14	−.16	−.17	.32	—						
PA-3	.11	.16	.05	.07	.14	.14	.06	.12	.14	.12	.11	.12	.17	−.09	−.07	−.14	−.12	−.14	−.13	−.13	.31	.38	—					
SM-1	.08	.18	.10	.08	.17	.13	.18	.22	.32	.11	.15	.17	.18	−.25	−.23	−.28	−.22	−.16	−.26	−.24	.38	.32	.26	—				
SM-2	.13	.27	.18	.19	.25	.21	.17	.31	.40	.18	.24	.29	.30	−.36	−.31	−.37	−.22	−.19	−.31	−.27	.35	.33	.28	.54	—			
SM-3	.18	.26	.15	.12	.23	.17	.12	.24	.25	.15	.14	.20	.20	−.27	−.26	−.33	−.23	−.15	−.26	−.25	.21	.24	.23	.34	.49	—		
SM-4	.14	.21	.12	.14	.19	.16	.14	.26	.33	.09	.15	.18	.18	−.27	−.23	−.28	−.21	−.19	−.28	−.28	.28	.26	.25	.45	.55	.46	—	
SM-5	.11	.22	.15	.13	.22	.20	.16	.30	.36	.18	.19	.23	.24	−.35	−.30	−.33	−.21	−.22	−.30	−.33	.31	.31	.27	.53	.61	.48	.64	—

Note. SR, spiritual relatedness; AT, autonomy; CP, competence; EE, emotional exhaustion; DP, depersonalization; PA, personal accomplishment; SM, satisfaction in ministry.

Table 5. Factor correlations in the first-order model

	SR	AT	CP	EE	DP	PA	SM
Spiritual relatedness	–						
Autonomy	0.54	–					
Competence	0.27	0.35	–				
Emotional exhaustion	–0.50	–0.74	–0.23	–			
Depersonalization	–0.41	–0.65	–0.24	0.68	–		
Personal accomplishment	0.27	0.38	0.36	–0.19	–0.40	–	
Satisfaction	0.36	0.60	0.38	–0.55	–0.58	0.69	–

Note. SR, spiritual relatedness; AT, autonomy; CP, competence; EE, emotional exhaustion; DP, depersonalization; PA, personal accomplishment; SM, satisfaction in ministry.

Table 6. MIMIC model results

	SR	AT	CP	EE	DP	PA	SM
Position	–0.02	0.04	–0.01	0.15**	0.04	0.31**	– 0.05*
Age	0.18**	0.23**	– 0.06*	– 0.10**	0.05	– 0.25**	0.02
Gender	–0.03	0.07*	–0.01	0.07*	0.11**	0.13**	–0.03

Note. All statistically significant coefficients are boldfaced; * $p < .01$, ** $p < .001$. SR, spiritual relatedness; AT, autonomy; CP, competence; EE, emotional exhaustion; DP, depersonalization; PA, personal accomplishment; SM, satisfaction in ministry.

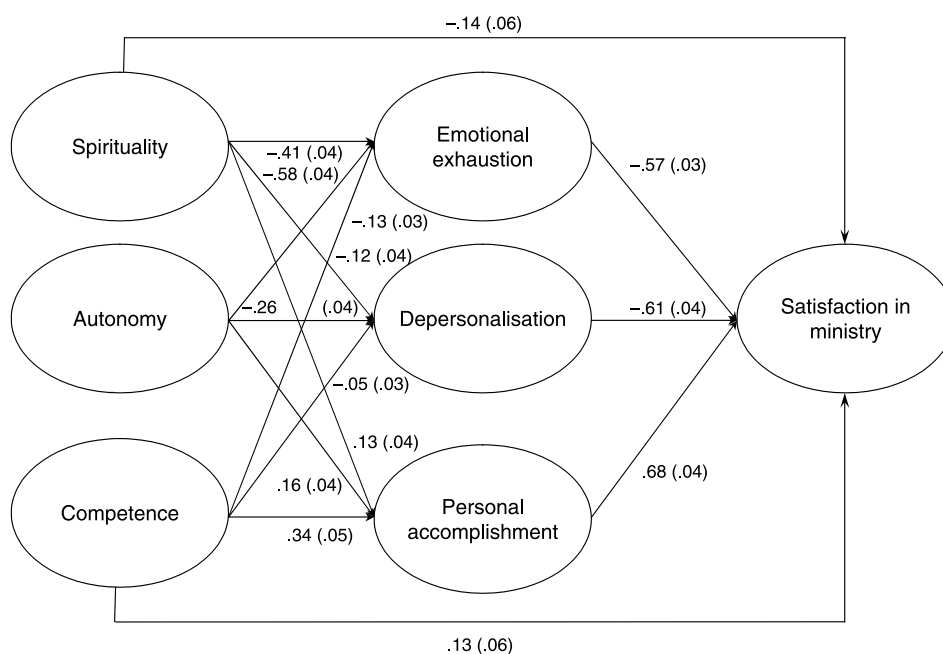


Figure 1. Partially mediated SEM model. Model fit: $\chi^2 = 2185.43$, $df = 336$, RMSEA = .052. Standard errors in parenthesis.

Discussion

The results of the study attest to:

- (a) the validity of a three-dimensional structure of (i) internal orientation to ministry, and (ii) burnout as applied to clergy;
- (b) the applicability of an internal model of ministry orientation as affecting both burnout and ministry satisfaction; and
- (c) the partially mediating role of burnout in the relationship between internal orientation to ministry and ministry satisfaction.

Each of these points is discussed below.

Validity of multidimensional ODM and burnout models

It was hypothesized that an internal orientation to ministry would comprise three distinct dimensions: spiritual relatedness, autonomy and competence. It was also hypothesized that burnout would comprise three distinct dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal accomplishment. The CFA model tested this hypothesis (along with the inclusion of satisfaction with ministry). The good model fit of the CFA model indicates that the multidimensional structure of orientation to ministry and burnout fits the data well.

The support provided for the multidimensional structure of an internal orientation to ministry is important because it is not intuitively obvious that a sense of spiritual relatedness, autonomy and competence should constitute an internal orientation to ministry demands. Nonetheless, these dimensions are highly interpretable as buffering responses to secularization processes which weaken absolutist claims regarding Christian (or any) spirituality, undermine external sources of legitimation, and call into question the competence of generalist clergy to carry out traditional tasks such as counselling and financial administration. Hence, these dimensions provide a means of explaining why an internal orientation to ministry should be more or less adaptive in secularized settings for ministry. This explanation is consistent with concerns expressed about social changes impacting ministry (e.g. as highlighted by Cotton *et al.*, 2003), but also suggests a specific, multidimensional psycho-spiritual orientation may protect ministers psychologically in the face of such changes.

The results also provide support for the multidimensionality of burnout amongst ministers. Previous work on clergy burnout has either assumed the three dimensions articulated in the Maslach model (e.g. Rodgeron & Piedmont, 1998), or has specifically postulated a single 'core' dimension of burnout (Francis, Kaldor *et al.*, 2004). In contrast, this study directly tested a three-factor model of burnout with data supplied from ministers, finding support for this model. In doing so, we were able to establish that personal accomplishment is a unique and important dimension of clergy burnout. This latter finding is important in view of debate about the status of personal accomplishment as a dimension of burnout. It has been argued that personal accomplishment is problematic because: (i) it is positively worded, (ii) it loads on to engagement (the opposite of burnout – see Maslach & Leiter, 1997) rather than burnout itself, (iii) its opposite (inefficacy) shares the same antecedents as burnout (Leiter & Durup (1994); and (iv) personal accomplishment is related to job resources rather than job demands (Maslach *et al.*, 2001). Our findings, in contrast, support the importance of personal accomplishment as a specific dimension of clergy burnout, but future work using a measure of inefficacy may result in even better models (Bresó *et al.*, 2007).

Our results also demonstrate the independence of personal accomplishment from satisfaction in ministry. This distinction has been blurred in previous research (e.g. Francis, Kaldor *et al.*, 2004). However, consistent with other studies (e.g. Best, Stapleton, & Downey, 2005), our research suggests that satisfaction in work (ministry) should be viewed as a consequence, rather than component, of burnout. Hence measures of both personal accomplishment and ministry satisfaction are warranted in burnout studies.

Confounding variables

Certain demographic variables confounded the effects of internality and burnout on ministry satisfaction. In this study, increasing age is generally associated with internality of ministry orientation and reduced levels of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment, but is unrelated to ministry satisfaction. These results suggest that, although the experience and maturity associated with age may protect individuals from some aspects of burnout (Maslach *et al.*, 2001), other personal factors may be more relevant to experiencing job satisfaction, including personality styles associated with positive affect (Thoresen, Kaplan, Varsky, Warren, & De Chermont, 2003). Indeed, balancing negative affect resultant from difficult interpersonal interactions encountered in ministry might well reduce vulnerability to a range of states indicative of low well-being (Krause *et al.*, 1998).

Increasing seniority in ministry was unrelated to internality of ministry orientation, but was associated with increased levels of emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment and slightly lower levels of ministry satisfaction. Hence, seniority appears to be associated with increased personal costs in ministry. Being male is also associated with the increased personal costs of higher emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but also higher personal accomplishment and a greater sense of autonomy in ministry. Thus, male ministers may experience contrary psychological 'forces' with respect to their engagement in ministry. Whatever the case, the MIMIC modelling results point to the importance of differentiating groups of participants in this study, as the overall results do mask some significant intergroup differences.

Ministry orientation and outcomes of burnout and ministry satisfaction

Since reduced satisfaction in work is reported as a consequence of burnout (Best *et al.*, 2005), it is plausible to conclude that burnout would mediate any relationship between internal orientation to ministry and satisfaction in ministry work. Rather than a fully mediated model, however, our findings suggest a partially mediated model (with only indirect effects on ministry satisfaction evident for autonomy, but direct effects evident for spiritual relatedness and competence) is not a significantly worse fit to the data than the full forward model. Thus, our modelling generally suggests that higher levels of internality directly and indirectly render clergy less vulnerable to burnout. However, the dimensions of ministry orientation are differentially related to ministry satisfaction, as discussed more fully below.

An internal orientation to ministry, particularly the internal dimensions of autonomy and spiritual relatedness, apparently protects against burnout. Those higher in autonomy reported lower emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, and high autonomy was associated with high levels of personal accomplishment. Since autonomy represents a global sense of being able to function without external support and

legitimation, those scoring high on autonomy are likely to be able to differentiate self- and ministry-roles, and high levels of clergy differentiation are related to lower levels of clergy burnout (Beebe, 2007). Highly autonomous ministers would also be expected to perceive the presence of inner strength. Ministers who are aware of such inner resources are typically able to continue in ministry without being emotionally depleted, or withdrawing from people. Autonomy was also moderately related to personal accomplishment, consistent with other studies (e.g. Leiter & Durup, 1994).

Conversely, autonomy was not directly associated with ministry satisfaction, but its relationship to ministry satisfaction was mediated by burnout. Although work autonomy is generally directly associated with work satisfaction (e.g. Kovner, Brewer, Wu, Cheng, & Suzuki, 2006; Landeweerd & Boumans, 1994; Pearson & Moomaw, 2005), autonomy in ministry implies more than the freedom to make key work-related decisions. As used in relation to the concept of internal ministry orientation, autonomy depicts a capacity to work without external legitimation – a psychological capacity rather than an objective feature of the workplace. Such autonomy does not directly affect satisfaction in ministry. Rather, autonomous ministers report higher satisfaction in ministry because they experience less burnout than non-autonomous ministers.

Higher levels of satisfaction with spiritual relatedness were moderately associated with lower levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and higher levels of personal accomplishment. These findings suggest that ministers who find their spirituality to be an inner source of authority and coping are able to withstand pressures that might otherwise lead to emotional overload and withdrawal. Moreover, since ministers are called to spiritual 'work' it is not surprising that satisfaction with one's spiritual relatedness would enhance a sense of effectiveness. Spirituality also has a direct effect on ministry satisfaction. Surprisingly, the relationship is negative – with greater frequency of, and satisfaction in, spiritual practice being related to lower ministry satisfaction. It is possible to speculate that spiritual relatedness in this sample was experienced as a job-related demand or requirement rather than (or in addition to) an intrinsically driven activity. If this is the case then this experience might contribute to perceived work-related demands, and reduce satisfaction with ministry.

A sense of competence was also significantly related to personal accomplishment and had a direct effect on ministry satisfaction. These relationships are consistent with the view of Leiter and Durup (1994) that low personal accomplishment reflects a crisis of self-efficacy. Evaluations that one has the skills and training necessary to perform one's role, then, are likely to promote consistent and competent engagement with all aspects of work (Maslach *et al.*, 2001), providing a stable source of satisfaction. On the other hand, high levels of competence were moderately, but nevertheless significantly, related to higher levels of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Other studies of Australian church leaders (Kaldor & Bullpitt, 2001) have, similarly, not found strong associations between competence indicators and burnout. Since ministry tasks are typically complex, diverse and open-ended it is possible that ministers who believe themselves to be competent across an array of ministry tasks would attempt to meet the demands of ministry from personal resources and, hence, experience a degree of work overload, followed by detachment as a means of coping (Lee & Ashforth, 1993). In short, competence may be a 'double-edged sword' for clergy, both increasing the risk of some aspects of burnout, but also increasing the likelihood of a greater sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.

Overall, the three dimensions of orientation to ministry are substantially related to all dimensions of burnout, and either directly (in the case of autonomy) or indirectly

(in cases of spiritual relatedness and competence) to ministry satisfaction. This substance attests to their usefulness in explaining both positive and negative outcomes of ministry.

Limitations and further work

Although the study is based on a large national sample of Australian clergy, it is limited because it uses archival data gathered using alternate measures of burnout. The study is also cross-sectional in design and relies on self-report measures. Future research attempting to replicate our results using the MBI in longitudinal studies that include behavioural data, ratings by others and other indirect measures would be helpful. Nonetheless, our modelling was based on the well-established theory of Maslach and colleagues, and supports the imposition of the Maslach framework on the *post hoc* combination of items used in this study. The success of the modelling (replicating results predicted by Maslach *et al.*'s theory) attests to the robustness of the theory and the relevance and applicability of the items used in this study.

As noted in the Method section, the reliabilities of some scales used in this study were moderate rather than very strong, likely reflecting the brevity of the measures. Future work should endeavour to use longer scales having greater internal consistency.

Some of the items used in this study include double-content information, potentially leading to an inflation of relationships due to overlapping content. Further, it could be argued that the orientation to the demands of ministry (ODM) dimension of competence is conceptually similar to the burnout dimension of personal accomplishment. However, our CFAs support the dimensional separation of these factors in this study, with moderate factor correlations indicating that none of the factors in the study are collinear. Moreover, at the item level, the zero order correlation matrix does not show any excessively high inter-item correlations. Nevertheless, content overlap at the item and factor level is a serious issue in psychometric studies. For this reason, future studies using items in this study should evaluate inter-item and inter-factor correlations as part of the research methodology.

Contribution and applications

This study contributes to an understanding of burnout in an often-neglected occupational group by showing that an internal orientation to ministry decreases the risk of clergy burnout and increases ministry satisfaction. Based on the increasingly complex work situation of clergy in secularized societies, we predicted that ministers who reported a strong internal orientation to the demands of ministry (i.e. an internal source of legitimation and coping) would be better able to withstand ministry pressures than those whose internal orientation was weak or absent. Findings from our structural equation modelling support this prediction.

In order to protect ministers from burnout, interventions to strengthen an internal orientation to ministry are indicated. Internality of ministry orientation could be strengthened in several ways. Church organizations could provide more training in personal spiritual formation, with ongoing spiritual direction (a suggestion supported by Virginia, 1998). Training could also be provided in relational skills and conflict resolution (two aspects clearly implicated in our items), in order to support clergy competence. Autonomy could be promoted via graded support in ministry functioning, affirming interactions with colleagues and mentors, and providing opportunities to

experience positive feedback (the latter of which acts more broadly to buffer burnout, e.g. Angerer, 2003). In addition to strengthening internality of orientation, interventions at both personal and workplace levels to reduce emotional exhaustion and depersonalization would be expected to lead to an increased a sense of personal accomplishment and enhanced ministry satisfaction.

Conclusion

This study adds to knowledge concerning relationships between a psycho-spiritual orientation, burnout, and job satisfaction amongst church leaders. Specifically, this study is the first to investigate and specify relationships between a multidimensional measure of internality, multidimensional burnout, and job satisfaction, in a psychometrically robust and detailed manner. Findings support: (1) the applicability of the three-dimensional model of burnout to clergy, (2) satisfaction in ministry as a separate construct from burnout, and (3) the importance of examining an internal psycho-spiritual orientation with respect to both positive and negative occupational outcomes. The study, thus, supports the claim that dimensions of internality are highly relevant to the healthy psychological functioning of Christian clergy in a secularized society.

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