


AUTHOR:

F. D. Orton¹ 
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4724-8057>

B.J. Linde² 
<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3811-3214>

C. S. Jonker³ 
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0011-6949>

AFFILIATION:

Workwell Research Unit
North-West University ¹

Workwell Research Unit
North-West University ²

Workwell Research Unit
North-West University ³

CORRESPONDENCE TO:

ortontoit@gmail.com

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An exploration of psychological contract violation and calling experienced by religious ministers

ABSTRACT

Although individuals who experience a vocational calling tend to be less receptive to psychological distress causing burnout, depression and turnover the prevalence of these cases are on the rise among religious ministers. This hitherto unexplained phenomenon is investigated in this study by exploring psychological contract violation experience with religious ministers in South Africa. A total of 11 participants were interviewed using a narrative approach, forming a qualitative study exploring the content of calling, expectations created by calling in reaction to it and the perceived violation of these expectations in the vocational setting. The result indicates that religious ministers do indeed experience psychological contract violation that leads to a host of negative effects.

Key concepts: Psychological contract; calling; religious ministers

Opsomming:

'n Ondersoek na psigologiese kontrak skending- en roeping ervaring by geestelike leiers.

Alhoewel individue wat 'n roeping ervaar die geneigdheid het om minder vatbaar te wees vir psigologiese stress wat uitbranding, depressie en omkeer-intensie voorafgaan, is daar 'n toenemend hoër voorkoms hiervan by geestelike leiers. Hierdie onverklaarde fenomeen word in hierdie studie ondersoek deur psigologiese kontrak verbrekings ervarings onder geestelike leiers in Suid Afrika te ondersoek. 'n Totaal van 11 deelnemers is by wyse van narratiewe onderhouds ondervra om 'n kwalitatiewe studie te doen wat die inhoud van roeping, verwagtinge vanuit die roeping en beleefde skending van hierdie verwagtinge in die loopbaankonteks te ondersoek. Die resultaat dui daarop dat geestelike leiers wel psigologiese kontrak skending ervaar wat negatiewe gevolge inhou.

Kernbegrippe: Psigologiese kontrak; roeping; dominees

1. Introduction

Work, vocation, profession, our jobs. The concept that encompasses the activity that encompasses mental, physical, emotional and spiritual energy annexing most of our waking time through our adult lives. Adults who do not have work yearn for it. Children dream about it. Students aspire to it. The concept of work has been the topic of discussion and philosophy for as long as man has been able to ponder on his/her purpose and answer the question "what was I born to do" (Leider, 2015). Some people report experiencing their work as more than just a transaction rendering time and receiving money in return, but rather that this pursuit that is work, is a calling (Harzer & Ruch, 2016). In cases where employees report having a calling, results have indicated that these employees attach more meaning to their work, experience a sense of purpose and tend to be more happy in their work environment, despite environmental challenges (Dik, Duffy, & Eldridge, 2009) of the professions that are regarded as having a calling, none are more prominent than those in ministry, presumably due to the historical origin of the term 'calling' (Dik

& Duffy, 2009). Interestingly research into the stress experienced by clergy (Arumugam, 2003), an increase in depression amongst clergy (Faucett, Corwyn, & Poling, 2013) and also a higher prevalence of burnout (Swain, 2014) is on the rise. The predominant reasons for this phenomenon, according to Faucett, Conwyn and Poling (2013) is role conflict, role ambiguity and conflict regarding the intrinsic job requirements and according to Swain (2014) the predominant reason for burnout amongst clergy is compassion fatigue. These results seem to be at odds with the concept of calling, bearing in mind that calling is, according to the most influential scholars on calling (Duffy & Dik) a phenomenon that leads to an increased experience of satisfaction and meaningfulness in life, and leads to better coping with life's hardships (Duffy & Dik, 2013).

This gap can potentially be explained by psychological contract violation experience, wherein the individual (clergy) experience the reciprocal (perceived) promises made by the other party to be unfulfilled (Robinson & Morrison, 2000), leading to feelings of anger and betrayal (Morrison & Robinson, 1997). The study explores the expectations of religious ministers prior to entering into ministry, bearing calling in mind and also studies the possibility of psychological contract violation experience as an explanation for the gap left in literature.

1.1 Psychological contract

When researching the psychological contract, one is essentially studying the "promise of future exchange", that at its most basic level translates to the perception of the mutual obligations that the parties to a relationship have (Robinson & Rousseau, 1994). It is important to note that the principles of the psychological contract and subsequently a possible violation or breach experience are not exclusive to the employment relationship, but that the bulk of research has been centred around the employment relationship.

In discussing psychological contracts two distinct terms are of importance to the study, namely breach and violation. Psychological contract breach experience can be described as a cognitive evaluation by one individual in the relationship that the other failed to deliver on their promise (Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007), whilst psychological contract violation refers to an affective awareness (feeling or experience) that the other party to the relationship does not uphold their obligation to the relationship (Erkhutlu & Chafra, 2013). Whilst psychological contract breach refers to cognitive, measurable and quantifiable aspects, psychological contract violation refers to emotive, affective and intangible aspects. Both psychological contract breach and psychological contract violation is born from subjective interpretation and personal experience of one party to the relationship regarding the failure of the other to produce a promised result.

Interestingly psychological contract breach leads to counterproductive work and even deviant workplace behaviour (Astrove, Yang, Kraimer, & Wayne, 2015), while psychological contract violation leads to emotions of feeling wronged, and even bullied, leading to higher turnover intention (Salin & Notelaers, 2017). Based on the above then the indication is that individuals who experience perceived psychological contract breach will tend to stay in organisations, despite cognitions of a breach in reciprocity, taking revenge on the organisation, whilst those who experience perceived psychological contract violations will have the intention to flee the organisation, because of an emotive perception of broken reciprocity.

In the case of religious ministers this is of particular interest. One aspect that sets them apart from other careers that report having a calling is that, the religious minister is limited in terms of possible employers, as religious ministers exclusively work for the organisation that is the Church and the option of leaving this environment is per implication very limited, bearing career prospects in mind.

In terms of the psychological contract, two specific questions need to be answered namely (1) what the individual's perception is of the relationship prior to entering into it and (2)

who the other party to the relationship is. In the case of religious ministers, the initial perception of what the future exchange will entail is experienced in the form of a calling, and reinforced or diminished in the course of theological training, whilst the other party to the (employment) relationship is more difficult to define.

1.2 Calling

In describing calling, one is not only describing a feeling or experience of what to do with one's life, but in effect making a distinction between having a job or work and having a vocation as both terms were born from the Protestant reform movement championed by Martin Luther and later John Calvin in the 16th century (Hardy, 1990). The "zeitgeist" of the time had an ambiguous view of "worldly pursuits" (such as work in exchange for money) and "spiritual pursuits" essentially arguing that there should be a distinction between God's work and doing normal work. Calvin ascertained that this view devaluates "earthly occupations" and argued that all work has spiritual significance, a sentiment that was shared by Abraham Kuyper who argued that all off creation belongs to God, including the efforts of man in his work (Kuyper, 1998). Bearing this in mind the argument is simply that all careers and all individuals can experience a calling to do a specific task, and that calling is thus not exclusive to religious ministers and clergy.

Calling consists of five distinct subsets namely passion, identity, urgency, engulfed consciousness, sense of meaning and self-esteem (Phillips, 2009). Calling can be explained as being summoned, beyond the self to align the individual's life with a specific goal and deriving a sense of purpose and meaning that creates new goals and values that causes motivation (Dik & Duffy, 2009).

In the case of religious ministers calling is not only a feeling, but also a prerequisite to enter into ministry. Calvin (1559) explained that a prerequisite for entering into ministry would be that the individual experiences a calling from God (internal calling), be trained in the word of God (reaction to calling), and receive a calling from the church in the form of a congregation (external calling). This is confirmed by the bulk of church denominations in South Africa by means of their individual church orders.

Bearing the psychological contract in mind, one can thus invariably see that calling not only sets the direction that the one party to the psychological contract takes, but also inclines the individual to form an expectation of what the living of the calling, or vocation would entail. Their training, which varies between church denominations, are largely influenced by the work of John Calvin (1509-1564), and his theoretical and philosophical theology is widely seen in Theological and Bible schools. In explaining the actual work of the religious ministers, Calvin referred to the work as being *Verbi Divini Minister* or *Verbi Dei Minister* (Calvin, 1559), that can be translated as being a "preacher of the Godly word".

Preaching the Godly word and fulfilling the vocational obligation does not take place in isolation, as per definition the word needs to be preached to someone, from a position of authority, that must be granted by an organisation, that is in this case the Church as conferrer of Godly authority to the religious minister in its capacity as embodiment of Christ on earth (Lloyd-Jones, 1958). It is thus important to also understand the Church environment, as the potential other party to the psychological contract.

1.3 The church

In the question of what the work of religious ministry, or *Verbi Divini Minister* entails, the separate church orders and individual "calling letters" sent to ministers give a clearer explanation as to what the position entails. It is, however, evident that the different denominations have different interpretations as to what religious ministers are to do in the work context.

It seems to be a very difficult feat to clarify how many Christian denominations exist in the world today, as Christianity stemmed from the Jewish Christian movement, after the death of Jesus, under the leadership of Simon Peter and James the Just. It later developed into so-called Pauline Christianity, based on the 13 epistles of Paul and even later Gnostic Christianity (Borg & Crossan, 2009). These early forms of Christian denominations later gave birth to the Catholic doctrine of Primacy, rendering the Catholic Church the primary Christian church (Ratzinger, 2000). Currently, the World Council of Churches includes 348 member churches (denominations), world wide, representing more than half a billion Christians (World Council of Churches, 2017). The South African Council of Churches includes 36 churches and Christian organisations (South African Council of Churches, 2015), with many other, independent church denominations not being accounted for. We thus need to work from the presumptions that ministry structures are dependent on denominational structure, although the church is seen to be the embodiment of Christ on earth, constantly changing and adapting to the world that it operates in (Ratzinger, 2000).

2. Research purpose and objectives

Bearing in mind the fact that individuals who experience a vocational calling are less likely to experience burnout, depression and general negative emotions according to literature and the staggering evidence that proves that the prevalence of these exact negative emotions and devastating effects are on the rise with religious ministers, who are deemed to have a calling a gap was identified in current research.

This research explores the possibility of psychological contract violation experience explaining this gap. This research is also the first of its kind identified, as only two other studies have been done where calling and psychological contract violation have been studied simultaneously, with no studies regarding psychological contract violation in ministry have been done.

Religious ministers were chosen as a population as this grouping can be deemed to have a vocational calling and that vocational calling is a prerequisite for entering into the ministry. It thus stands to reason that this population provides the ideal study group for this phenomenon. This sample furthermore proves to be representative of the South African population with 79.8% of South African citizens identifying with the Christian faith, and the overwhelming group of this population in 2001 reporting that they identified most closely with Protestant Christianity (these figures are based on the 2001 census, as the 2011 census did not include questions on religion) (Statistics South Africa, 2001).

The study focussed on asking religious ministers questions about their individual calling, how this transpired and also questions regarding their experiences in ministry.

3. Research design

3.1 Research approach

Because the study focusses on exploring a specific phenomenon from the perspective of the participants' point of view, within the environment of the church a qualitative research design was chosen, specifically using a narrative approach. The narrative approach was chosen to allow participants free range to discuss their perceived experiences. This allowed the researcher to identify themes and bracket these themes within the confines of existing literature.

3.2 Research method

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were utilised with a study sample chosen based on convenience sampling. The researcher did, however, stratify the sample to gain participants that are representative based on race, language, denomination, sex and tenure.

3.3 Research setting

All participants were interviewed in their homes to maximise comfort for the participant, but also create a secure environment due to the public nature of their work.

3.4 Data recording

Data was recorded using a voice recorder (for which written consent was obtained) and field notes made by the researcher.

These recordings were independently transcribed to ensure data integrity.

3.5 Data analysis

Thematic analysis of the transcriptions was done by grouping data into categories across all participants. This analysis was done using MS Excel and further grouped to form hermeneutic units.

3.6 Research population

Because of the diverse nature of the organisation that is the church a stratified sample was purposefully selected to obtain a wide range of information from religious ministers. Table 1 indicates the discriminant factors of the research participants. Of the 11 participants, nine were white males, one a black male and one a white female. All participants grew up in the church, reported experiencing a calling prior to entering into ministry and have formal qualifications that enable them to be religious ministers. The ages of the participants range from 29 years old to 66 years old and include ministers who have formally left the ministry (emeritus) to a minister that has a tenure of three years. Although the bulk of the participants are based in the North West Province, respondent experience also included all other South African provinces and Namibia.

Table 1
Discriminant Factors of Research participants

	Race	Rex	Age	Tenure - in years	#Congregations	Current congregation province
Respondent 1	White	Male	32	7	2	Eastern Cape
Respondent 2	White	Male	58	41	2	North West Province
Respondent 3	White	Male	50	22	3	North West Province
Respondent 4	White	Male	31	3	2	North West Province
Respondent 5	White	Male	64	35	5	North West Province
Respondent 6	White	Male	41	11	2	North West Province
Respondent 7	White	Male	66	41	5	Emeritus
Respondent 8	White	Male	32	7	3	Western Cape
Respondent 9	White	Male	49	23	3	North West Province
Respondent 10	White	Female	29	6	1	North West Province
Respondent 11	Black	Male	34	9	2	North West Province

4. Findings

To ease readability, the findings are grouped into different sub-headings explaining the results per phenomenon and then integrated to describe the results:

4.1 Calling

All respondents indicated that they actually experienced a calling prior to entering into the ministry, with all but one respondent admitting that they first entertained other avenues of work, study or vocation prior to actually embarking on studies to qualify them as religious ministers. The avenues that they engaged in are so far apart (engineering, accounting, fighter pilot, farmer, soldier, post office clerk, psychologist) that no link can be found to support either calling, professional status or even similarity in work.

The actual calling experience, however, can be clearly recalled by all with the female respondent indicating that she was reminded that she played at being a minister as a child, some reporting that they first experienced a calling during high school, and others reporting only experiencing a calling later in life. Figure 1 illustrates the experienced calling as explained by the respondents.

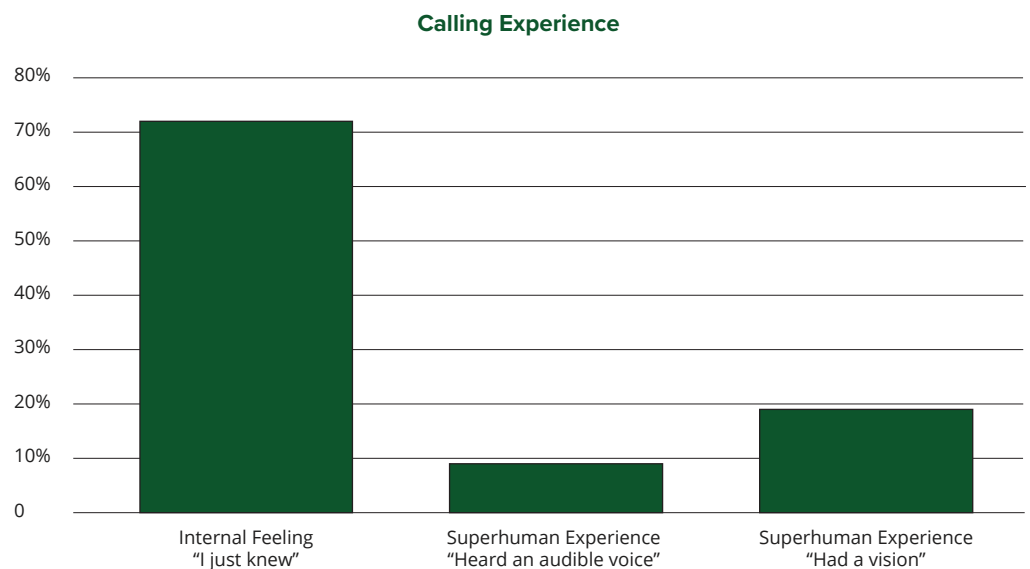


Figure 1. Calling experience as reported by research participants.

The bulk of the respondents indicated that they had a "feeling" that they should become religious ministers, whilst one heard an audible voice and two reporting seeing a vision of themselves on a pulpit and experiencing "emptiness" in the world, a void that would be filled by their calling. The only notable difference in the calling experience is that the ministers from the less structured denominations tended towards a superhuman experience with the actual calling experience. All three respondents who experienced the superhuman experience have, however, started their careers in highly structured organisations, with two later on in their careers forming independent church denominations. The black respondent reporting studying theology, because he had no other option, as he could not enrol to study accounting as he envisioned and the female respondent did not know that full-time ministry was an option for a woman, despite her father being in full-time ministry. Six of the respondents explained that they believed that their talents and/or perceived spiritual gifts and what they experienced their calling to be coincided, whilst seven of the respondents experienced unnatural "blessing" after reacting to their calling by means of funding of studies, financial support in their personal capacity and even random people confirming their calling, without being prompted to do so.

In terms of what the respondents felt that they were called to do, all the respondents had a clear indication of what they perceived that they were primarily called for. The results are contained in figure 2 and illustrate that most of the respondents experienced a primary calling towards preaching, whilst the second largest group are inclined towards pastoral care and the lowest grouping towards evangelism.



Figure 2. Perceived Vocational Calling.

All the participants grew up in the church and thus had certain expectations of the organisation prior to entering into ministry, three of the respondent’s fathers were religious ministers, and all three of them explained that they hesitated to answer the calling, due to seeing the working environment of their fathers. One respondent proclaimed that he had no expectation of what ministry would entail, whilst only two (both white males) explained that they experienced that they are currently living out their calling in their daily lives.

4.2 Work environment

In exploring whether religious ministers experience a violation experience the actual work content of the ministers was examined, and results are shown in figure 3. There does seem to be a discrepancy in the perceived employer, wherein two respondents reported that they worked for God, and ten respondents believing that they work for the church council of the congregation where they serve. The respondent that was on the fence on whether he works for the church council or God is the retired minister, who is under the impression that his work efforts are measured by God, but that the financial incentive (tractament) for his work efforts is paid by the church council and that they thus have employer rights from a transactional perspective. Only one respondent believed the employment relationship to be a contractual one, whilst two respondents explained the normative contract as a covenantal relationship where the employment relationship is formed by means of a contract or promise to God.

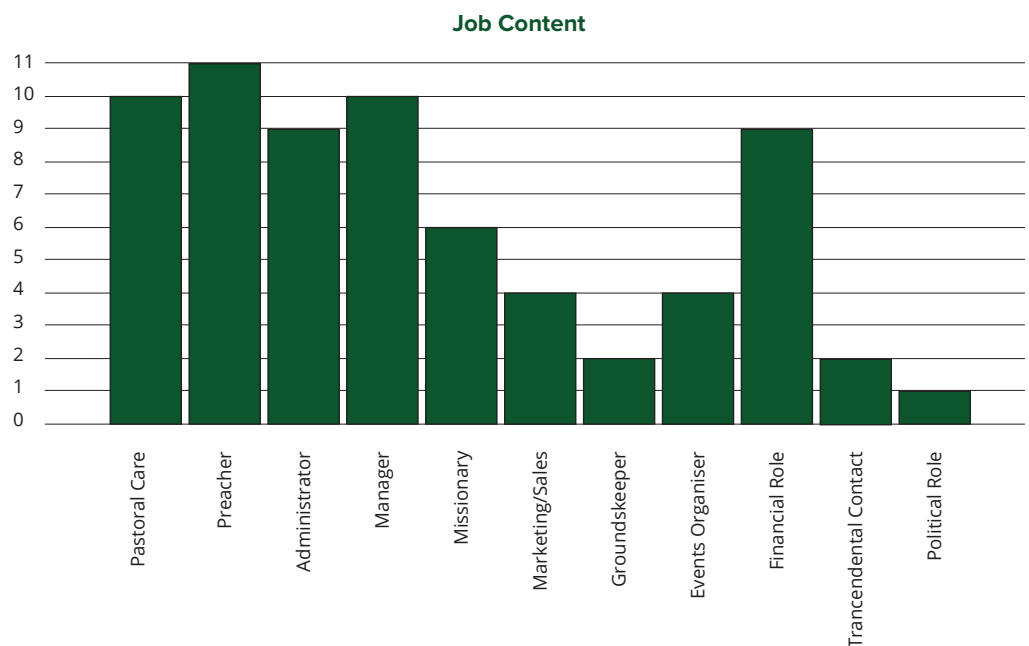


Figure 3. Job content of clergy.

The results in figure 3 give a graphical representation of the perceived activities that the respondents have as part of their employment relationship. According to these results the bulk of a religious ministers work goes into Preaching, Pastoral care, Administration, Management and Financial planning and management (which includes risk assessments and investment decisions). Other tasks that came to the fore, to a lesser degree, is missionary work, marketing, groundskeeper and events organiser. The black minister's explanation of his role illustrated that although he primarily works at the church, there is a larger societal impact on him from a community that places a very high value on mysticism and tradition in that he needs to be present in community work that exceeds that of his formal work. It is customary, according to the respondent, for the minister to be present at Lobola negotiations, political gatherings and even incidences of family conflicts and crime to address conflict and make decisions on the correct path for future action to be taken by those involved. 45% reported that they required additional training to do what is required of them in the workplace, with this training ranging from additional training in counselling, business training and even one respondent who completed an MBA.

All respondents commented on this phenomenon from a different perspective explaining that they have a public persona and a personal persona and that people in general (parishioners and non-parishioners) treat them differently and explain different expectations as soon as they learn of the individual ministers occupation. This leads to definite violation experiences in several areas of both their professional and personal lives to the extent where 45% of the participants stated outright that they are not living their calling - in other words not doing what they were called to do, and are thus experiencing a violation in terms of the psychological contract.

4.3 Psychological contract violation experience

According to the responses of the respondents the areas in which religious ministers experience psychological contract violation can be divided into three distinct areas namely (1) violation associated with job role, (2) violation associated with the organisation and (3) violation associated with personal circumstances. Of the three areas, violation associated with perceived limitation in terms of personal circumstances received the most varied attention by the respondents, results of which are contained in figure 4:



Figure 4. Violation experience associated with personal circumstances.

Bearing in mind the intensity and personal nature of calling it is to be expected that violation experiences of a personal nature would be exhibited in a discussion regarding violation experience. It has become clear in the discussions that the extent of violation experiences touched respondents on a personal and psychological level with almost half explaining that they are in need of psychological assistance, 36% reporting that they have experienced depressive symptoms recently and 27% that they experienced some form of burnout in the preceding 24 months. In ascertaining what the reason for these statistics might be the research revealed that 73% of respondents experienced unfair treatment in terms of attribution of job success in that job success is attributed to God's grace, favour and the like, whilst diminishing parishioner numbers, budget shortfalls and various other setbacks that are attributed to the religious minister. In addition to that only 45% could honestly say that they were in part living out their calling to some extent. 55% explained that they had experienced violation due to remuneration elements including not getting paid, getting paid too little, not getting enough annual leave or remuneration and benefits not being dealt with, with confidentiality.

On an even more personal level the female minister explained that the fact that she is a religious minister limits her romantic prospects, with other ministers (64%) agreeing that there is an incongruence between their personal and public personae, and that they, in other words cannot be themselves in their work environment. Although not prompted to this in questioning, 55% of the respondents indicated a turnover intention – either to leave ministry in totality and pursue other career avenues, or to find another congregation to work at.

Related to the violation experiences for personal reasons, several violated expectations came about as a result of the job role of the ministers, and these results are contained in figure 5:

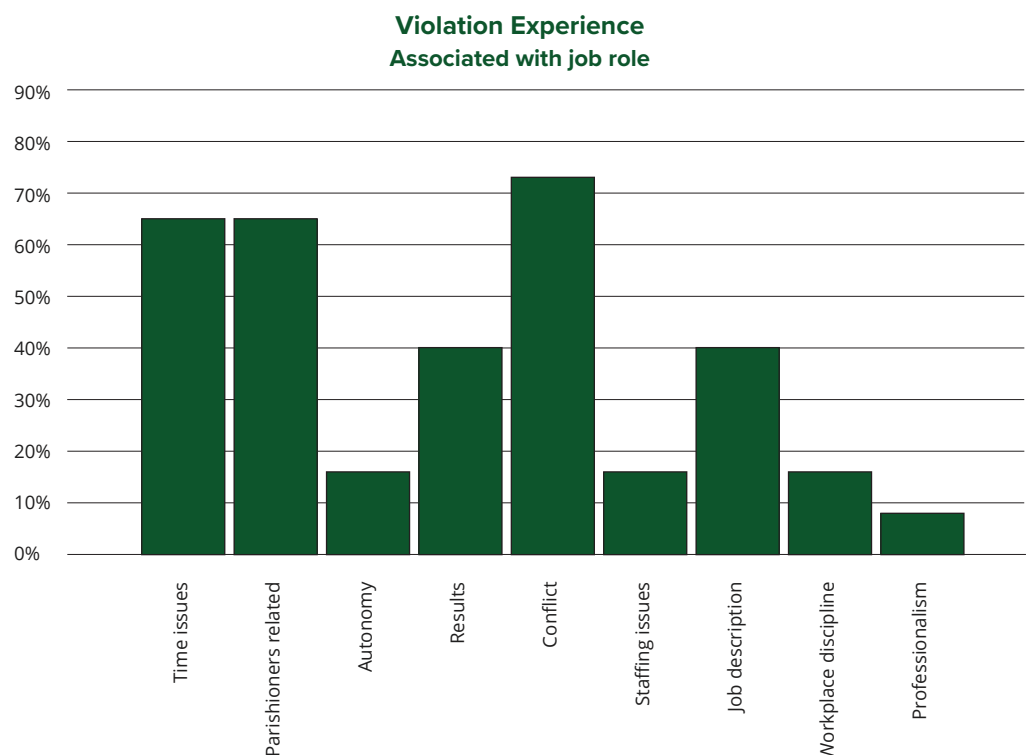


Figure 5. Violation experience associated with job role.

As with the bulk of studies relating to job dissatisfaction, the established narrative of too little staff, too much work and too little money were again reiterated in this discussion. A point of further interest, however, was that one respondent explained that being a religious minister is not regarded as a professional career (although a minimum study of

four years is required), and that the minister can thus not apply for professional benefits through companies that provide specialised life insurance and the like. 82% of respondents reported that the work environment is one with high conflict that they did not expect to be so. Conflict was both of a personal nature, as well as the minister being required to resolve conflict. The nature of this conflict ranges from interpersonal conflict, organisational conflict, co-worker conflict and conflict between parishioners. Furthermore 73% of respondents reported that their violation experience was parishioner related with parishioners coming from heterogeneous groups, with undisclosed expectations of the minister and voicing their dissatisfaction with the minister in a public forum, this is also related to the minister not experiencing autonomy in the workplace, and almost half reporting that they cannot see results of their efforts.

The last area where violation was experienced was the issue of experiences associated with the organisation that is the church. Results are reflected in figure 6:

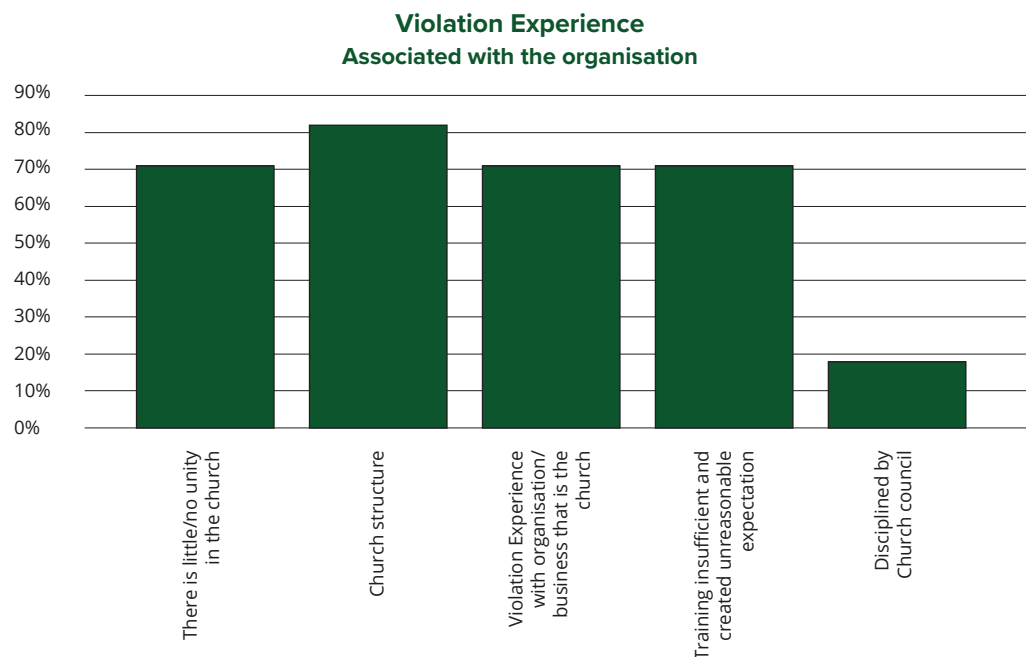


Figure 6. Violation experience associated with the organisation

Two respondents acknowledged being disciplined by the church council, and even reported that they were threatened with dismissal as a result of the discipline. This in itself poses an interesting violation experience as both these respondents did not believe that they stood in a contractual relationship with the church formalising an employer/employee relationship, thus begging the question if the church council does have the authority to discipline a religious minister. In terms of the organisation that the ministers stand in a relationship with an overwhelming number reported that the church lacks unity, that church structures are stifling and in effect creating an environment that nurtures violation experiences. One minister reported that the financial turnover of the separate congregations warrants the organisation the status of being a business, and that it is to be run as a business, thus creating an environment where management, administration and finance become more important. Interestingly these areas of job role are also the areas that create dissatisfaction with the psychological contract between the parties. It was reported that even though the church is run as a business, parishioners still view it as a club in terms of their behaviour, involvement and expectations.

4.4 Integration of information

Based on research on calling it is expected that people who experience a calling should experience lower to no levels of burnout and depression. The results indicated that all of the respondents experienced a calling, yet they also experienced burnout and depression.

The results further indicated that there are various areas where there was a perceived incongruence in expectations that can be called a violation experience. It still begs the question whether this unhappiness can be classified as a psychological contract violation experience. Morrison and Robinson (1997) found that psychological contract violation experience is associated with emotions of anger and betrayal. All the respondents reported being angry, 82% that they felt betrayed and 73% that they are frustrated in their jobs.

It can thus justly be deduced that religious ministers do experience psychological contract violation, despite and in spite of their calling in that they perceived to be called to do something different from what they are actually doing, that the environment in which they work does not meet their expectations and that this has an impact on their personal lives.

5. Practical implications

As of late high rates of clergy turnover have been seen in South Africa (Bickerton, Miner, Dowson, & Griffith, 2015), with the number of religious ministers exiting the ministry and moving between congregations increasing over denominational lines (Joynt & Dreyer, 2013) with specifically Protestant churches experiencing a displacement challenge. The reasons offered for this phenomenon have up to now been vague and symptomatic, rather than offering a systemic and root cause answer to the reason for clergy exit.

This study allows such a reason and advances various practical implications into the relational perception of religious ministers:

- Training content of religious ministers can be evaluated from a psychological contract and expectation creating perspectives.
- Employment practices in terms of contractual agreements, job descriptions and the like can be clarified.
- Individual calling and subsequent expectations can be tested against a practical view of the vocation that is religious ministry.

Failure to address the perceived psychological contract violation experience can potentially have a severe impact on the organisation, individual ministers and parishioners in that:

- The current trend of ministers exiting the ministry can potentially continue
- The organisation can open itself up to legislative pressure in terms of the health and safety act, bearing in mind the knowledge that the current format of ministry creates psychological distress.
- Parishioners might choose to not associate with the church due to their individual expectations not being met.

6. Limitations and recommendations

This study exclusively focussed on religious ministers from the Protestant Church movement in South Africa – as such the study can extend to include an international population as well as a sample outside ministry. A confirmatory study can be done to test the influence of calling on psychological contract violation. This study did not quantify calling to specify what ministers are called for, it is recommended that a scientifically valid and reliable psychometric instrument be developed to accurately measure and describe calling, to be administered prior to entering into theological training.

7. Conclusion

Psychological contract violation experience accurately fills the gap in literature pertaining to emotional and psychological coping mechanisms that are associated with calling. The

current state of religious ministers in their existing work environment is not conducive to a harmonious working environment, promoting spiritual well-being and individual growth. Further studies should be done to build on this work and create clarity in terms of a scientific base to promote a lived calling experience and eliminate psychological contract violation experience, or at the very least create a platform to address this.

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Author contribution

This paper forms part of the first author's master's degree (M.Com. IO Psychology) research at the North West University. This author contributed to the paper by identifying the research problem, applicable research method and design, applying the research and reporting the results in conjunction with his supervisors. Du Toit also participated in the process of identifying an applicable academic journal and preparing a paper to submit to, as first author.

In contributing as co-author of this paper, Bennie Linde acted as the supervisor of the first author, mr FD Orton, where he formed part of the development of the research project and the application thereof, as well as guiding the first author during the research project. He also contributed in the planning and development of all aspects of the paper with the first author, including the identification of an appropriate academic journal and the submission of the paper. Finally, Bennie contributed in editing the paper, before it was submitted.

As co-author, Cara Jonker assisted in the writing and formulation of research concepts and problem formulation. She assisted with the formulation of arguments and literature framework. Other inputs, whether verbally or in writing, was given in terms of qualitative research methodology and approach. Other inputs were given insofar ethical guidelines. Supervision and participation in qualitative theme extraction from data. Finally Cara had a role in terms of overall supervision in terms of the discussion of research themes.