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**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**

**College of Education and Behavioral Studies**

**School of Psychology**

**Challenges and Opportunities of Pastoral Counseling: The Case of Selected  
Evangelical Churches in Addis Ababa.**

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This thesis is submitted to the School of Psychology in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for MA degree in counseling Psychology

Advisor, Dr. Sewalem Tsega

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## **Abstract**

*This study's primary objective was to investigate the challenges and opportunities facing counseling in Addis Ababa's evangelical churches. The research design used in the study was qualitative. conducted semi-structured in depth interviews with ten pastors, including male and female representatives from five evangelical congregations, who were chosen purposfully. With regard to their positions, pastoral counselors' experiences, perceptions, and points of view were to be thoroughly documented using this methodology. The investigation's findings from these interviews included obstacles including the stigma attached to mental health problems, lack of professional training in counseling and the complex interplay between spiritual and psychological and also opportunities including demand for counseling, collaboration with mental health professionals and holistic approach.*

*Keywords: Pastoral Counseling, Evangelical Churches, Challenges, Opportunities, Mental Health, Psychology, Addis Ababa, Theology, Stigma, Behavioral Science, Training Needs*

# **Chapter One: Introduction**

## **1.1 Background**

Counseling is a broad term that encompasses various approaches aimed at helping individuals overcome challenges, improve their mental well-being, and achieve personal growth. According to APA counseling is defined as professional assistance provided to individuals for coping with a range of personal problems, including emotional, behavioral, vocational, marital, educational, rehabilitation, and life-stage issues such as retirement. The counselor employs various techniques, including active listening, guidance, advice, discussion, clarification, and the use of tests (APA, 2018).

Pastoral counseling is one specific form of counseling that integrates insights from theology and the behavioral sciences. It combines religious or theological training with advanced training in the behavioral sciences, such as psychology, to provide support and guidance within a spiritual context. Through the integration of faith-based principles and psychological techniques, pastoral counseling addresses the unique needs of individuals seeking assistance while considering the important role of spirituality in their lives (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2024).

Pastoral counseling holds significant importance within the evangelical protestant faith community as it integrates psychological principles, spiritual insights, and theological perspectives to address the holistic needs of individuals (Slocum & Detrich, 2016). It reflects the belief system of the evangelical Protestant church, which emphasizes the integration of faith into all aspects of life, including counseling and mental health support (Bartoli, 2007; Latini, 2009).

Historically, pastoral counseling can be traced back to the early Christian church, where pastors served as spiritual guides and counselors. Over time, it evolved to incorporate psychological principles and practices, adapting to the changing needs and challenges within religious traditions (Johnson & Johnson, 2014). The integration of psychology and religion in the early 20th century has played a crucial role in shaping pastoral counseling, allowing for the incorporation of psychological insights into pastoral care (McMinn & Campbell, 2007). Furthermore, the changing dynamics of pastoral authority and identity, alongside the professionalization of counseling, have influenced the role of pastors as counselors within religious communities (Pargament, 2007).

In the current context, pastoral counseling in the evangelical Protestant church faces both challenges and opportunities. Challenges include the need for intentional reflection on formation in pastoral counseling, balancing contextual realities with broader discourse, limited integration of spiritual formation, and navigating the integration of theological beliefs with psychological theories. However, opportunities have been identified in the literature, such as enhancing collaboration between mental health professionals and pastoral counselors, providing specialized training and resources for pastoral counselors, supporting individuals seeking counseling within religious communities, and developing culturally sensitive and contextually appropriate counseling approaches (Foskett & Lynch, 2001; Woodruff, 2002).

This research explores the challenges and opportunities of pastoral counseling in the selected Addis Ababa evangelical churches. Through this explorative process, it seeks to contribute to developing effective pastoral counseling practices that address the holistic needs of individuals within the faith community.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

With its unique combination of scripture, prayer, and psychological principles, pastoral counseling in the framework of the Evangelical church provides holistic care (Hunt, 2015; Worthington & Corey, 2013). Due to the natural position that pastors play in their communities, this type of counseling offers a great deal of potential for building rapport and trust. According to Johnson (2019), pastoral care is perceived as a reliable source, which makes it easier to start counseling and enables people to talk freely about personal matters and get adequate help. Pastoral counseling is a challenging practice, though, especially in developing nations like Ethiopia where obstacles related to resources, culture, and infrastructures constrain the scope of its application.

Pastoral counseling in Ethiopia aims to be comprehensive, covering the spiritual as well as emotional aspects of a person's difficulties. This all-encompassing strategy is essential in an environment where mental health resources are limited and traditional beliefs frequently influence how people perceive mental health (Sherrill, 2018). Even though Pastors have a lot to offer when it comes to dealing with challenging problems with mental wellness, often they lack counseling skills. To guarantee comprehensive care, this gap requires collaboration with trained mental health professionals (Hunt, 2015). Furthermore, pastors face serious ethical and practical difficulties in their dual duty as they attempt to reconcile their pastoral responsibilities with the need for counseling confidentiality (Hays, 2009).

Moreover, the resource limitations within many churches, including the lack of full-time staff and funding for dedicated counseling programs, further exacerbate these challenges. These limitations affect the accessibility and sustainability of pastoral counseling services, making it difficult for churches to offer consistent and effective support (Sherrill, 2018). The diverse theological views within the church can also create tension when counseling on sensitive issues, requiring pastoral counselors to navigate these differences sensitively and respectfully (Hays, 2009).

Ethiopian pastoral counseling is likewise impacted by both contemporary professional methods and customary methods. Ethiopian communities have always relied heavily on traditional counseling systems. Formal counseling services, on the other hand, have just recently started to take shape and are mostly provided in schools, churches, hospitals, rehabilitation facilities, youth centers for HIV/AIDS, and orphanages. These programs are still in their infancy and face several obstacles, such as the stigma attached to getting help and the lack of information about mental health concerns (Mukima, 2019).

The motivation for this study stems from both a review of existing literature and personal observations. Pastoral counseling is intended to be a holistic approach to addressing individuals' spiritual, emotional, and mental needs. However, a review of the literature indicates that its practice in Ethiopia remains underdeveloped and lacks comprehensive frameworks, despite its potential to play a critical role in mental health and spiritual care. This gap highlights the importance of a systematic investigation to understand current practices, challenges, and opportunities for improvement.

In addition to this academic rationale, my personal experiences as a member of the Ethiopian church community have reinforced the need for this research. I have

witnessed firsthand both the benefits pastoral counseling can offer and the limitations it faces. These observations have fueled my desire to contribute to strengthening this field.

The purpose of this study is to examine the current state of pastoral counseling practices in selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It aims to identify challenges that need to be addressed, highlight areas where progress is already being made, and provide actionable recommendations for improvement. By bridging gaps in knowledge and offering insights into better practices and policies, this research seeks to enhance the role of pastoral counseling in promoting mental and spiritual well-being within the Ethiopian context.

### **1.3 Objective**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To explore the challenges and opportunities in the practice of pastoral counseling in selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa.

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To assess the current practices of pastoral counseling in selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa.
2. To identify the key challenges faced by pastoral counselors in delivering effective counseling services.
3. To explore opportunities for enhancing pastoral counseling through improved training, resources, and collaboration with mental health services.

#### **1.4 The significance of the Study**

The study is particularly relevant and important for pastoral counseling, the church community, and the welfare of those who seek counseling in Addis Ababa, Ethiopian Evangelical Churches and other denominations. The research's conclusions may have the following important implications;

##### **Enhancing Pastoral Counseling Practices:**

By examining current practices in pastoral counseling within selected evangelical churches, this study aims to identify practical methods for integrating psychological concepts, spiritual insights, and theological perspectives. The findings can suggest evidence-based approaches to improve counseling techniques, fostering a better response to the holistic needs of church members.

##### **Identifying and Addressing Challenges:**

The research will explore the specific challenges pastoral counselors face, such as resource limitations, training gaps, and ethical dilemmas. Based on these findings, practical recommendations can be made to address these issues, such as suggestions for targeted training, improved resource allocation, or collaboration opportunities with mental health professionals.

##### **Increasing Mental Health Awareness:**

By highlighting the intersection of mental health and pastoral counseling, the study can contribute to reducing stigma around mental health within the church community. This can encourage individuals to seek help, fostering a supportive environment for addressing mental health challenges.

Supporting Spiritual Growth:

The study can also shed light on how pastoral counseling helps individuals navigate faith-related challenges and provides meaningful spiritual guidance. This can lead to enhanced spiritual well-being and stronger faith connections among church members.

The findings from this research are expected to be both practical and impactful, offering actionable insights to improve pastoral counseling services, address challenges, promote mental health awareness, and support the spiritual and emotional well-being of church members.

### **1.5 Delimitation of the Study**

The study is delimited to exploring the challenges and opportunities of pastoral counseling within selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The focus was on the perspectives and experiences of pastoral counselors, including pastors and other church leaders involved in providing counseling services. The study did not include perspectives from church members or individuals who have received pastoral counseling. Additionally, the study is limited to the context of evangelical Protestant churches and did not examine pastoral counseling practices in other Christian denominations or religious traditions. This delimitation allowed the researcher to conduct an in-depth exploration of the unique dynamics and issues faced by pastoral counselors within the specific evangelical church context in the selected study sites.

### **1.6 Limitations of the Study**

The main limitation of this study is that it focuses only on a sample of evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The findings may not be fully generalizable to other Christian denominations or to evangelical churches in different geographical contexts. Additionally, the study relies on self-reported data from pastoral counselors, which could be influenced by their personal perspectives and experiences. Further research involving a broader range of churches, denominations, and data sources could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing pastoral counseling across diverse religious settings.

### **1.7 Definition of terms**

1. Pastoral Counseling: A form of counseling that integrates insights from theology and the behavioral sciences. It combines religious or theological training with advanced training in the behavioral sciences, such as psychology, to provide support and guidance within a spiritual context. Pastoral counseling addresses the unique needs of individuals seeking assistance while considering the important role of spirituality in their lives.
2. Evangelical Christianity or evangelical Protestantism: is a worldwide interdenominational movement within Protestant Christianity that emphasizes the centrality of sharing the "good news" of Christianity, being "born again" in which an individual experiences personal conversion, as authoritatively guided by the Bible, God's revelation to humanity. The word evangelical comes from the Greek word for "good news" (euangelion).
3. Denominations: a recognized autonomous branch of the Christian Church.

4. Congregants: Members of a religious congregation or community who regularly attend religious services and participate in religious activities within their faith tradition.

## **Chapter Two: Literature Review**

### **2.1 Definition and Conceptualization of Pastoral Counseling**

Pastoral counseling within the context of evangelical churches can be defined as a specialized form of counseling provided by pastors or trained individuals within the church community to address the spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs of individuals, families, or groups. It involves integrating spiritual principles, values, and beliefs with psychological insights to offer holistic care and support (Kebede, 2017). Pastoral counseling in evangelical churches is distinct from secular counseling as it emphasizes the importance of faith, spirituality, and religious teachings in the counseling process, aiming to help individuals navigate life challenges from a religious perspective (Kebede, 2017).

One of the unique characteristics of pastoral counseling in evangelical churches is the dual role of the counselor as a spiritual leader and a mental health provider. Pastoral counselors are expected to exhibit qualities such as empathy, self-awareness, integrity, and a genuine interest in people, in addition to having a clear calling from God for their pastoral counseling ministry. They are viewed as representatives of the religious community, offering a relationship that is grounded in faith and theological understanding. Pastoral counselors in evangelical churches often provide care and

support to individuals within the church community and beyond, addressing a wide range of issues from a spiritual and psychological perspective (Kebede, 2017).

By fusing psychological knowledge with faith-based concepts, pastoral counseling in evangelical churches aims to support people's personal development, emotional healing, and spiritual progress. By giving people a secure and encouraging space to discuss their worries within the parameters of their Christian beliefs and values, it seeks to assist people in overcoming obstacles in life, relationship problems, bereavement, and other hardships (Kebede, 2017). In the end, pastoral counseling aims to advance people's general well-being and wholeness by combining spiritual direction with mental health assistance.

The researcher acknowledges the benefits of a holistic approach to pastoral counseling, which integrates spiritual and psychological elements. While the emphasis on faith and spirituality in evangelical churches may be valuable, conflicts between spiritual and psychological approaches may occur, and the lack of formal training in mental health or psychology raises questions about the expertise of pastoral counselors. The researcher planned to examine the implications of this conceptualization to develop inclusive practices that meet the diverse needs of the evangelical community.

## **2.2 Historical Development of Pastoral Counseling in Evangelical Churches**

Pastoral counseling within evangelical traditions has undergone significant evolution over time, influenced by key figures, movements, and events that have shaped its practice. Initially rooted in providing spiritual guidance and support, pastoral counseling has expanded to incorporate psychological insights and holistic care within

evangelical churches. This evolution reflects shifts in emphasis and methodology as the field has developed.

2.2.1 Early Christian Church (1st–4th century) - Clergy provides pastoral care to assist people both spiritually and emotionally in the early Christian church (Oladipupo, 2016).

- Pastoral care was stressed by early Christian leaders like Augustine of Hippo and Gregory the Great (Oladipupo, 2016).

2.2.2 Protestant Reformation (16th century): This movement placed a strong focus on the idea that all believers are priests and that they can approach God directly via faith. As a result, pastoral care became more important in Protestant traditions. Pastors were viewed as spiritual mentors who helped those in need by offering guidance and support; this was a change toward a pastoral care model that was more direct and intimate. Oladipupo (2016).

- According to Oladipupo (2016), Martin Luther and John Calvin highlighted the importance of pastors in offering spiritual direction and assistance.

2.2.3 Wayne Oates and Integration of Psychology (20th century)

- Wayne Oates, a professor at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, advocated for integrating psychology into pastoral counseling(Oladipupo, 2016).

- This integration marked a shift towards a more holistic approach to counseling, incorporating psychological insights alongside spiritual guidance(Oladipupo, 2016).

2.2.4 Nouthetic Counseling Movement (20th century)

- Jay Adams pioneered the nouthetic counseling movement, emphasizing the sufficiency of Scripture in addressing psychological issues(Oladipupo, 2016).

- This movement rejected secular psychological methodologies in favor of biblical principles for counseling(Oladipupo, 2016).

### 2.2.5 Contemporary Perspectives (21st century)

- In recent times, there has been a trend towards integrating faith and psychology in pastoral counseling(Oladipupo, 2016).

- Some evangelical counselors have adopted a more integrative approach, combining biblical teachings with psychological insights(Oladipupo, 2016).

This historical overview highlights the evolution of pastoral counseling within evangelical churches, from its early roots in the Christian tradition to contemporary integrative approaches that combine faith and psychology. The historical development of pastoral counseling within evangelical churches is crucial for understanding its current practices and the evolution of its emphasis and methodology. Key figures like Augustine of Hippo, Martin Luther, John Calvin, Wayne Oates, and Jay Adams played pivotal roles in shaping the field. The transition from spiritual guidance to incorporating psychological insights reveals the adaptability of pastoral counseling to the evolving needs and cultural landscapes of the evangelical community. Further research on the integration of faith and psychology within pastoral counseling could offer valuable insights.

## **2.3 Pastoral Counseling Practices Today**

Pastoral counseling in evangelical churches nowadays takes a holistic approach to meeting members of the faith community's emotional, psychological, and spiritual needs. These churches provide pastoral counseling services for a variety of problems, such as family and marital difficulties, bereavement, spiritual direction, mental health challenges, and personal development (Woodruff, 2002; Pedhu, 2019).

Individual counseling, premarital and marriage counseling, family counseling, bereavement counseling, and spiritual direction and mentorship are among the common counseling services provided by evangelical Protestant churches (Clinebell, 2011; McMinn, 2011). These programs are intended to support and counsel people and families dealing with a range of issues and to encourage holistic well-being in the setting of the church community.

Evangelical churches frequently combine theological insights with psychological principles in their pastoral counseling techniques. Pastoral counselors are educated to meet clients' spiritual and religious needs in addition to providing a secure and encouraging space for them to explore their emotional and psychological issues (Bartoli, 2007). This could entail using psychological approaches influenced by spiritual viewpoints, praying, active listening, empathy, and scripture-based guidance (Latini, 2009).

Recent developments and advancements in pastoral counseling techniques among evangelical Protestant churches include a greater emphasis on mental health awareness and a reduction in the stigma attached to mental health difficulties within the religious community (Pedhu, 2019). Pastoral counselors are increasingly integrating psychological interventions that are backed by science with spiritual and faith-based practices to address mental health concerns and promote overall well-being (Collins & Collins, 2017).

Furthermore, evangelical churches are starting to realize that pastoral counseling techniques need to be diverse and culturally sensitive. Recent developments highlight the necessity of tailoring counseling approaches to meet the unique needs of individuals from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, it is

critical to address issues of social justice, equity, and inclusivity in the religious community (Cheney, 2018).

In general, a variety of counseling services addressing typical subjects like marital difficulties, grieving, mental health concerns, and personal growth are covered by pastoral counseling in evangelical Protestant churches. The integration of evidence-based psychological interventions with spiritual practices is emphasized in recent trends and advancements. Additionally, the necessity for cultural competence and diversity in pastoral counseling practices within the faith community is emphasized. With an emphasis on the holistic aspect of counseling, this section offers a thorough overview of contemporary practices in evangelical churches. Important aspects are the extensive range of services provided, the way in which psychological concepts and spiritual ideas are integrated, and the focus on mental health awareness and cultural competence. The integration of faith-based practices with psychiatric interventions based on evidence is also highlighted in this section, as is the significance of cultural competence. This section, in my opinion, provides a solid starting point for further investigation and evaluation.

#### **2.4 Roles and responsibilities of pastoral counselors**

The roles and responsibilities of pastoral counselors in Evangelical churches are multifaceted and comprehensive. One of their primary responsibilities is to build strong, trusting relationships with church members through active listening and creating a safe, non-judgmental environment (Kebede, 2017). This helps establish rapport and facilitates effective counseling.

Pastoral counselors are also tasked with gathering relevant information about the client's presenting concerns, including their background, current situation, and any underlying factors contributing to the problem (Kebede, 2017). This assessment process is crucial for clearly defining the problem and developing an appropriate plan of action. Collaborating with the client to set realistic and achievable goals for the counseling process is another important responsibility (Kebede, 2017).

In addition to these core counseling tasks, pastoral counselors must have the knowledge and skills to guide clients towards their desired changes, drawing upon relevant biblical principles and spiritual resources as appropriate (Kebede, 2017; Slocum & Detrich, n.d.). This integration of faith-based and psychological approaches is a defining feature of pastoral counseling in Evangelical churches.

Maintaining appropriate boundaries and making referrals to other professionals when necessary is also a key responsibility of pastoral counselors (Kebede, 2017 ). This demonstrates a commitment to providing the best possible care and ensuring that the client's needs are met, even if they exceed the counselor's expertise or the scope of the church's counseling services.

Pastoral counselors may also be responsible for providing various types of counseling, such as individual, group, family, or multicultural counseling, depending on the needs of the church community (Kebede, 2017;Walker, n.d.). Developing competence in these different areas is crucial for addressing the diverse needs of church members effectively.

Overall, the roles and responsibilities of pastoral counselors in Evangelical churches require a unique blend of relational, assessment, intervention, and referral skills, as well as a deep understanding of biblical principles and their application to the counseling context (Kebede, 2017; Walker, n.d.;Slocum & Detrich).

#### **4.5 Challenges of pastoral counseling**

We have established how much pastoral counseling is an important aspect of ministry aimed at providing emotional and spiritual support to the faith community. The role of pastoral counselors is critical, given the various challenges that individuals face in the contemporary world. While pastoral counseling has numerous benefits, several challenges hinder effective service delivery. This section aims to examine these challenges and their impact on the effectiveness of pastoral counseling.

One of the main challenges of pastoral counseling is time constraints that pastors face, leading to a lack of adequate time for counseling services. According to Pierce and Refu (2015), pastors have competing demands for their time, including preaching and teaching, church administrative work, and private family time. This results in inadequate time for pastoral counseling services, thereby compromising the quality of counseling services to the individuals in the faith community. Louw (2015) concurs that pastoral counseling requires specialized counseling skills that require significant time to develop and maintain.

Another challenge of pastoral counseling is the lack of pastoral counseling experience among pastors and other religious leaders. Pastoral counselors often lack counseling training, resulting in the use of prescriptive and judgmental counseling approaches (Louw, 2015; Pembroke, 2016). This leaves to the individuals in the faith community feeling judged and condemned, discouraging them from seeking pastoral counseling services (Pierce & Refu, 2015). As a result, individuals often seek counseling services elsewhere, not fully convinced in the role of the pastors as counselors.

Furthermore, many churches, especially those in rural areas and poor neighborhoods, lack resources to provide adequate pastoral counseling services (Pierce & Refu, 2015). This results in a dependence on secular counseling services, which may not be based on Christian teachings and values. Additionally, pastoral counselors often face challenges in addressing cultural differences among the parishioners (Chao & Wei, 2011). Some cultural differences, including differing beliefs and worldviews, may lead to misunderstandings and misinterpretations of counseling messages, leading to ineffective counseling outcomes. The changing family structure and orientation and community cultural values also negatively affect pastoral counseling services. According to Mukimai (2019), pastors face challenges in providing counseling services to individuals due to changing family structures and orientations, which leads to complicated familial crises.

Furthermore, some African communities hold strong beliefs that the spirit world of ancestors and evil forces profoundly influences the direction of life among the living, causing misconceptions about pastoral counseling services (Magezi, 2006; Brunsdon, 2015). These cultural beliefs discourage individuals from seeking counseling services. Another challenge of pastoral counseling is ethical dilemmas in counseling practices. Ethical dilemmas such as confidentiality, boundary violations, and the use of power affect the effectiveness of pastoral counseling services (Louw, 2015). Pastoral counselors should maintain confidentiality to protect the privacy of the individuals while ensuring their safety. Moreover, pastoral counselors should avoid dual relationships and monitor their use of power to help and not harm the individuals in the faith community.

In addition, the role of the pastor as a counselor is not well-defined. According to Steward and Kerr (2017), pastors have multiple roles, and their counseling roles may

conflict with other roles such as preaching and teaching leading to role ambiguity. This can negatively affect the effectiveness of counseling services to the individuals, leading to role overload.

Moreover, pastoral counseling requires cultural sensitivity and awareness. Pastoral counselors must have knowledge and insight into different cultures for effective counseling services (Chao & Wei, 2011). Additionally, pastoral counselors must understand the cultural differences that may exist within the church to offer effective counseling services.

Lastly, pastoral counselors, church staff members, and the congregation must work together. Pastoral counseling works best, according to Tompkins and Fulkerson (2019), when pastors work with other staff members and include the congregation in the counseling process. An atmosphere of transparency and confidence is fostered via collaboration.

Providing successful pastoral counseling services in the setting of evangelical churches presents several challenges, which are thoroughly outlined in the section Challenges of Pastoral Counseling. Among the primary challenges are role ambiguity, cultural sensitivity, ethical conundrums, lack of training, time restraints, and budget limits. The topic at hand offers a thorough grasp of the subject and is backed up with academic sources that lead logically to the discussion. More research and discussion on methods to improve the efficacy of pastoral counseling services can be conducted using this information as a foundation.

## **2.6 Opportunities of pastoral counseling**

Despite the numerous challenges, pastoral counseling presents various opportunities for individuals and communities to experience healing, growth, and transformation. This section seeks to identify the opportunities of pastoral counseling and their potential impact on counseling effectiveness.

One of the primary opportunities in pastoral counseling is creating a collaborative environment between the pastor and the congregation. According to Hawkins and Clinton (2015), pastoral counseling involves collaboration that fosters transformational change aimed at holistic healing - psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. The collaboration provides a safe space for parishioners to discuss their problems and seek solutions through the guidance of the pastor, who acts as a facilitator of the counseling process. By working together, pastors and parishioners can achieve greater success in addressing the pastoral needs of the community.

Moreover, pastoral counseling offers an opportunity to integrate faith and spirituality in the counseling process. Integrating faith in counseling recognizes the interconnectedness of body, mind, and spirit in the human person. As such, pastoral counseling offers a unique perspective on the role of faith in psychological well-being (Scott et al., 2016). Integrating faith enables pastoral counselors to provide counsel that acknowledges the spiritual needs of the parishioners, leading to more holistic healing.

Another opportunity of pastoral counseling is meeting the unique needs of the congregation within their cultural context. Pastoral counseling aims to blend pastoral needs with an understanding of the cultural context relevant to each counseling situation. Therefore, pastoral counselors can tailor their counseling services to the specific needs of the parishioners, avoiding misinterpretation of messages, and increasing the effectiveness of counseling services (Waruta & Kinoti, 2013).

Additionally, pastoral counseling offers a chance to strengthen the church's ultimate goal of bringing about constructive social change. Pastoral counseling assists in addressing social issues that have a detrimental impact on community members, such as abuse, poverty, and social injustice. By providing the community with competent pastoral counseling services, the church may play a crucial role in addressing these difficulties (Ogunkunle & Attwood, 2019).

Giving the congregation the tools they need to take responsibility for their life, deal with the problems they face, and develop into fully realized individuals is another benefit of pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling seeks to support the congregation's emotional and spiritual development while providing the members with the knowledge and resources necessary to deal with their issues (Ogunkunle & Attwood, 2019). Pastoral counselors assist the church as a whole, in addition to helping individuals.

Pastoral counseling also presents an opportunity for pastors to learn and develop their counseling skills. Pastors who take up pastoral counseling services can benefit from training and continuing education that can enhance their skills in counseling. Through practical experience, ongoing research, and training, pastors can become more effective pastoral counselors (Mukimai, 2019).

Furthermore, pastoral counseling provides an opportunity for pastors to enhance their role in the church and positively impact their relationship with the congregation. By providing pastoral counseling services, pastors can establish closer and more meaningful relationships with the individuals in the faith community, thereby promoting a sense of community and belonging (Knox, 2017).

In pastoral counseling, addressing the effects of technology and social media on mental health presents another opportunity. In today's technologically advanced world, problems like addiction, cyberbullying, and social isolation are common. Pastoral counselors can assist people in addressing these concerns (Scott et al., 2016).

To sum up, pastoral counseling presents a number of ways for the church to help its members on an emotional and spiritual level. These opportunities include fostering a culture of collaboration, integrating psychology, spirituality, and faith; attending to specific cultural needs; strengthening the mission of the church; empowering the congregation; developing the abilities of pastors; encouraging meaningful relationships; addressing the effects of technology; and fostering holistic healing. Pastors have a special chance through pastoral counseling to deepen their relationship with their congregation and advance the community's general well-being.

## **2.7 Perceived solutions to the challenges facing pastoral counseling**

There are various perceived solutions that can enhance pastoral counseling and this section will examine the perceived solutions to the challenges facing pastoral counseling and their potential impact on improving counseling services.

One perceived solution to pastoral counseling challenges is for pastors to receive adequate counseling training. Louw (2015) emphasizes the importance of pastoral counselors having knowledge and qualifications in counseling theories and practices. Adequate counseling training can enhance counseling skills and reduce the prescriptive and judgmental use of religious teachings in counseling services. Pastors who receive counseling training can provide effective counseling services to their congregation.

Another perceived solution is for pastoral counseling to address the unique needs of their congregation within their cultural context. Waruta and Kinoti (2013) suggest that pastoral counseling services be tailored to the cultural backgrounds of the parishioners. This approach can promote a deeper understanding of the congregation's problems and lessen the risk of misinterpretation of messages during counseling services.

Integrating faith and spirituality into counseling services is also a perceived solution to overcome the challenges of pastoral counseling. According to Scott et al. (2016), pastoral counseling aims to create a holistic healing environment that addresses spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs. By integrating faith and spirituality, pastoral counselors can provide counseling services that recognize and address the spiritual aspects of human struggles.

Furthermore, pastoral counseling can benefit from the involvement of the congregation. Individuals in the faith community can be trained to provide supportive services and counseling to fellow members of the congregation. This approach can provide additional resources and support for individuals in need (Knox, 2017). The involvement of the congregation creates a sense of community and belonging, leading to effective counseling services.

Another solution is for pastors to establish well-structured pastoral counseling programs during their training. According to Ogunkunle and Attwood (2019), well-structured training programs can equip pastors with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide effective pastoral counseling services. The training programs can emphasize the use of counseling theories, the appropriate role of scriptures, and cultural sensitivity in counseling services.

Furthermore, in order to improve the efficacy of pastoral counseling services, Louw (2015) advises pastors to uphold confidentiality, follow moral principles, and refrain

from having multiple partnerships. Pastoral counselors must provide a secure and dependable atmosphere while guaranteeing confidentiality and upholding professional norms that safeguard clients' privacy.

Ongoing studies on counseling in general and pastoral counseling in particular might be helpful to pastors. Pastoral counselors can remain up to date on growing trends and strategies in counseling services as well as best practices by following the latest research (Mukimai, 2019).

Understanding the value of cooperation between pastoral counselors, other church staff members, and the congregation is another way to address problems with pastoral counseling. Pastoral counseling is most successful, according to Tompkins and Fulkerson (2019), when pastors work in tandem with other staff members.

Finally, pastoral counseling should put more emphasis on empowering the the congregation to take charge of their lives. According to Nabwire (2016), the primary aim of the pastoral counseling process is to help the parishioners take charge of their lives and growth continuously towards fulfilling their unique personhood. Pastoral counselors must equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to address their struggles, promote emotional, and spiritual growth, and enhance their overall well-being.

To sum up, pastoral counseling presents a multitude of chances for a pastor to offer their church both spiritual and emotional support. Promising potential to improve pastoral counseling services are presented by the perceived answers to the problems facing pastoral counseling that are detailed in this literature study. The congregation's involvement, cultural sensitivity, combining faith and spirituality, well-structured training programs, confidentiality preservation, continuous study, teamwork, and individual empowerment within the faith community are some of these answers.

Pastoral counselors can continue to be productive and provide their congregation with high-quality counseling services by putting these suggestions into practice.

## **2.8 Empirical Studies**

Several empirical studies and research findings have explored the challenges and opportunities in pastoral counseling in evangelical Protestant churches. One common theme that emerges from the literature is the importance of integrating psychological principles with theological insights to provide a holistic approach to counseling that addresses both the psychological and spiritual dimensions of individuals within the faith community (McMinn, 2011; Pedhu, 2019).

Another common theme is the need for pastoral counselors to be trained in both psychological and theological/spiritual competencies to effectively address the unique needs of individuals within the faith community (Woodruff, 2002; Bartoli, 2007). This includes the ability to provide support that is sensitive to the religious beliefs and values of congregants, as well as the ability to address psychological and emotional challenges openly and reduce stigma within the faith community (Latini, 2009).

However, several gaps in the existing literature also emerge. One such gap is the lack of empirical research on the effectiveness of pastoral counseling practices in evangelical Protestant churches. While there is a growing body of literature on the theoretical frameworks and models that can be applied to pastoral counseling, there is a need for more empirical research to evaluate the effectiveness of these practices in addressing the unique needs of individuals within the faith community (Collins & Collins, 2017).

More study is required to fill another gap in the literature regarding the potential and difficulties unique to pastoral counseling practices in various ethnic and cultural contexts. Further research must be conducted to comprehend how pastoral counseling practices in predominantly white evangelical Protestant churches can be modified to better serve the needs of people from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds, even though this is the main focus of much of the literature currently in publication (Pedhu, 2019).

In general, the research that is currently available emphasizes how crucial it is for pastoral counseling procedures in evangelical Protestant churches to incorporate both psychological and theological/spiritual competences. Further empirical research is necessary to assess the practicality of these methods and investigate the opportunities and challenges unique to varied cultural and ethnic situations.

## **2.9 Theoretical Frameworks**

The early 1900s witnessed the rise of secular psychologists specializing in mental health, sparking debates within religious circles about the compatibility of psychology and faith. Some Christians resisted psychology, fearing it weakened their faith, while others, like Franz Brentano and G. Stanley Hall, engaged with it. Anton Boisen, a pioneer in pastoral care, overcame his battles with mental illness, leading to the development of a model for mentally ill patients. Boisen's work paved the way for Clinical Pastoral Training. In 1954, the Christian Association for Psychology Studies (CAPS) was founded, contributing to the integration of psychology and faith. However, the early 1970s saw concerns about this integration, with more conservative Christians wary. Despite debates, today there is widespread acceptance of spiritual

integration in secular psychology. Licensed Christian mental health practitioners offer counseling from both secular and integrated perspectives. The intersection of Christianity with the mental health needs of individuals is evident in various professional settings, with theological schools incorporating both secular psychology and biblically-based pastoral care into their training programs.

Integrating psychology and theology within an evangelical framework in pastoral counseling involves various models and approaches that aim to harmonize the insights of both disciplines to provide holistic care for individuals. Several models have been proposed to successfully integrate psychology and theology in counseling within an evangelical context (McMinn, 2012).

## **2.10 Pastoral Counselor Education and Training**

Pastoral counselor education and training are essential in evangelical settings for equipping people to offer spiritual and emotional assistance to their communities. The body of research on the education and training of pastoral counselors in evangelical contexts emphasizes the combination of counseling techniques and theological education to prepare counselors to meet clients' needs on a whole. Courses on pastoral care, counseling theories, and useful abilities like active listening and empathy are frequently included in this integration (Cadge et al., 2019).

Pastoral counselors in evangelical settings need ongoing supervision, mentorship, and professional development to grow and be effective. Counselors are kept up to speed on ethical standards, best practices, and new research through professional development. Counselors can improve their clinical abilities, get feedback on their job, and reflect on their work in a structured environment under supervision. With the

founding of clinical pastoral education (CPE) programs in the early 1900s, pastoral counseling has a long tradition of supervision. These programs give pastoral counselors-in-training opportunity for systematic supervision and reflection, enabling them to evaluate their own biases and beliefs, integrate theory with practice, and form their own pastoral identities. Counselors can improve their counseling abilities, get input regarding their role, and reflect on their work in a structured environment under supervision. With the founding of clinical pastoral education (CPE) programs in the early 1900s, pastoral counseling has a long tradition of supervision. These programs give pastoral counselors-in-training opportunity for systematic supervision and reflection, enabling them to evaluate their own biases and beliefs, integrate theory with practice, and form their own pastoral identities. Counselors who are under supervision can better handle difficult ethical situations, develop their self-awareness, and advance their therapeutic abilities by receiving feedback and direction from seasoned supervisors. In order to help novice counselors overcome obstacles and forge their professional identities, mentoring provides advice and support from more seasoned counselors (Cadge et al., 2019).

Despite the importance of ongoing professional development, supervision, and mentorship, there are some gaps and challenges in the current training programs for pastoral counselors in evangelical settings. One challenge is the need for more standardized training programs that incorporate evidence-based practices and cultural competence to effectively serve diverse populations. Additionally, there may be limited opportunities for ongoing supervision and mentorship, leading to potential gaps in the support and guidance available to counselors as they navigate complex counseling situations [(Cadge et al., 2019).

There are quite a few training facilities in Ethiopia that provide counseling education to individuals. One of these is the College of Evangelical Theology (ETC). To complete the counseling degree requirements, ETC has adopted the biblical counseling curriculum created by BCC (Biblical Counseling Center). In a low-income third-world nation like Ethiopia, members of the congregation rely on church leaders with biblical counseling training to address their needs. If counseling wasn't provided by the church, these people would never be able to afford it. BCC has trained thousands of people throughout the years, and because those who have been trained by BCC have trained others, the impact on the nation's churches is immeasurable. More effectively, pastors have tended to congregations. Additional centers include Leadstar Christian University, Holistic Bible College, Grace Leadership & Theological University, and Gelila International Seminary.

Overall, the education and training of pastoral counselors in evangelical settings require a balance of theological education and counseling skills. Ongoing professional development, supervision, and mentorship are essential for the growth and effectiveness of counselors, although there may be gaps and challenges that need to be addressed to enhance the quality of training programs in these settings.

## **2.11 Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The conceptual framework for this research on pastoral counseling within selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa emphasizes the interplay between theological and psychological principles in addressing the holistic needs of individuals.

This study recognizes that while some challenges and opportunities may be acknowledged in existing literature, there is a significant gap in understanding how these elements manifest in the unique Ethiopian context. By exploring these dynamics, the research aims to uncover specific challenges faced by pastoral counselors and identify actionable opportunities for improvement.

Conducting this research is vital not only to fill the knowledge gap but also to provide insights that can lead to enhanced pastoral counseling practices, ultimately promoting mental and spiritual well-being within the church community. The findings will contribute to developing frameworks that better integrate faith and psychological support, responding effectively to the needs of congregants.

## **Chapter Three: Methods**

### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employs a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. This design is suitable for exploring the lived experiences of pastoral counselors and understanding the complex realities of their counseling practices.

Concurring to Creswell (2013), qualitative methods are the most viable for analyzing lived encounters and going more profound into complex phenomena.

10 churches were selected because qualitative studies typically use smaller sample sizes to allow for in-depth exploration of the research topic(Creswell & Poth, 2018) and the researcher also purposefully selected 5 evangelical churches in Addis Ababa to capture perspectives from a range of church contexts(Patton, 2015).Moreover, choosing 2 pastors from each of the 5 churches allowed the researcher to hear diverse views and experiences, while still keeping the overall sample size manageable for a qualitative study(Creswell & Poth, 2018).

### **3.2 Population, Study Location, and Sampling**

#### Population

The population for this study comprised pastoral counselors from selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This included both male and female pastors who actively engaged in counseling within their congregations. By focusing on pastoral counselors, the study aimed to gather insights into their experiences, challenges, and opportunities in providing pastoral counseling services.

#### Study Location

The research was conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. This location was chosen due to its diverse population and the significant presence of evangelical churches. The selected churches included the Cloud of Glory international prayer center, Halwot Amanuel Church, the Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, the Meserete Kristos Church, the Full Gospel Church. These churches represented a mix of congregational sizes and counseling approaches, making them ideal settings to

explore the dynamics of pastoral counseling within a multicultural and multifaceted environment.

### Sampling

A purposive sampling method was employed to select participants for the study. This approach allowed for the inclusion of participants who had specific knowledge and experience relevant to the research topic. The sample consisted of ten pastors from the five selected evangelical congregations, ensuring a mix of perspectives based on gender, age, and counseling experience. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather in-depth qualitative data, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced in pastoral counseling.

This sampling strategy aimed to provide rich insights that reflected the unique context of pastoral counseling in Addis Ababa, contributing to the study's overall objectives.

### **3.3 Data Collection Instrument**

For this study, a semi-structured interview guide was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The guide was designed to facilitate in-depth discussions with pastoral counselors regarding their experiences and perspectives on the challenges and opportunities in pastoral counseling. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in probing deeper into responses and adapting the interview based on the participant's narrative, thus ensuring rich, detailed, and comprehensive data collection (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

#### Structure of the Interview Guide

The interview guide included open-ended questions that allowed participants to express their views in detail. This method is particularly suitable for capturing the

nanced and context-specific insights that are crucial for understanding the dynamics of pastoral counseling in the selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa (Creswell, 2013).

Key areas of focus included:

1. Background Information: Questions related to the participants' demographic details, pastoral experience, and training in counseling.
2. Challenges in Pastoral Counseling: Questions aimed at identifying specific obstacles faced in their counseling practices, including issues related to training, resources, and cultural perceptions of mental health.
3. Opportunities for Improvement: Questions that explored potential strategies for enhancing pastoral counseling, including collaboration with mental health professionals and community education efforts.
4. Personal Experiences: Questions that encouraged participants to share personal anecdotes and reflections on their counseling practices, illustrating the real-world implications of the challenges and opportunities discussed.

#### Pilot Testing

Before the main data collection, the interview guide was pilot-tested with a small group of pastoral counselors to ensure clarity and relevance of the questions. Feedback from the pilot test allowed for adjustments to be made, enhancing the instrument's effectiveness in eliciting comprehensive responses during the actual interviews.

#### Data Collection Process

The semi-structured interviews were conducted in a face-to-face format, allowing for a conversational flow and the opportunity to probe deeper into participants' responses.

Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes and was recorded with the participants' consent for accurate data capture. Transcriptions of the interviews were subsequently analyzed to identify key themes and insights related to the research objectives.

This data collection instrument aimed to provide rich qualitative data that would contribute to a nuanced understanding of pastoral counseling within the selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa.

### **3.4 Data Collection Procedure**

The data collection procedure for this study involved several key steps that I undertook with valuable assistance from various individuals, ensuring a systematic and ethical approach to gathering qualitative data from pastoral counselors in selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa.

#### **Step 1: Preparation**

Before initiating data collection, I developed a comprehensive plan that included finalizing the semi-structured interview guide based on feedback from the pilot testing phase. I secured verbal approval from the relevant institutional review board, confirming that all research activities adhered to ethical guidelines.

#### **Step 2: Participant Recruitment**

I recruited participants through purposive sampling, targeting pastoral counselors from selected evangelical churches: Cloud of Gory international prayer center, Ethiopian Kale Heywet Church, Meserete Kristos Church, Full Gospel Church, and Halwot Amanuel Church . I reached out to church leadership to inform them about the study and sought their assistance in identifying suitable participants. With their help, I

provided interested pastors with information about the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures.

### Step 3: Scheduling Interviews

Once potential participants were identified, I coordinated to schedule individual interviews at their convenience. I worked with them to find suitable times and locations, ensuring a comfortable and private environment conducive to open discussion.

### Step 4: Conducting Interviews

I conducted the interviews in a face-to-face format, allowing for a personal connection and the opportunity to delve deeper into participants' responses. Each interview lasted approximately 60 to 90 minutes. At the beginning of each session, I reiterated the study's purpose and obtained informed consent for recording the conversation. Participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses.

### Step 5: Data Recording and Transcription

With the participants' consent, I audio-recorded each interview to ensure accurate data collection. Audio recordings are considered a reliable method for capturing detailed and nuanced information, essential for understanding the specific challenges and dynamics associated with pastoral counseling (Guest et al., 2006). In addition to recording the interviews, the researcher also took detailed field notes. These notes included observations about the participants' non-verbal cues and the context of the interviews, providing additional layers of data for analysis. Field notes are a valuable complement to audio recordings, offering insights that might not be captured in the audio alone (Creswell, 2013).

After completing the interviews, I transcribed the recordings verbatim. This process allowed for a detailed analysis of the discussions and ensured that participants' voices were accurately represented in the findings.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

The data collected in this study were subjected to thematic analysis, a method particularly suited for qualitative research. This approach facilitates the identification and examination of patterns within the data, providing a rich, detailed, and complex account of the research topic (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process involved several key steps to ensure a thorough and reliable interpretation of the interview data. Firstly, a verbatim transcription of the audio recordings of the interviews was done to guarantee correctness and to enable a thorough examination of the participants' answers. The researcher then went over these transcripts several times to become acquainted with the material and to find preliminary codes that indicate important aspects of the data (Creswell, 2013). As it entails labeling portions of the data that are pertinent to the research objectives, coding is an essential stage in theme analysis process. To enable a thorough interaction with the data and guarantee that the details of the participants' experiences were recorded, this procedure was carried out manually.

After initial coding, the codes were reviewed and grouped into potential themes. This involved organizing codes into broader patterns that address the research questions and objectives. Themes are essentially patterns across the data that are important to the description of the phenomenon and are associated with a specific research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). For this study, themes such as trust issues, stigma

surrounding mental health, lack of resources, cultural sensitivity, and the need for training were identified.

A second coder reviewed a portion of the transcripts in order to increase the credibility of the results. According to Guest, MacQueen, and Namey (2012), this procedure, referred to as inter-coder reliability, aids in ensuring that the coding is consistent and not unduly subjective. The analysis's credibility was increased by discussing and resolving any coding disagreements to a consensus.

Reflexivity was maintained throughout the data analysis process to minimize potential biases. The researcher continually reflected on their own perspectives and potential influences on the data interpretation. This involved keeping a reflexive journal to document thoughts, decisions, and the rationale behind them (Creswell, 2013). By doing so, the researcher aimed to ensure that the findings accurately represented the participants' experiences and viewpoints rather than being skewed by personal biases.

The final stage of the thematic analysis involved defining and naming the themes. This step included refining each theme to ensure clarity and coherence, as well as relating them back to the research questions and literature. The themes were then compiled into a comprehensive report that includes direct quotes from the participants to illustrate the findings and provide a vivid account of the challenges and opportunities in pastoral counseling within the selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Overall, the thematic analysis provided a structured yet flexible approach to exploring the complex and multifaceted nature of pastoral counseling in the Ethiopian context, ensuring that the rich qualitative data were systematically analyzed and effectively presented (Guest et al., 2012). This rigorous approach allowed for the generation of meaningful insights that can inform practice and further research in this field.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

Under this section, the findings from in-depth interview were illustrated. The section begins with a description of the participants' demographic characteristics. After reviewing and summarizing each interview, the researcher identified common codes across the interviews. The data collected from the interviews with the 10 counseling pastors provided a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in pastoral counseling within evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, as the pastors shared their experiences, perspectives, and recommendations for enhancing counseling services. The analysis generated initial codes related to the challenges, such as trust issues, stigma surrounding mental health, lack of resources, Cultural Sensitivity and Communication, and lack of training, as well as opportunities, including collaboration with mental health professionals, establishment of dedicated counseling programs, increased awareness and education about mental health within the church community, and diverse counseling services.

#### 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Variable	Categories	Frequencies
Gender	Male	7
	Female	3
Age	30-39	3
	40-49	5
	50-59	2
Marital Status	Married	10
	single	0
Education Level	Diploma	3
	Bachelor's Degree	5
	Master's Degree	2
Years of Experience pastoral in counseling	Less than 10 years	4
	10-19 years	3
	20 years and above	3
Full-time/Part-time	Full-time	7
	Part-time	3
Formal Counseling Training	Yes	2
	No	8

## **Description of Demographic Characteristics**

The demographic characteristics of the study participants reveal several key insights. The majority of the participants were male, indicating that pastoral counseling in the selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa is predominantly a male-dominated field. The participants' ages ranged from their 30s to above 60, with the largest age group being 40-49 years, comprising half of the participants. This suggests a relatively mature group of counselors with significant life experience likely contributing to their counseling roles. All of the participants were married, reflecting the traditional expectation in many evangelical circles for pastors to be married, which may influence their counseling perspectives, particularly on marital and family issues.

The educational background of the participants varied, with the majority holding at least a bachelor's degree. Specifically, five participants had bachelor's degrees, two had master's degrees and three had a diploma, . This high level of education suggests an educated group of counselors capable of integrating theoretical knowledge with practical counseling skills. Participants had varying years of experience in pastoral counseling, ranging from less than 10 years to over 20 years, indicating a mix of seasoned counselors and relatively newer ones who may bring fresh perspectives.

The study included both full-time and part-time ministers, with seven participants serving full-time and three part-time, which may affect the amount of time and resources each participant can dedicate to counseling. Additionally, 2 participants had received formal training in pastoral counseling, while eight had not although most(5)

had took few courses. The presence of training among more than half of the participants suggests a recognized need for professional development in counseling within these churches.

## **4.2 Challenges in Pastoral Counseling**

Respondents stated that pastoral counseling faces multifaceted challenges. A few of the main obstacles include trust issues, stigma including mental well-being, limitation of resources, Cultural Sensitivity, and lack of training for counselors.

### **4.2.1 Trust Issues and Privacy Concerns**

Building trust with church members looking for counseling services risen as a noteworthy challenge. Based on the interview, the trust issues that the church faces in giving successful pastoral counseling services are basically centered around the congregation's need of certainty in the church's capacity to handle their individual things professionally and competently.

In the interview number 3 the respondent expressed that even if the church members have numerous issues, they have a difficult time coming to the church counselor and telling him/her what is going on in their life, and even if they do, they come exceptionally late, and they have a difficult time opening up to the counseling. This suggests that he said, the assembly does not completely believe the church's counseling services to handle their individual things effectively; most of the time they most likely need you to pray for them without telling you anything.

The interviewee number 2 mentioned that the assembly select my office instead of going to the church's office since they do not feel that there are prepared counselors in the church and this he said shows that the assembly does not have certainty in the church's capacity to give the necessary counseling services.

Furthermore, the issue of conflicting and insufficient counseling services too contributes to the congregation's need of believe another participant said. The interviewee number 9 clarifies that the church counselors may not provide "the service" due to being too busy, and a few ministers give counseling without proper preparing, driving to poor advice or indeed judgment of the counselees. This has clearly harmed the reputation of the church's counseling services and lowered the congregation's believe in the church's competence.

Lastly, the concern around the church's capacity to maintain secrecy further erodes the congregation's believe. In the interviewee number 10 the participant stated that there is a stress that private information shared during counseling may be accidentally or knowingly uncovered by the counselors, either through lecturing or sharing examples. This need of trust prevented the openness and trustworthiness essential for successful counseling sessions. Another participant shared a story of a church member who communicated hesitance to share individual battles during counseling sessions out of fear of judgment or chatter, underscoring the affect of trust issues on the counseling process; as a matter of reality individuals from other churches come to counseling he said, more than ours and I believe that is since they feel secure not

being known, you don't know them you don't judge them, even if you do you won't be going to the same church and that is such a relief I figure.

#### **4.2.2 The stigma related to mental illness**

An additional element that emerged was the stigma attached to mental health problems in the context of churches. According to the participants, this stigma might discourage people from getting treatment and may cause them to feel guilty or condemned.

In the second interview, for example, the participant discussed how people with mental health issues can be held accountable for their experiences. He stated that people who have gone through trauma or any other type of unfortunate experience can be held accountable for their experiences in sessions, which can have the opposite effect of counseling and negatively impact an individual's self-perception. This highlights a concerning pattern where people are held accountable for their mental health issues rather than receiving compassionate support.

Another interviewee (number 4) shared one of her experiences: "I encountered an individual who displayed mistrust and erratic behavior, such as accusing the prayer team members of theft and creating commotions. One day during a prayer meeting, this individual shouted unexpectedly, and while some thought she was possessed, I suspected a mental health issue. I calmed the situation, halted the attempts to cast out a perceived demon, and instead contacted her family, urging them to seek professional

mental health support. Despite initial resistance, the individual eventually agreed to treatment and is now doing well with her medication. This experience highlighted the lack of awareness about mental health issues within our faith community.”

Furthermore, respondent number 8 stated his experience regarding this saying, I’ve encountered many church leaders and believers who don’t think mental illnesses a health problem but instead believe it’s demon possession. One time there was this young lady who went to our church, shouted like she was possessed every week and the prayer team prayed for her but the same thing kept happening. One day I took her to my office and asked her why she was shouting and she explained her situation which was she was under a lot of pressure she couldn’t handle, we talked further and I did whatever I could to help. That day though I learned just because somebody shouted it doesn’t mean he/she is possessed and we need to differentiate whether it is a demon or a disorder. The tendency to dismiss, blame or judge those struggling with mental health concerns creates a barrier to seeking and receiving the support they need leading to unnecessary suffering.

#### **4.2.3 Limited Resources**

Another concern that was raised was the lack of resources available for pastoral counseling, including funding constraints and inadequate infrastructure. The participant stated that limited resources are hindering the delivery of comprehensive and quality counseling services to congregants.

For instance, Interviewee number 5 highlighted that the church does not have enough financial support to hire trainer and provide continuous training for existing counselors. This lack of financial resources often leads to an overreliance on volunteers who may not have the necessary skills or time to dedicate to counseling effectively and sometime it's not because they don't have resource it's because they don't seem to think how important this office is.

Furthermore, Interviewee number 8 mentioned that “the church's physical space is not conducive to private counseling sessions. This inadequate infrastructure can compromise the confidentiality and comfort needed for effective counseling. The lack of dedicated counseling rooms forces sessions to be held in multipurpose areas where interruptions and lack of privacy are common. Such conditions not only affect the quality of counseling but also deter individuals from seeking help due to the fear of being overheard or interrupted.”

In addition, Interviewee number 4 shared a personal experience where a lack of resources meant that there were no materials or literature available to support the counseling process. The absence of educational materials, such as pamphlets, books, and researches, limits the counselor's ability to provide comprehensive care and follow-up support and that she wishes if she could find materials written in Amharic to read regarding counseling.

#### **4.2.4 Training in counseling skills**

The need for training and skills development among pastoral counselors was also a significant theme. Participants discussed challenges related to inadequate training, leading to issues such as improper advice and lack of professional boundaries.

For instance, one participant shared an experience where a lack of training resulted in ineffective counseling sessions. He shared one of his experiences highlighting the issue of bias in pastoral counseling, explaining that in one case, a previous church counselor counseling a couple, who only listened to the husband, supported and encouraged the husband, and didn't even ask what the wife had to say. Because of this, she said that there was a lot of insensitivity. when pastor who has not been trained or doesn't know how to counsel give counseling it has such an impact that sometimes it actually destroys the counseling reputation. This example demonstrates how inadequately trained counselors can perpetuate harmful biases, further stigmatizing those seeking help.

Most participants expressed difficulties related to their own training and skill development. Without targeted training in areas such as trauma-informed care, marriage counseling, counseling techniques, mental health, and adolescent development, counselors stated they often struggle to address the diverse and specific needs of their congregants effectively.

#### **4.2.5 Sensitivity to Culture**

The participants agreed that the pastoral counseling process is strongly influenced by the diversity of backgrounds and cultural variations among congregants.

One counselor (interviewee number 2) highlighted the challenge of working with a couple from different cultural backgrounds, where the husband's cultural norms valued indirect communication, while the wife was accustomed to direct and outspoken communication. This difference led to misunderstandings and conflicts within the marriage. The counselor's approach involved teaching the couple to understand and respect each other's cultural communication styles, helping them to adjust their expectations and improve their interactions. The participant also stated if a counselor doesn't know this which most doesn't, it would be difficult to understand why their clients are doing what they are doing and that, in turn, hinders the counseling process.

The eighth participant provided an example of how cultural norms influence attitudes about mental health and family relations. It might be challenging for people to ask for help openly since, for instance, mental health concerns are stigmatized in some cultures as personal or familial failings.

Additionally, the need for ongoing cultural competence training for counselors was stressed. The participants stated training includes learning about different cultural norms, values, and communication styles to ensure that counseling services are respectful and relevant to each person's unique situation.

### **4.3 Opportunities of pastoral counseling**

Pastoral counselors in selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa also provided insight into both existing practices and potential development opportunities. Participants highlighted themes including Pastors' Passion for Counseling, premarital counseling, and marriage counseling through thematic analysis. The researcher also looked at opportunities that arise, such as working with mental health professionals, continued education and training, holistic care, raising awareness and educating members of the community, resource mobilization, and infrastructure development(establishment of organized counseling programs).

### **4.3.1 Existing Opportunities in Pastoral Counseling**

#### **4.3.1.1 Pastors' Passion for Counseling**

The data from the interviews reveals that pastors exhibit significant passion and dedication towards counseling, demonstrated by their unwavering commitment to assisting their congregants. One pastor emphasized, "I serve in various pastoral ministries and believe my contributions, though small, can significantly impact those seeking advice" (Interview 1). This sentiment of dedication was a recurring theme throughout many interviews, highlighting the pastors' readiness to offer support, time, and expertise to guide their congregants through challenging times.

Several respondents shared how they frequently extend their availability beyond regular church hours to meet the needs of their congregation. One pastor noted, "There are times when people need immediate counsel, and I make sure to be there, even if it means late-night sessions or meeting during my personal time. The well-

being of my congregation is paramount" (Interview 5). This level of commitment, rooted in a deep-seated passion to serve, illustrates the extent to which pastors are willing to go to support their community.

The trust and respect pastors garner from their community members often stem from this personal investment in their well-being. One interviewee recounted, "I have seen people open up about their most profound fears and struggles because they trust me. This trust is built over time through consistent support and genuine care" (Interview 2). The establishment of such trust is foundational for effective counseling, enabling congregants to feel safe and supported as they navigate personal and relational challenges.

The interviews also highlighted the proactive approach pastors take in identifying and addressing issues before they escalate. One pastor mentioned, "I make it a point to stay engaged with my congregation, to know what's happening in their lives. This way, I can offer help early on, before problems become crises" (Interview 10). This approach ensures that pastors can address a wide range of issues, from spiritual crises to personal and relational challenges, making a significant difference in the lives of those they counsel.

#### **4.3.1.2 Premarital Counseling**

Premarital counseling, according to respondents, is a crucial part of pastoral counseling; it assists couples in preparing for marriage by addressing potential issues and promoting realistic expectations. This type of counseling helps to establish a

strong, enduring foundation for the relationship. Throughout the interviews, the participants stressed the importance of this particular service. One respondent highlighted that premarital counseling is crucial for a successful marriage since it improves understanding between partners and helps them set reasonable expectations (Interview 3). The respondent went on to say that during these sessions, couples can discuss crucial topics including money management, communication styles, family planning, and dispute resolution. It takes open and honest conversation to develop trust and understanding, and the structured environment makes this feasible. By settling on core values and goals before to marriage, couples can also lessen the chance of reoccurring issues and foster a successful marriage.

#### **4.3.1.3 Marital Counselling**

Participants also highlighted in church couples receive counseling to resolve persistent issues and build stronger bonds. With a foundation on biblical principles, the seminars aim to offer helpful guidance and assistance. During open counseling days, couples gather to discuss their problems, according to interviewee number 3.

According to interview 8, it's not just about praying; it's also about giving helpful counsel based on biblical concepts and life experiences. Divorce cases, financial hardship, infidelity, communication breakdowns, and parenting difficulties are among the problems that couples address in marriage counseling sessions. Interviewee number 4 said couples can examine their difficulties without fear of judgment in the church's safe and encouraging setting.

## **4.3.2 Potential opportunities to Improve Pastoral Counseling**

### **4.3.2.1 A variety of counseling services are in demand**

The results of the interviews showed that there is a great need for counseling services, and evangelical churches in Addis Ababa have a great chance to grow their counseling programs to better serve the varied needs of their members. Participants stressed that providing a variety of counseling services, such as grief and trauma support, individual, couples, and family counseling, could significantly improve the church's capacity to deliver comprehensive treatment. In addition to mentioning the need in other areas and how important it is to have a diversity of counseling services to address the range of challenges that members confront, respondents valued the evangelical church's commitment to providing premarital and marriage counseling. They also mentioned the need for counseling services in other areas, pointing out that a variety of counseling options is necessary to address the wide range of problems that members encounter and guarantee that each person receives the right kind of support for their particular circumstance.

For instance, interviewee number 10 emphasized that individual issues often require one on one support allowing church members to address their concerns in an private manner. He shared a story of a grappling with anxiety who experienced significant relief through tailored counseling sessions. This individualized approach enabled the counselor to customize the sessions to meet needs resulting in effective assistance and improved outcomes. Moreover couples counseling emerged as another area with potential for development according to the respondents. All participants mentioned

that their churches have a history of providing couples counseling acknowledging the efforts made in this domain while also recognizing opportunities for enhancement.

Interviewee number 5 elaborated on how challenges, such as breakdowns in communication and conflicts over responsibilities can be effectively addressed through joint counseling sessions for couples. He recounted an instance where a couple on the verge of divorce greatly benefited from sessions focused on enhancing communication skills and understanding each others viewpoints. Through these interventions the church played a role, in helping the couple mend their relationship and fortify their bond demonstrating the impact that couples counseling can bring about.

Another important service that has come to light and that the church community should consider expanding is family counseling. The seventh interviewee brought attention to the challenging dynamics inside families, which frequently call for outside assistance. He talked of a family that was having to deal with their teenage son's disobedient actions. The church counselor assisted the family members in improving their communication skills, establishing healthy boundaries, and providing support for one another during difficult times through family therapy sessions.

Grief support was another essential service that participants identified as needing further development. Interviewee number 3 emphasized that congregants often turn to the church during times of loss, seeking comfort and guidance. However, the emotional complexities of grief require specialized support that goes beyond general pastoral care. He cited an instance where a bereaved congregant found solace and

healing through support by the church. These provided a safe space for individuals to share their experiences and receive emotional support. If there are training regarding coping strategies, highlighting the value of dedicated grief counseling services it would really help the participant stated.

It was also acknowledged that trauma support needed to be expanded. The second interviewee noted the number of people members of the church have gone through a variety of traumas, such as abuse, violence, and major life transitions. Counselors must complete specific training in trauma-informed care in order to provide effective trauma assistance. He related a story of a woman who was abused at home and had trouble trusting other people. She was able to process her experiences, reclaim her sense of safety, and start the process of rebuilding her life with the help of trauma-focused counseling. This case emphasizes how crucial it is to offer specific assistance to trauma survivors in a religious setting.

#### **4.3.2.2 Collaboration with mental health professionals**

The respondents emphasized the potential for collaboration between pastoral counselors and other trained professionals. Interviewee number ten highlighted the importance of working with trained professionals, saying, I believe it's crucial to collaborate with trained professionals like psychologists in the congregation or the faith community. Most people in the church believe that demons are responsible for everything. Of course, God heals and releases all burdens, but He also bestowed knowledge onto us. The participant went on to say that certain problems might have

cognitive or mental health components, in which case working with mental health specialists is required.

Another participant underlined the importance of interdisciplinary cooperation by observing, "If demons are present they have an influence; deliver them if that's the case, but if it's mental, I think working with mental health specialists is essential. This individual further emphasized how crucial it is to combine spiritual and medical approaches in order to successfully meet the various needs of congregants who are in need of pastoral counseling.

The interviews also disclosed the possible advantages of providing pastors with basic psychological training in addition to faith and spiritual knowledge. One participant proposed that even for pastors who are unable to receive extensive training, a "short training course" on illness and mental health could be helpful. Pastors can act as role models for mental health by adopting this perspective and attitude.

#### **4.3.2.3 Campaigns for Education and Awareness**

The respondents indicated that in order to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues, evangelical churches should launch internal education initiatives and awareness campaigns. The importance of launching awareness campaigns and educational programs in order to reduce the stigma attached to mental health issues and encourage congregation members to seek help was repeatedly stressed by the participants. They assert that these programs have the ability to transform the church environment into one that is more hospitable, supportive, and encourages open

discussion and handling of mental health issues. Almost all of the participants emphasized how important it is for churches to actively take part in awareness campaigns that de-stigmatize mental health concerns.

According to the first interviewee, there is a widespread misperception among churchgoers that mental health issues indicate a lack of faith or spiritual weakness. Many of them are therefore unwilling to seek help. He advised churches to disseminate accurate information regarding mental health through sermons, seminars, and church announcements, emphasizing that it is a common and manageable component of overall well-being. By normalizing conversations about mental health, churches may help members understand that seeking help is a step toward healing and growth rather than a sign of failure.

The fourth interviewee gave a positive account of an awareness campaign that was carried out at her church. During Mental Health Awareness Month, the church hosted workshops, discussion groups, and guest speakers on a range of mental health-related subjects. These gatherings gave attendees insightful information about mental health issues like PTSD, sadness, and anxiety as well as helpful suggestions for coping mechanisms and other resources. Testimonies from people who had effectively overcome their mental health obstacles with counseling assistance were also featured in the campaign. These first-person accounts had an especially powerful effect because they humanized mental health concerns and lessened the sense of isolation experienced by persons who are battling.

Respondents emphasized the significance of continuing psycho-education inside the church community in addition to large-scale initiatives. The seventh interviewee

explained how his church's regular programming, particularly youth sessions, included mental health instruction. Through the incorporation of mental health conversations into these settings, the church successfully reached a large audience and reaffirmed the idea that mental health is a crucial component of total well-being. This method offered a safe environment for members to talk about their experiences and look for assistance in addition to educating them about mental health.

Fostering an environment of tolerance and encouragement was yet another important issue that came out of the interviews. The eighth interviewee stressed the need for church leaders and counselors to set an example for this culture by publicly admitting the existence of mental health problems and exhibiting compassion and support for individuals who are impacted. She related a story of a sermon in which a church leader opened up about his personal struggles with depression and burnout. This congregation-wide display of vulnerability from a well-respected leader had a dramatic effect, encouraging others to feel more at ease talking about their troubles.

#### **4.3.2.4 Establishment of organized Counseling Programs**

Based on the interviews, evangelical churches in Addis Ababa have a chance to enhance their pastoral care by establishing dedicated counseling programs. The formalization and organization of these programs, according to the respondents, would alleviate a number of issues with providing consistent and effective counseling services. Churches can ensure a more accurate pastoral counseling approach by creating dedicated programs, which would greatly benefit both counselors and members.

The third interviewee stressed that conducting counseling without a formal structure is challenging because counseling services frequently require consistency and reliability. However, by establishing a dedicated counseling program, churches can provide a dependable and organized system for administering counseling services, ensuring that members receive convenient and dependable support.

Interviewee number six discussed the advantages of having counselors with specific training within a dedicated program. Even if they don't provide professional medical care, this training will be useful for them in identifying these cases and referring them to other specialists. Formal counseling programs appear to provide counselors with specific training that enables them to more effectively address a wide range of concerns. To start, the program can provide modules on marriage and family therapy, mental health, and trauma-informed treatment.

Additionally, a few participants emphasized how important it is to have designated counseling areas on church property. The seventh interviewee recounted an incident in which effective counseling was hampered by the absence of a private and secure space. Churchgoers often found it awkward to discuss personal matters in public settings where there was no privacy. Establishing dedicated counseling rooms within the church would provide members with a safe, quiet environment in which to confide their problems. Additionally, these dedicated areas might be equipped with instruments for counseling and mental health literature, which would improve the quality of care even more.

The eighth interviewee talked about how formal programs could help foster partnerships with outside mental health sectors and professionals. Referral networks, collaborative training sessions, and access to specialized mental health services are a few examples of these collaborations. Churches can improve their counseling skills and provide their members more services by incorporating outside expertise. For example, a focused program can involve collaborations with nearby clinics for mental health awareness campaigns or psychiatric assessments.

Interviewee number five proposed that workshops and seminars on a range of subjects, including healthy relationships, stress management, and grieving may be offered as part of an official counseling program. These educational programs would give congregants the skills and information necessary to take proactive care of their well-being in addition to increasing awareness of mental health issues. Preventative initiatives could foster a mental wellness culture within the church community and drastically lower the frequency of mental health crises.

## **Chapter Five: Discussion**

The findings from this study illuminate the multifaceted landscape of pastoral counseling within selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa, revealing both significant challenges and promising opportunities. By comparing these findings with existing literature, we can better contextualize the dynamics of pastoral counseling and identify pathways for improvement.

## 5.1 Challenges in Pastoral Counseling

A primary challenge identified in this study is the lack of training and resources for pastoral counselors. Many participants expressed concern over their insufficient preparation to address complex psychological issues effectively. This aligns with Louw (2015), who argues that inadequate training often leads to poor counseling outcomes. Similarly, Pierce and Refu (2015) emphasize that many pastors feel unprepared to tackle the psychological dimensions of their congregants' issues, which can lead to ineffective support. The findings highlight a critical gap in pastoral education that necessitates the development of more structured training programs, incorporating both theological and psychological training to better equip counselors.

Another significant challenge noted by participants was related to cultural sensitivity. Pastors reported that cultural beliefs and practices significantly influence the effectiveness of counseling sessions. This finding is consistent with Chao and Wei (2011), who assert that cultural misunderstandings can impede effective communication and counseling. The current study reinforces the notion that pastoral counselors must navigate complex cultural dynamics, which requires a heightened awareness and understanding of the cultural context in which they operate. This suggests a need for training programs that emphasize cultural competency as a core component of pastoral counseling education (Mukima, 2019).

Additionally, the issue of time constraints emerged as a recurring theme in the study. Many pastors indicated that their numerous responsibilities within the church limit their availability to provide adequate counseling. This observation echoes Louw's

(2015) findings, which highlight time management as a critical barrier to effective pastoral care. The current study emphasizes the need for churches to recognize these time limitations and consider strategies to allocate more time for counseling activities, potentially through the establishment of dedicated counseling roles or support staff.

## **5.2. Opportunities for Improvement**

Despite these challenges, the study identified several opportunities for enhancing pastoral counseling practices. One significant opportunity is the integration of faith and psychology. Participants expressed a strong desire to merge psychological principles with spiritual insights, which aligns with the advocacy for a holistic approach in counseling described by McMinn and Campbell (2007). This integration allows counselors to address both spiritual and psychological needs, potentially leading to more effective and comprehensive support for congregants.

Moreover, the potential for collaboration with mental health professionals was highlighted as a crucial opportunity. Participants recognized that partnerships with mental health experts could enhance the resources available to pastoral counselors, supporting a more integrated approach to care. Hunt (2015) emphasizes that such collaborations are essential for bridging the gap between spiritual guidance and psychological expertise. The findings suggest that fostering these partnerships could significantly benefit pastoral counseling in evangelical settings, allowing for a more nuanced approach to addressing mental health issues within the community.

The research also indicated a growing recognition of the importance of holistic approaches to counseling. Participants advocated for methods that address emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being, which resonates with the views of Slocum and Detrich (2016). Their argument for comprehensive pastoral care that meets diverse needs underscores the findings of this study, suggesting that an integrative approach could enhance the effectiveness of counseling services.

### **5.3 Impact on Community Healing**

The findings further highlight the role of pastoral counseling in fostering community healing and reducing stigma associated with mental health issues. Participants noted that by openly addressing mental health within the church, pastoral counseling can create a more supportive environment for individuals seeking help. This perspective is in line with Mukima (2019), who discusses the vital role of pastoral counseling in promoting mental well-being within faith communities. By encouraging discussions about mental health, pastoral counselors can help dismantle the stigma that often surrounds these issues, facilitating a more open dialogue and encouraging congregants to seek the support they need.

## **Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **Conclusion**

The exploration of pastoral counseling within selected evangelical churches in Addis Ababa has illuminated both the profound challenges and the significant opportunities present in this vital area of community support. The study identified key challenges, such as the lack of training and resources, cultural sensitivity issues, and the constraints of time that pastoral counselors often face. These findings align with existing literature, which underscores the necessity for improved training programs and greater awareness of cultural dynamics in counseling practices (Louw, 2015; Chao & Wei, 2011).

Moreover, while these challenges can impede effective counseling, the research also revealed promising opportunities for enhancing pastoral counseling practices. Participants expressed a strong desire to integrate psychological principles with spiritual insights, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of a holistic

approach to counseling (McMinn & Campbell, 2007). The potential for collaboration with mental health professionals emerged as a critical avenue for improving resource availability and providing comprehensive care. Furthermore, the emphasis on fostering community healing and reducing stigma surrounding mental health issues highlights the transformative potential of pastoral counseling when adequately supported and structured (Mukima, 2019).

In summary, the findings from this study call for a proactive approach to pastoral counseling that addresses identified challenges while capitalizing on opportunities for growth and improvement. By enhancing training, fostering collaboration, and promoting a holistic understanding of mental health, pastoral counselors can significantly improve their effectiveness and better serve their congregations.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are proposed for implementation:

#### 1. Develop Comprehensive Training Programs:

- Action: Collaborate with educational institutions to create training modules that encompass both theological education and psychological principles. This could include workshops, seminars, and continuing education courses specifically tailored for pastoral counselors.

- Impact: Such programs would equip pastors with essential counseling skills and knowledge, enabling them to address the psychological needs of their congregants more effectively.

## 2. Integrate Cultural Competence Training:

- Action: Incorporate cultural competence as a core component of pastoral training programs. This should focus on understanding the diverse cultural contexts of congregants and how these affect counseling dynamics.

- Impact: By enhancing cultural sensitivity, pastors can build stronger relationships with congregants and provide more relevant and effective counseling.

## 3. Establish Peer Support and Mentorship Systems:

- Action: Create peer support networks or mentorship programs within churches, where less experienced pastoral counselors can receive guidance from seasoned professionals.

- Impact: This initiative would foster an environment of collaboration and continuous learning, helping to address the resource gaps identified in the study.

## 4. Encourage Collaboration with Mental Health Professionals:

- Action: Develop partnerships with local mental health organizations to facilitate joint workshops, training sessions, and referral systems for congregants needing specialized care.

- Impact: Such collaborations can enhance the capacity of pastoral counselors to address mental health issues, providing a comprehensive support network for congregants.

#### 5. Allocate Dedicated Time for Counseling:

- Action: Advocate for structural changes within church operations to ensure that pastors have designated time for counseling activities. This may involve redefining pastoral roles or hiring additional support staff.

- Impact: By ensuring that counselors have the time necessary to engage with congregants, the quality of pastoral care can be significantly improved.

#### 6. Raise Awareness and Reduce Stigma:

- Action: Implement educational campaigns within the church community to promote mental health awareness and the role of pastoral counseling. This could include sermons, workshops, and community events focused on mental health issues.

- Impact: Increased awareness can help reduce stigma, encouraging congregants to seek help and fostering a more supportive community environment.

#### 7. Promote Holistic Counseling Approaches:

- Action: Train pastors to adopt holistic counseling methods that address emotional, spiritual, and psychological well-being. This could involve workshops on integrating various counseling techniques.

- Impact: A holistic approach to counseling can lead to more comprehensive support for congregants, addressing the multifaceted nature of their needs.

By implementing these recommendations, pastoral counselors can enhance their effectiveness and better serve their congregations, ultimately contributing to the mental and spiritual well-being of the community. These steps not only address the

current challenges but also pave the way for a more integrated and supportive approach to pastoral care.

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## **Appendices**

### Consent Form for Participation in Research Study

Opening:

Dear Participants/Discussants,

These questionnaires/topic guides have been designed to conduct research for the fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of M.A. in Counseling Psychology. One of the requirements for this degree is to conduct a research project. The topic of the study is "Challenges and Opportunities of Pastoral Counseling in Evangelical Churches."

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You, as a participant, have the full right to participate or not to participate. You do not have to answer any questions that you do not want to answer, and you are encouraged to ask questions about anything that is

not clear. However, your honest answers to these questions are very important for the purpose of the study.

I would also like to remind you that your genuine answers are of paramount importance to the outcome of the research, and that all your answers and your identity will be kept anonymous and confidential. The confidentiality of the participants will be maintained, and the participants' privacy will never be disclosed by any means at any stage of the study.

Do you agree to participate in the study?

Thank you in advance.

Participant's Consent:

I have read the information provided above. I have been given a chance to ask questions and all of my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study and understand that I can withdraw at any time without any negative consequences.

- Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

- Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix A**  
**Addis Ababa University**  
**School of psychology**  
**Counseling Psychology Program**

I. Demographic information

- ✧ Age:
- ✧ Gender:
- ✧ Marital Status:
- ✧ Education level:
- ✧ The name of your church:
- ✧ Full time server ? (Yes / No):
- ✧ How many years of experience do you have in pastoral counseling?
- ✧ Have you received any formal training in pastoral counseling? (yes no)  
If yes, please specify the type and duration of training.

II. Interview questions

1. Could you explain your role and duties as a pastoral counselor within your church?

2. What are some of the major challenges you encounter when providing pastoral counseling to your congregation members? Can you provide specific examples?
  
3. What can you tell me about the formal counseling training and experience among pastoral counselors in your church or community? How does this influence the counseling services you and other counselors offer?
  
4. What resources, facilities, or financial support does your church or community have to facilitate effective pastoral counseling? Are there any gaps or limitations in these resources?
  
5. Can you provide examples of how different backgrounds, cultural differences, beliefs, or worldviews among the people you counsel affect the pastoral counseling process and outcomes? What strategies do you use to ensure appropriate counseling?
  
6. Have you ever faced ethical dilemmas in your pastoral counseling services, such as issues of confidentiality, boundaries with counselees, or the appropriate use of pastoral authority? How do you handle these challenges?
  
7. How do you balance your pastoral counseling role with preaching, teaching, administrative duties, and other responsibilities? How does this impact your counseling services?

8. Do you believe that integrating pastoral counseling services with mental health services can enhance the overall well-being of church members, or do you think it is unnecessary? If you believe it is beneficial, please explain.

9. How do you collaborate with other church ministers or involve the wider congregation in the counseling process? How does this collaboration improve the effectiveness of your counseling services?

10. In your experience, how can pastoral counseling services address broader social issues by combining faith, spirituality, and psychology to foster a better society? What role can it play in empowering individuals and communities to enhance their overall well-being? Can you provide examples from your services?

**አዲስ አበባ የኒሽርስቲ**

**የሳይኮሎጂ ት/ቤት**

**ካውንስለንት ሳይኮሎጂ ዘርፍ**

በአዲስ አበባ ወንጌላውያን አብያተ ክርስቲያናት ላሉ የመጋቢ አማካሪዎች የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች።

## I. የ ስነ ሕዝብ መረጃ

◇ እድሜ:

◇ ጾታ:

◇ የጋብቻ ሁኔታ:

◇ የትምህርት ደረጃ :

◇ የቤተ ክርስቲያን ህስም: -

◇ ሙሉ ጊዜ አገልጋይ ? (አዎ / አይ) :-

◇ በእረኝነት ምክር የስንት ዓመታት ልምድ አሎት : -

◇ በእረኝነት ምክር ላይ ምንም ዓይነት መደበኛ ሥልጠና ወስደዋል ?

(አዎ አይ)

አዎ ከሆነ ፣ እባክዎን የስልጠናውን አይነት እና የቆይታ

ጊዜ ይግለጹ።

## II. የቃለ መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች

1. በቤተ ክርስቲያናችሁ ውስጥ እንደ መጋቢ አማካሪነት ያለዎትን ሚና እና ሀላፊነት መግለጽ ይችላሉ?

2. ለጉባኤዎችሁ አባላት የምክር አገልግሎትን ሲሰጡ የሚያጋጥሙ አንዳንድ ዋና ዋና ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው? የተወሰኑ ምሳሌዎችን መስጠት ይችላሉ?

3. በቤተክርስቲያናችሁ ወይም በማንበረሰባችሁ ውስጥ በመጋቢ አማካሪዎች መካከል ስላለው መደበኛ የምክር ስልጠና እና ልምድ ሊነግሩኝ ይችላሉ? ይህ እርስዎ እና ሌሎች አማካሪዎች የምክር አገልግሎት በሚሰጡበት ምንገድ ላይ ተጽእኖ የሚያሳድረው እንዴት ነው?

4. ውጤታማ የመጋቢ የምክር አገልግሎት እንዲኖር ለመደገፍ ቤተክርስቲያን ወይም ማህበረሰብዎ ምን አይነት ግብዓቶች፣ መገልገያዎች ወይም የገንዘብ ድጋፎች አሏቸው? በእነዚህ የምክር አገልግሎት ምቹ በማረግ ውስጥ ያሉ አንዳንድ ክፍተቶች ወይም ገደቦች ምንድናቸው?

5. የምክር አገልግሎት ከሚጠቀሙ ሰዎች መካከል የተለያዩ አስተዳደግ፣ የባህል ልዩነቶች፣ እምነቶች ወይም የዓለም አመለካከቶች (world view) የማማከረር ሂደትን እና ውጤቱ ላይ እንዴት ተፅዕኖ እንደሚያደርጉ አንዳንድ ምሳሌዎችን መጥቀስ ይችላሉ? እነዚህን ያማከለ ተገቢውን የምክር አገልግሎት ለመስጠት ምን አይነት ስልቶችን ይጠቀማሉ?

6. በመጋቢ የምክር አገልግሎት ውስጥ እንደሚሰጡ ጉዳዮች፣ ከአማካሪዎች ጋር ያለ ገደብ (boundary)፣ ወይም የመጋቢውን ሥልጣን በአግባቡ መጠቀምን የመሳሰሉ የሥነ ምግባር ችግሮች (ethical dilemma) አጋጥመውዎት ያቃል? እነዚህን አይነት ሁኔታዎች /ፈተናዎች እንዴት አድርገው ያልፋሉ?

7. እንደ ስብከት፣ የማስተማር ፣ አስተዳደራዊ ተግባራት እና ያሉዎትን ሌሎች ሀላፊነቶች ከግምት ውስጥ በማስገባት የመጋቢ መካሪነት ሚናዎን እንዴት ሚዛናዊ አድርገው ይሄዳሉ? የሀላፊነት ሚና መብዛት በምክር አገልግሎቶች ላይ ምን ተጽዕኖ ያሳድራል?

8. የመጋቢ ማማከር አገልግሎትን የአእምሮ ጤና አገልግሎቶች ጋር አንድ ላይ በማጣመር የቤተክርስቲያኒቱን አባላትን ሁለንተናዊ ደህንነት ለመደገፍ በምን መንገዶች አብሮ መስራት ይቻላል ብለው ያስባሉ፤ ወይስ አስፈላጊነት የለውም? አዎ ከሆነ መልሱ ያብራሩ።

9. ከሌሎች የቤተክርስቲያን አገልጋዮች ጋር እንዴት እንደሚተባበሩ ወይም ሰፊውን ምእመን በምክር አገልግሎት ሂደት ውስጥ እንዴት እንደሚያሳትፉ መግለጽ ይቻላል? ይህ ትብብር የምክር አገልግሎትዎን ውጤታማነት ለማሻሻል የሚረዳው እንዴት ነው?

10. በተሞክሮዎ፣ የተሸለ ማህበረሰብን ለመፍጠር እምነት፣ መንፈሳዊነት እና ስነ-ልቦናን (psychology) በማጣመር የመጋቢ ምክር አገልግሎት ሰፊ ማህበራዊ ጉዳዮችን ለመፍታት፣ ግለሰቦችን እና ማህበረሰቡን ሁለንተናዊ ደህንነታቸውን እንዲያሻሽሉ ለማበረታታት ምን ሚና ሊጫወት ይችላል? በአገልግሎቶች ውስጥ ለዚህ ምሳሌዎች አሉዎት?

