

Exploring the Intersection of Spirituality and Mental Health among Filipino Christian Pastors

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Abstract

This qualitative study examined the intersection of spirituality and mental health among Filipino Christian pastors, a group whose psychological well-being is influenced by ministry demands, spiritual expectations, and cultural norms related to faith and resilience. The research aimed to investigate how Filipino Christian pastors conceptualize their spirituality and mental health, interpret the relationship between these constructs, and develop a culturally grounded psychospiritual framework from their lived experiences. Employing a phenomenological research design, the study utilized in-depth semi-structured interviews with Filipino Christian pastors actively engaged in ministry. Thematic analysis identified two primary themes for spirituality: spirituality as dimensions of personhood and human existence, and spirituality as a Christ-centered faith manifested in life and service. Mental health was described through two themes: mental health anchored in spirituality and mental health as holistic well-being. Five themes emerged regarding the intersection of spirituality and mental health: spiritual practices as sources of psychological strength; experiencing divine comfort and peace; faith as resilience in the face of life's demands; transformation and renewal through divine alignment; and faith as a framework for strength and meaning. These findings reveal limitations in Western-centric models of pastoral spirituality and emphasize the culturally specific ways Filipino pastors integrate faith and psychological well-being. Based on these insights, the study introduces the PASTOL Psychospiritual Framework, a culturally responsive model intended to inform biblically grounded, psychologically informed pastoral mental health programs, seminars, and interventions that reflect the lived spiritual realities of Filipino Christian pastors.

Keywords: Psychology; spirituality and mental health, psychospiritual integration, pastoral well-being; qualitative phenomenological study, in-depth interviews, thematic analysis; Philippines, Asia