

A study on adaptive performance, work-related psychological health and demographics in Episcopal Church bishops

Adaptive performance and psychological health

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Received 10 February 2023

Revised 14 April 2023

21 May 2023

Accepted 21 May 2023

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this research study was to explore the relationship between adaptive performance and work-related indicators of psychological well-being among ‘The Episcopal Church bishops.’

Design/methodology/approach – Hierarchical regression models were used in this research study to explore the relationship between adaptive performance and work-related psychological health.

Findings – There was a positive correlation between adaptive performance and work-related psychological health. Demographic factors did not correlate to adaptive performance. However, a negative correlation was observed between the years ordained as a bishop and the interpersonal adaptability dimension of adaptive performance.

Research limitations/implications – Managing work stress has been revealed as an integral part of adaptive performance and satisfaction in ministry. Interpersonal adaptability and reactivity could be understood, then, as useful vehicles for increasing the capacity of bishops to manage work stress. In this research, the authors applied the Scale for Individual Adaptive Performance and the two scales Scale of Satisfaction in Ministry and Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry .

Practical implications – The results provided insights into the behaviors necessary for adequate development of bishops in their role. The religious landscape was becoming more challenging from a revenue generation perspective. The resultant complexity and the financial strain would necessitate the need for development of different models of ministry for long-term sustainability. This could further necessitate a different set of knowledge creation related to a set of behavioral capacities like those of adaptive performance. Such insights would assist in the promotion and development of greater work-related psychological health in bishops while deepening their ability to deal with complex and uncertain environments. Furthermore, this would increase satisfaction in ministry through improved workplace management skills.

Originality/value – Presently, very few studies empirically established the developmental needs of bishops as they entered, learned and grew into their leadership roles. Such insights would allow the formation programs for new bishops to be grounded in empirical data. Furthermore, this research study examined a largely unexplored population. This would provide a basis for a larger research agenda related to adaptive



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Journal of Work-Applied Management
Vol. 16 No. 1, 2024
pp. 31-47
Emerald Publishing Limited
e-ISSN: 2205-149X
p-ISSN: 2205-2062
DOI 10.1108/JWAM-02-2023-0015

performance in judicatory leaders and their work-related psychological health. Consequently, it is posited that improved psychological health would result in better workplace learning.

Keywords Adaptive performance, Psychological health, Emotional exhaustion, Employee satisfaction, Episcopal Church bishops, Hierarchical regression model

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

Adaptive performance has been viewed as a leadership attribute posited to increased individual and team performance (Wall *et al.*, 2017a). Adaptive performance increased effectiveness in complex and changing environments. Bishops, a leadership subset within The Episcopal Church (TEC), exercise managerial oversight in geographical regions called dioceses environments (Downey, 2018). Episcopal bishops were, in many ways, CEOs of voluntary organizations with life tenure analogous to “Federal Judges” in the United States (Pickard, 2017). Therefore, the bishop’s ability to learn and respond was considered a critical workplace management tool. Given this expansive scope of service and the extended terms of their appointments, there was interest in ensuring that the selection and development of individuals appointed to the episcopate had the requisite qualities and preparation for effective leadership. Exploring the antecedents and outcomes of adaptive performance in the TEC context could provide indicators for effective episcopal leadership.

Few studies empirically establish the developmental needs of bishops as they learn and grow into their leadership roles (Francis *et al.*, 2004, 2011; Pickard, 2017). This research study examined this context, thus providing a basis for a more extensive research agenda related to adaptive performance in judicatory leaders and their work-related psychological health (Wang *et al.*, 2022).

2. Theoretical framework

In this section, the authors present the theoretical framework of this study.

Scholars have explored the Big Five personality constructs (Barrick and Mount, 1991) and their relationship to adaptability and adaptive performance (Griffin and Hesketh, 2005) with mixed and sometimes counterintuitive results, to discover the antecedents of adaptive performance, particularly the demographic correlates. The purported antecedent character of the predictor variables has been reflected in Figure 1.

Clergies experience more work-related stress and burnout than their parishioners (Francis *et al.*, 2005). However, this came with higher job satisfaction (Francis *et al.*, 2005). Figure 2 depicted the relationship between adaptive performance and psychosocial well-being as operationalized by the Francis Burnout Inventory (FBI) (Francis *et al.*, 2005).

Pulakos *et al.* (2000) operationalized the adaptive performance model. Two aspects were noted by researchers regarding these initial efforts. Firstly, the research aimed to develop behavioral models of adaptive performance without any theoretical explanation regarding the behaviors (Griffin *et al.*, 2007). Secondly, the question of whether the construct of adaptive performance functioned as a multidimensional construct was examined. In an attempt to address the pervasive need for sound measurement in adaptive performance research, Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) developed a psychometric measure of adaptive performance. Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) explored the underlying dimensionality of adaptive performance, applicable across a wide range of job contexts. Items for the scale were generated using the eight dimensions posited by Pulakos *et al.* (2000). Work-related psychological well-being was operationalized using the two scales of the FBI.

2.1 Conceptualizing adaptive performance

Adaptive performance has been defined as the ability of an individual to adapt to dynamic work situations (Griffin and Hesketh, 2005). Pulakos *et al.* (2000) proposed eight specific dimensions characterizing how employees adjusted their behaviors to novel experiences and work situations. A current lack of consensus about the nature of adaptive performance across various job, occupational and role assessment situations prompted Pulakos *et al.* (2000) to define adaptive performance. Their comprehensive literature review addressing various job-relevant adaptive performance aspects revealed six dimensions that could be used to explore both a definition and a model for adaptive performance. These included solving problems creatively, dealing with uncertain and unpredictable work situations, learning work tasks, technologies and procedures, demonstrating interpersonal adaptability, demonstrating cultural adaptability and demonstrating physically oriented adaptability (Pulakos *et al.*, 2000). Kyei-Frimpong *et al.* (2022), in their research study, examined how leadership behavior impacted behavioral performance. They mentioned that knowledge sharing played a significant role in performance.

Griffin and Hesketh (2003) attempted a more parsimonious conceptualization of the Pulakos *et al.* (2000) models using the Minnesota Theory of Work Adjustment to address the theoretical and empirical concerns. These researchers asserted that Pulakos *et al.*'s (2000) eight dimensions could be categorized using three broad types of behavioral adaptability: proactive (creative problem-solving, dealing with crises), reactive (new learning, interpersonal, cultural and physical adaptability) and tolerant (coping with stress, dealing with uncertainty). Three exploratory factor analyses conducted to compare these two models did not find strong support for either model (Griffin and Hesketh, 2003). Thus, the measurement of adaptive performance has remained challenging.

2.2 Development of the adaptive performance scale

To address the pervasive need for sound measurement in the adaptive performance research, Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel (2012) worked to develop a scale for this task. Items for the scale were generated using the eight dimensions posited by Pulakos *et al.* (2000).

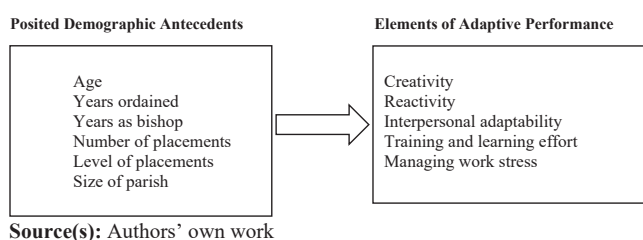


Figure 1. Relationship between adaptive performance and demographic variables

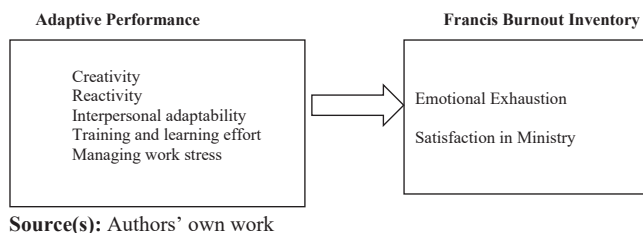


Figure 2. Relationship between adaptive performance and psychosocial well-being as operationalized by the Francis Burnout Inventory

Shoss *et al.* (2012) described adaptive performance as reflecting behaviors associated with competency acquisition as opposed to task and contextual performance (Borman and Motowidlo, 1993), behaviors that were associated with the expression of competencies. The mid-range theory of adaptability developed by Ployhart and Bliese (2006) posited adaptability that could apply to any performance dimension and type of performance (task, contextual or counterproductive). This indicated that the environment required adaptability. The adaptive requirements are not inherent in the criterion construct. Still, in the domain itself and even though adaptability is posited to be represented by the eight dimensions represented in Pulakos *et al.* (2000), these dimensions do not constitute separate performance dimensions (Ployhart and Bliese, 2006).

The meta-analysis of research relating personality to more general job performance conducted by Barrick and Mount (1991) concluded that conscientiousness was a “consistently valid predictor” (p. 17). The issue of whether conscientiousness and other personality trait predictors of performance could be more specifically applied to adaptive performance lacked clarity.

Personality variables as predictors have had mixed results overall. Allworth and Hesketh (1999) tested the Big Five personality factors and found a lack of relationship between the five factors and adaptive performance. Few researchers had empirically tested the relationships between conscientiousness (Griffin and Hesketh, 2005), openness to experience (Griffin *et al.*, 2007) and adaptive performance. Lepine *et al.* (2000) explored whether predictors of employee performance, like general cognitive ability and the Big Five personality variables used in the selection approaches of many organizations, were capable of predicting adaptability.

In addition to the personality factors and cognitive predictors discussed earlier in this study, several other predictors have been explored. Prior experiences with change and change-related self-efficacy (Griffin and Hesketh, 2003) have been found to predict adaptive performance.

Two primary constructs were explored in this research study. The first is “adaptive performance,” and the second is work-related psychological health. These constructs were operationalized with two separate self-reporting instruments used in this study. The Scale for Individual Adaptive Performance (SIAP) (Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012) and the two scales, the Scale of Satisfaction in Ministry (SIMS) and the Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) (Francis and Crea, 2021) which constitute as the FBI (Francis *et al.*, 2005). In addition to these instruments, participants answered questions designed to measure demographic details of the antecedents which included age, years of ordained ministry, years as a bishop, the largest congregation served and the number of positions held.

While extant adaptive performance research explored the more stable personality factors and cognitive predictors, there needed to be more research that explored antecedents and outcome measures that were developmental (Stokes *et al.*, 2010; Wall *et al.*, 2017a). Bishops’ roles in TEC and their election rendered the personality factors less necessary for the bishops’ development (Pickard, 2017). This research study focused on an individual’s more developmental, malleable aspects and the subsequent relationships with adaptive performance and work-related psychological health. Whether adaptive performance could be predicted accurately remained an essential question for organizations facing unpredictable and complex environments, especially as it related to hiring practices and other human resource-related areas (Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012). Thus, the authors propose the following three hypotheses to explore the interrelationship between adaptive performance and demographic variables about bishops.

H1. Age will be positively correlated with adaptive performance.

H2. Years of ordained ministry will be positively correlated with adaptive performance.

H3. Years ordained as a bishop will be positively correlated with adaptive performance.

Research relating personality to more general job performance conducted by [Barrick and Mount \(1991\)](#) concluded that conscientiousness was a consistently valid predictor. The issue of whether conscientiousness and other personality traits were predictors of performance which could be more specifically applied to adaptive performance needed more clarity. Thus, the authors proposed the following hypotheses to explore this question.

H4. The number of placements will be positively correlated with adaptive performance.

H5. The size of the parish served prior to ordination as a bishop will be positively correlated with adaptive performance.

3. Research method

In this section, the authors outline the research design and variables and describe the instrumentation used to operationalize each variable and its respective psychometric properties. The procedures used in the data collection process are also explored in detail.

This research study utilized a cross-sectional research design and employed a survey tool. The patterns of association between the demographic variables, adaptive performance and work-related psychological health were explored. This was also reflected in the research by [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#) and [Stokes et al. \(2010\)](#).

The primary variables in the study were adaptive performance and work-related psychological well-being ([Francis et al., 2004](#)). This manifested as emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry ([Francis et al., 2004](#)). The following demographic variables were assessed: age, years of ordained ministry, years ordained as a bishop, the number of placements and size of the parish served before ordination as a bishop. The adaptive performance served as an outcome variable concerning assessing demographically correlated variables. Adaptive performance was a predictor variable concerning the outcome variables of emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry. Population parameters as predictor/outcome variables, as well as demographic correlates, were reported.

The research study population comprised church-related judicatory leaders and active TEC bishops. An actively serving bishop was a bishop who functioned as the diocesan, suffragan, assistant or assisting bishop of a diocese ([Pickard, 2017](#)). Such bishops did the churchwide body in such a way to retain their voting membership in the House of Bishops of TEC. Currently, there are more than 150 actively serving bishops. Since the active bishops' population was relatively small, all the active bishops were invited to participate in the research study. Solicitation consisted of an email message sent by the principal researcher (an active bishop in TEC) through the *College for Bishops*, who are responsible for the formation of bishops under the canon law of TEC, 112 bishops completed the entire.

The survey contained the FBI ([Francis et al., 2005](#)) and the SIAP ([Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012](#)). This was along with questions that made inquiries regarding demographic variables such as age, the number of years of service in ordained ministry, the number of years as a bishop, the number of placements during those years of service and the size of the parish served.

Bishops were asked to rate their agreement with statements related to their roles. This self-understanding of their adaptive performance was made to capture the construct and serve as the quantitative data. This was to measure the prevalence of adaptive performance and its relationship with work-related psychological health and proposed demographic antecedents ([Pulakos et al., 2000](#); [Wang et al., 2022](#)).

The authors conducted the survey following institutional review board approval. Participants were invited to participate in the study. Those who agreed to participate were

provided an overview of the survey as advised by [Christensen et al. \(2011\)](#). The responses were digitally recorded and then analyzed. The surveys were conducted to understand the participants' experiences better ([Kreiner et al., 2015](#)). The authors included bishops in the USA to conduct the survey and study the constructs. Thus, TEC from Europe, Canada and other areas were excluded from this study.

Participants also completed the SIMS and SEEM, the two scales that comprise the FBI. The FBI instrument had a balanced effect ([Bradburn, 1969](#)). [Bradburn \(1969\)](#) argued that positive and negative affect were separate continuums rather than opposite ends of a single continuum. This provided theoretical justification for why clergy in our study often reported emotional exhaustion with simultaneously high satisfaction levels ([Francis et al., 2011](#)). Each scale asked participants to rate their agreement with statements about their ministries on a five-point Likert scale.

The data were analyzed in three phases. The *Stata* statistical software package generated the statistics ([Gutierrez, 2010](#)). In the first phase, descriptive statistics were computed to describe the population, as advocated by [Kaur et al. \(2018\)](#). Each of the scale scores was calculated in detail. For the SIAP, a composite score and a score for each dimension were calculated. This was also suggested by [Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel \(2012\)](#). Population parameters were also reported. Such a description allowed for securing a holistic picture of the parameters of the population ([Kaur et al., 2018](#)). This set the stage for the next two phases of analysis.

The second phase utilized inferential statistics. A correlation matrix was generated to explore the relationships between the demographic variables and adaptive performance. Moreover, the relationships between adaptive performance and each of its constituent dimensions (the two scales that comprised the FBI: emotional exhaustion and satisfaction in ministry) were explored.

In the third phase, multiple regression analysis was used to explore the significant relationships that emerged concerning the composite and constituent dimensions of adaptive performance ([Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012](#)). This improved the study rigor. A separate analysis was carried out with respect to the antecedent and consequent relationships. Emotional exhaustion or satisfaction in ministry and each of the demographic variables that correlated with adaptive performance were explored. This was done to estimate the proportion of variance accounted for by each of the outcome variables as advised by [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#).

4. Results and findings

In this section, the authors present the results and findings.

The demographic variables selected for this study were determined by commonly held beliefs about the selection criteria for bishops that might be developmentally significant. In [Table 1](#), the authors tabulated the means and standard deviations for years ordained, years ordained bishop and the number of positions.

Age often functioned as a selection criterion for the episcopate, and the distribution of age in this population is indicated in [Table 2](#).

4.1 Average Sunday attendance

The participants were asked to indicate the largest parish they served in terms of average Sunday attendance (ASA) and if they served a parish prior to the episcopate. The distribution of participants related to ASA is tabulated in [Table 3](#).

4.1.1 Scale scores. The SIAP was a 19-item survey with five dimensions: creativity in problem-solving, reactivity in the face of emergencies or unexpected circumstances,

interpersonal adaptability and managing work stress. Participants indicated their agreement with statements about how they functioned in the workplace using a seven-point Likert scale. In Table 4, the authors present the means and standard deviations for adaptive performance dimensions.

	Mean	SD
Years ordained	31.08	9.35
Years as a bishop	9.20	7.16
Number of positions held	5.34	1.96

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for demographic variables ($N = 117$)

Age categories	Frequency	Percentage
46–50	7	5.98
51–55	13	11.11
56–60	39	33.33
61–65	28	23.93
66–72	23	19.66
73+	7	5.98

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 2. Age distribution ($N = 117$)

ASA	Frequency	Percentage
76–100	2	1.72
101–125	1	0.86
126–150	6	5.17
151–200	18	15.52
201–250	21	18.10
251–300	21	18.10
301–450	18	15.52
451+	29	25.00

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 3. Distribution of bishops who previously served congregations by average Sunday attendance (ASA) ($N = 116$)

	Mean	Standard deviation	N
Creativity	22.30	2.78	112
Reactivity	19.71	3.58	112
Interpersonal adaptability	22.89	2.58	112
Training and learning effort	19.88	3.91	112
Managing work stress*	2.11	0.48	112
SIAP	102.13	11.10	112
SEEM	23.83	4.75	117
SIMS	47.03	4.07	117

Note(s): *The variable managing work stress was reflected and subject to a square root transformation

Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 4. Means and standard deviations: SIAP, SEEM and SIMS scales

Cronbach's alpha (α) score of 0.87 was calculated for the SIAP for the data in this study. Cronbach's alpha scores were also calculated for each dimension of the SIAP: creativity ($\alpha = 0.71$), reactivity ($\alpha = 0.74$), training and learning effort ($\alpha = 0.75$), interpersonal adaptability ($\alpha = 0.73$) and managing work stress ($\alpha = 0.60$). In [Table 5](#), the authors present a correlation matrix which indicated significant correlations with the SEEM and the SIMS ([Francis and Crea, 2021](#)).

There was a significant negative correlation between the SIAP and SEEM ($r = -0.50$, $p < 0.001$) and a significant positive correlation between the SIAP and SIMS ($r = 0.63$, $p < 0.001$).

4.2 Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) and Satisfaction in Ministry Scale (SIMS)

The SEEM and SIMS ([Francis and Crea, 2021](#)) were one-dimensional, 11-item scales. Participants indicated agreement with statements related to their ministry by utilizing a five-point Likert scale. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each scale using the data for this research study. Both scales yielded alpha reliability scores of 0.79. In [Table 4](#), the authors present the values of means and standard deviations for these scales. In [Table 5](#), the authors present a correlation matrix.

[Table 5](#) reflected a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.60$, $p < 0.001$) between these two scales and significant correlations with the SIAP, discussed earlier.

The normality of variables was assessed by inspection of skewness, kurtosis and histograms ([Tabachnick et al., 2007](#)). The variables followed normal distributions except for managing work stress, one of the constituent dimensions of the SIAP. The skewness level for that dimension was high and negative (-1.27). The variable was reflected, and a square root transformation was performed. This transformation reduced skewness to an acceptable level (0.30) as suggested by [Tabachnick et al. \(2007\)](#).

4.3 Hypothesis testing

The first hypothesis was to ascertain adaptive performance prevalence among TEC bishops. The results of the SIAP have addressed this research question. In [Table 4](#), the authors presented the means and standard deviations for the SIAP. Interpersonal adaptability, which reflected the willingness and ability of an individual to collaborate and change behaviors to work with others, revealed the highest mean score. This was closely followed by creativity. Creativity is an indicator of the ability of an individual to find new solutions or creative approaches to managing complex issues. Overall, the results in [Table 4](#) indicated the prevalence of adaptive performance among bishops in each of the five areas and the total scale score.

In this investigation, research question two was regarding what demographic variables covaried with adaptive performance among bishops in TEC. This research question resulted in the formulation of five hypotheses. To test these hypotheses, correlations for these variables and SIAP and its constituent dimensions were calculated. In [Table 6](#), the authors present a correlation matrix that includes correlations between demographic variables, the dimensions of the SIAP and scale scores for the SIAP, SEEM and SIMS.

The authors now present the study findings of the proposed hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 which postulated that age to be positively correlated with adaptive performance was not supported. There were no significant correlations between age and adaptive performance or its constituent dimensions.

Hypothesis 2 which indicated that years of ordained ministry was positively correlated with adaptive performance was not supported. No significant correlations existed between years of ordained ministry and adaptive performance or its constituent dimensions.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Age												
2. Years ordained	0.76***											
3. Years as a bishop	0.68***	0.67***										
4. Number of positions	0.43***	0.46***	0.21*									
5. Highest ASA of congregations served	0.09	0.12	-0.02	0.17								
6. Creativity	-0.01	-0.12	-0.09	-0.02	0.06							
7. Reactivity in the face of emergencies or unexpected circumstances	-0.02	-0.01	0.03	0.10	0.06	0.63						
8. Interpersonal adaptability	-0.15	-0.12	-0.23*	-0.07	0.03	0.38	0.23					
9. Training and learning effort	-0.06	-0.11	-0.08	0.01	0.13	0.64***	0.50***	0.36***				
10. Managing work stress	-0.04	-0.08	-0.13	0.07	0.09	0.37***	0.38***	0.42***	0.34***			
11. SIAP	-0.09	-0.12	-0.12	0.02	0.10	0.83***	0.78***	0.61***	0.82***	-0.62***		
12. SEEM	-0.03	-0.08	-0.01	-0.16	-0.08	-0.45***	-0.47***	-0.25**	-0.36***	0.29***	-0.50***	
13. SIMS	0.06	0.01	-0.07	0.08	0.18	0.56	0.50	0.38***	0.41***	-0.53***	0.63***	-0.60***

Note(s): * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$
 The signs for managing work stress were changed because the variable was reflected prior to square root transformation
Source(s): Authors' own work

Table 5. Correlation between demographic variables, dimension of the SIAP and scale scores for the SIAP, SEEM and SIMS

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Table 6.

Hierarchical regression
analysis:
SEEM ($N = 117$)

	B	SE B	β	ΔR^2	R^2
<i>Equation 1</i>					
Creativity	-0.37	0.19	-0.22*		
Reactivity	-0.41	0.14	-0.31**		
Interpersonal	-0.17	0.16	-0.09		
					0.2632***
<i>Equation 2</i>					
Creativity	-0.36	0.19	-0.21		
Reactivity	-0.38	0.14	-0.29**		
Interpersonal	-0.12	0.17	-0.06		
Stress	-0.78	0.95	-0.08		
				0.005	0.2679***

Note(s): * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

The signs for stress were changed because the variable was reflected prior to a square root transformation

Source(s): Authors' own work

Hypothesis 3 which suggested that years ordained as a bishop to be positively correlated with adaptive performance was not supported. A significant negative correlation ($r = -0.23$, $p < 0.05$) between years ordained as a bishop and the interpersonal adaptability dimension of adaptive performance was indicated. As years ordained as bishop increased, interpersonal adaptability decreased.

Hypothesis 4 which indicated that the number of placements will be positively correlated with adaptive performance was not supported. There were no significant correlations between the number of placements and adaptive performance.

Hypothesis 5 which indicated that size of parish served prior to ordination as a bishop will be positively correlated with adaptive performance was not supported. There were no significant correlations between the size of the parish served regarding ASA and adaptive performance or its constituent dimensions.

None of the five hypotheses associated with research question two thus found support. The authors had presented the results of the hierarchical regression model in which the SEEM was regressed on the constituent dimensions of adaptive performance.

The first equation (refer to **Table 7**) included creativity, reactivity to emergencies and unexpected circumstances and interpersonal adaptability. The inclusion of these variables

	B	SE B	β	ΔR^2	Adjusted R^2
<i>Equation 1</i>					
Block 1	Creativity	0.49	0.15	0.33**	
	Reactivity	0.28	0.11	0.25*	
	Interpersonal	0.31	0.13	0.19*	
					0.37***
<i>Equation 2</i>					
Block 2	Creativity	0.45	0.14	0.31**	
	Reactivity	0.19	0.11	0.17	
	Interpersonal	0.15	0.13	0.09	
	Stress	2.72	0.70	0.32***	
				0.075	0.44***

Table 7.

Hierarchical regression
analysis:
SIMS ($N = 117$)

Note(s): * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

The signs for stress were changed because the variable was reflected for a square root transformation

Source(s): Authors' own work

was significant ($F(3,108) = 12.86, p < 0.001$), accounting for 24% of the variance in the dependent variable. In the second equation (refer to Table 7), managing work stress was added. Training and learning effort was not included in this equation due to the multicollinearity indicated by high correlation ($r = 0.64$) with creativity. The addition of managing work stress provided an increment to R^2 of 0.005, which failed to reach significance ($F(1,107) = 0.68, p = 0.41$).

This hypothesis found partial support in the hierarchical regression model. Creativity and reactivity were significantly and negatively correlated with the SEEM in the first equation. The second equation added stress but did not significantly increase the R^2 value. For the final equation only, the reactivity dimension of adaptive performance was significantly associated with SEEM. The creativity dimension had approached significance ($p = 0.06$).

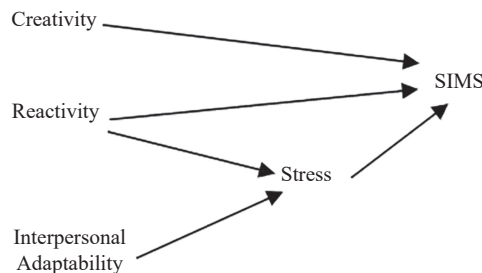
Results from the hierarchical regression analysis for the SIMS are reported in Table 7.

The first equation (refer to Table 7) included creativity, reactivity to emergencies and unexpected circumstances and interpersonal adaptability. This block was significant ($F(3, 108) = 22.57, p < 0.001$), accounting for 37% of the variance in the dependent variable. Training and learning effort was not included in this equation due to the multicollinearity indicated by a high correlation ($r = 0.64$) with creativity. The addition of managing work stress in equation two provided a significant increment to R^2 ($\Delta = 0.075$), $F(1,107) = p < 0.001$. These four variables account for 44% of the variance in the full model SIMS $F(4, 107) = 22.83, p < 0.001$.

Managing work stress was found to function as a mediating variable. This was regarding two of the other dimensions of adaptive performance in its relationship with SIMS: interpersonal adaptability and reactivity. The three variables of creativity, reactivity and interpersonal adaptability were included in the first equation (refer to Table 7) because these could be understood as behavioral resources that could have causal priority to managing work stress.

Interpersonal adaptability was significant ($p = 0.018$) in the first equation, but was not significant in the second equation ($p = 0.258$). The standardized slope for interpersonal adaptability was 0.20 in the first equation and 0.09 in the second. These were the first two indicators of a possible mediating effect. Managing work stress, the variable added in the second equation, was significant ($p < 0.001$), controlling for interpersonal adaptability. Furthermore, managing work stress and interpersonal adaptability were significantly correlated ($p < 0.001$) (refer to Table 6). This suggested that stress fully mediated the relationship between interpersonal adaptability and the SIMS (refer to Figure 3).

Managing work stress also mediated the relationship of reactivity with the dependent variable. Reactivity was statistically significant in the first equation ($p = 0.012$) but only approached significance ($p = 0.076$) in the second equation. The standardized slope for



Source(s): Authors' own work

Figure 3. Relationship between constituent dimensions of the SIAP and SIMS demonstrating the mediating effect of stress

reactivity was 0.25 in the first equation and 0.17 in the second equation with work stress variable added. Managing work stress, the variable added in the second equation, was significant ($p < 0.001$), controlling for reactivity. Managing work stress and reactivity was also significantly correlated ($p < 0.01$) (refer to [Table 6](#)). The reduction in the slope for reactivity and the fact that reactivity approached significance in the second equation suggested stress partially mediated relationship between interpersonal adaptability and the SIMS (refer to [Figure 3](#)).

Creativity, reactivity and interpersonal adaptability were all significant and positively correlated with the SIMS in the first equation. Training and learning effort was not included due to multicollinearity, and the second equation, which added stress, significantly increased the R^2 ($F(4, 107) = 22.83, p < 0.001$). In the second model, creativity and stress were significant, reactivity approached significance and interpersonal adaptability was not significant. Interpersonal adaptability was partially mediated by stress, and reactivity was fully mediated by stress.

The authors applied hierarchical regression analyses to seek answers. The SEEM was regressed on the constituent dimensions of the SIAP in the first equation, which accounted for 24% of the total variance. Managing work stress was added in the second equation but failed to reach significance. The SIMS was also regressed on the constituent dimensions of the SIAP in the first equation of the hierarchical model. Managing work stress was added to the second equation and was statistically significant. Managing stress was found to serve as a partial mediator for reactivity and complete mediator for interpersonal adaptability.

5. Discussion

The research study findings provide insights into the complex world of how bishops manage churches. Bishops were not only expected to converse fluently in uncertain environments but also required to assist clergy, congregations and the churchwide institution in doing the same ([Pickard, 2017](#)). The results indicated that these selection criteria would not alone provide the type of episcopal leadership sought by churches, as suggested by [Pickard \(2017\)](#). Data analysis indicated that higher levels of these variables (more years ordained, more years ordained as a bishop or serving larger congregations) would not, by itself, increase the level of adaptive performance. This was also highlighted by [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#). This study findings were also aligned with the findings of [Kyei-Frimpong et al. \(2022\)](#) that leaders' knowledge sharing influenced organizational performance. The critical element to improving bishops' adaptive performance abilities is their willingness and competence to augment their workplace learning processes. The church is a religious institution to serve the faith-based needs of the individuals besides expanding and growing the congregation. Unless bishops could mold themselves according to the changing people's expectations, they might find it difficult to contribute to increasing capacities toward people's faith-based needs. Based on our study results, the authors proposed that churches as organizations should focus on expanding their workplace learning capacities to improve the organizational response to the ever-changing internal and external environments.

While no positive correlations were supported, there was a significant negative correlation between the number of years ordained as a bishop and the interpersonal adaptability dimension of adaptive performance. This was also indicated by [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#). Interpersonal adaptability dimension conceptualized by [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#) described the adjustment of the interpersonal style to achieve goals with new teams or coworkers or customers. This was also indicated by [Stokes et al. \(2010\)](#). There were some aspects of this dimension more applicable to the work context of bishops than others. For example, bishops in TEC were not, for the most part, participating in cross-functional teams or were expected to meet customer demand in quite the same way as was anticipated in for-profit or some other

non-profit organizations (Kong, 2008). Instead, bishops tended to function in a chief executive role. They did so by adapting to the work style of others. They accomplished goals that had different operational or cultural values from other types of organizations (Pickard, 2017).

This study's results did not indicate a significant decrease in the full SIAP scale score, with increased years ordained as a bishop. Bishops became less interpersonally adaptive in their episcopate. This was also suggested by Pickard (2017). This is developmentally problematic from a role perspective and could decrease the ability of bishops to navigate their respective environments. This negatively affected bishops' work-related psychological health (Kreiner *et al.*, 2015). The possible complication of decreased quality of work-related psychological health became increasingly apparent. This was because of the significant relationship between the SEEM and adaptive performance and between the SEEM and the interpersonal adaptability dimension of adaptive performance. This was also pointed out by Di Fabio and Blustein (2010). Furthermore, emotional exhaustion decreased as both adaptive performance and interpersonal adaptability increased.

Greater alignment with the interpersonal adaptability dimension over time in the role required some level of reconceptualization of the role of the bishop in the exercise of episcopate. This was also highlighted by Pickard (2017). This realignment could not be quickly or easily achieved. This would be because it requires significant shifts in expectations at the level of organizational culture and at the practical level. Furthermore, it would require significant theological reflection in light of the current context. The relationship between satisfaction in ministry and emotional exhaustion in ministry and adaptive performance became more complicated and nuanced with the consideration of the constituent dimensions of adaptive performance through the use of hierarchical regression models. These models provided key insights and laid the groundwork for understanding the relationship between adaptive performance and work-related psychological health.

Results indicated that bishops were willing to consider at least and propose anti-establishment ideas and solutions. This was also suggested by Downey (2018). Bishops who were able to work to develop new tools and ideas for such problems experienced less emotional exhaustion. This was also highlighted in the research by Francis *et al.* (2004). Additionally, bishops who were able to consider a variety of options, reorganize work and act quickly to resolve issues also experienced lower emotional exhaustion. This finding was also supported by the research of Francis *et al.* (2011). Emotional exhaustion was a key indicator of work-related psychological health. Low levels of the same were critical to avoid burnout. The study results provide the basis for practical developmental foci for bishops. The bishops who were engaged in formation processes early in their tenure could provide a framework for continuing education and formation as their episcopal vocations progress. This was also highlighted in the research by Francis *et al.* (2005). The implications for ongoing practice were important even with the consideration of the three dimensions of adaptive performance that did contribute to emotional exhaustion. This was also suggested by Di Fabio and Blustein (2010). Developmental programs for bishops should consider ways to enrich creative problem-solving and careful decision-making processes as critical components.

The adaptive performance reactivity dimension impacted satisfaction in ministry in both direct and indirect ways. This was also supported in the research by Shoss *et al.* (2012). Reactivity alone had a significant relationship with SIMS, but the relationship was also partially mediated by managing the work stress dimension of adaptive performance. The ability to react well to emergencies and unexpected circumstances by quickly considering options and reorganizing work accordingly often increased bishop's satisfaction. When managing work stress was added to the equation, the relationship between reactivity and the SIMS was partially mediated. This was also suggested by Francis *et al.* (2005).

The relationship between interpersonal adaptability and the SIMS was more straightforward. In this case, managing the work stress dimension fully mediated the

relationship between interpersonal adaptability and the SIMS. The nature of relationships mediated by managing work stress pointed to some important insights. Interpersonal adaptability was driving the ability to manage work stress which, in turn, affected the SIMS. The significance of interpersonal adaptability was found in the willingness to collaborate with others and in adaptive behaviors to reach goals. This directly impacted the ability to manage work stress positively (Wall *et al.*, 2017b). Subsequently, this impacted satisfaction in the ministry.

The possible complication of decreased quality of work-related psychological health became increasingly clear because of the significant relationship between the SEEM and adaptive performance. This was also reported between the SEEM and the interpersonal adaptability dimension of adaptive performance. Furthermore, emotional exhaustion decreased both as adaptive performance and interpersonal adaptability increased.

It was observed that greater alignment was noted with the interpersonal adaptability dimension over a period of time in the role. This would require reconceptualization of the role bishops exercised in TEC. However, this realignment could not be easily achieved. This would be because it would require significant shifts in expectations in organizational culture at the individual level. Furthermore, it would require significant theological reflection, which was critical but beyond the scope of this research study.

6. Conclusion

The landscape and context of TEC continues to evolve and change as increasingly complex and uncertain environments emerge. Functioning and performing well in rapidly changing and challenging environments requires individuals to become more adaptable, versatile and tolerant of uncertainty (Pulakos *et al.*, 2000). One such environment was that faced by bishops in TEC. Bishops by their position worked with a broader set of individuals engaged in a wide variety of work-related tasks. This ranged from executive to pastoral functions. Bishops faced a secular culture with increasing ambivalence toward religious institutions and thus had to engage with a substantive level of emotional labor given their public and symbolic roles. Furthermore, with ever-decreasing human and financial resources, TEC required innovation and new congregational and governance models to sustain. This emphasized that learning agility, responsiveness and adaptability is required, which essentially formed the backbone of workplace learning.

6.1 Study scope and future research directions

While the SIAP scale worked well for this research study, there was a need for a closer examination of the factor structure. Thus, the development of the questions was more suited to the work of bishops and such other leaders. For example, interpersonal adaptability was important but could be captured differently with questions more aligned to the specific work of bishops.

Finally, exploring some of the psychosocial dimensions of leadership would also add value. Resiliency and self-efficacy could shed significant light on bishops' adaptive performance and work-related psychological health. Both could be examined as antecedents to adaptive performance. This also included adaptive performance as a capacity that could increase work-related psychological health.

6.2 Theoretical implications

Adaptive performance was posited to increase the ability of individuals to deal with complex and uncertain environments such as those experienced by bishops in TEC. Bishops who reported higher levels of adaptive performance also reported higher levels of work-related psychological health. Better psychological health, in turn, fosters an individual's ability to

learn and adapt to workplace management challenges through enhanced learning capacity. This was also suggested by Pulakos *et al.* (2000) and Pickard (2017). Managing work stress has been revealed as an integral part of adaptive performance and satisfaction in ministry (Francis *et al.*, 2004). Interpersonal adaptability and reactivity could be understood, then, as useful vehicles for increasing the capacity of bishops to manage work stress. The authors thus integrated the SIAP, SEEM, and SIMS (contributing toward theoretical advancement) with respect to adaptive performance (Griffin and Hesketh, 2003; Jundt *et al.*, 2015).

6.3 Managerial implications

The practical implication of the study mediating relationships was clear. The results provided insights into the behaviors necessary for the adequate development of bishops and other organizational employees in their role. The organizational landscape continued to change from a revenue generation perspective. The resultant complexity and financial strain necessitate the need for the development of different organizational models for long-term sustainability, work-related behaviors and knowledge creation. From a workplace learning perspective, this knowledge creation could bode well for improved organizational performance. Bishops had an onus to continually enhance and develop their workplace capacities through increased participation in individual and organizational learning. This was also reflected in Pulakos *et al.*'s (2000) research.

Such insights would assist in the promotion and development of greater work-related psychological health in employees while deepening their ability to deal with complex and uncertain environments. This was also pointed out in the research by Downey (2018). The interpersonal adaptability and reactivity indicated the ways in which the SIMS could be affected. This was not only on their own self but also by managing work stress (Charbonnier-Voirin and Roussel, 2012; Pulakos *et al.*, 2000). Moreover, the study would contribute to creating a societal impact which could include supporting religious management and moral considerations alongside management.

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