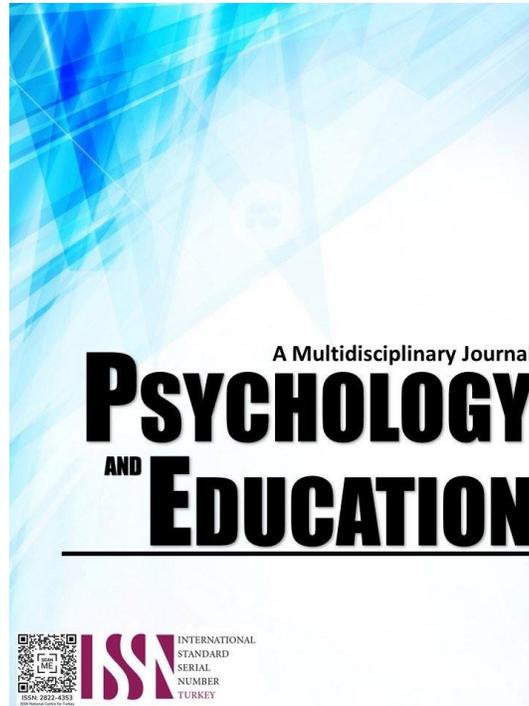


# LIVED EXPERIENCES OF CLERGYWOMEN IN SELECTED CHRISTIAN CHURCHES IN THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION, PHILIPPINES



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## Lived Experiences of Clergywomen in Selected Christian Churches in the National Capital Region, Philippines

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### Abstract

The phenomena where religion decides to break its own boundaries, is one where a lack of information exists. This study sought to explore the lived experiences of clergywomen inside the churches considering the limited local studies and literature conducted about clergywomen in the country. In light of this, additional knowledge is contributed to the few existing bodies of literature, specifically information about clergywomen's challenges, roles, and how they view themselves, highlighting the essence of clergywomen in the country. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with predetermined standards of serving the church as a clergywoman and actively participating in religious activities. This study utilized phenomenology, which included conducting one-on-one semi-structured interviews to gather data. The findings presented "ascension to pastoral ministry", "roles and responsibilities", "financial difficulty", "mockery", and "disagreement" as themes. It was also found that the participants have positive relationships, a supportive environment, and "positive view of themselves" even though they experienced struggles. The participants had different roles in the church, encountered several struggles, and had painful yet pleasing experiences as they defined them, leading them to have a positive view of themselves. Based on the findings, it is recommended to women in clergy, religious institutions and to the community to be more accepting of clergywomen in religious organizations. Moreover, further studies regarding clergywomen with different backgrounds such as single and married clergywomen as well as other members of the church including LGBT+ members are emphasized for future researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomena.

**Keywords:** *clergywomen, christian churches, lived experiences, challenges*

### Introduction

Religious organizations heavily influence how modern society functions, therefore making the roles of religious leaders of high importance. The clergy is a group of ordained ministers who administer sacraments, provide spiritual guidance, and play a vital role in ministerial leadership. The church, a central place for community gatherings, acts as a key institution where spiritual guidance and community development closely come together. In this framework, the clergyperson takes on responsibilities that go beyond usual guidance, covering not just coaching and counseling but also the careful art of watchful observation (Hilder, 2023). However, in the world of religious leadership, female clergy face a variety of challenges that strongly affect their journey in ministry, as it is a mostly patriarchal occupation.

In the workplace, clergywomen encounter various inequalities, including lower salaries, limited chances to preach, and fewer opportunities to advance to top leadership positions like senior pastor, solo pastor, denominational or network leader, or megachurch pastor (Matthews, 2022). These challenges highlight the widespread differences in the pastoral field, continuing despite the commendable increase in their participation in pastoral ministry. Although many churches in the Christian religion, especially protestant churches, have allowed women to lead congregations, authorities claim that females should not be appointed as leaders (White, 2015), therefore females tend to get fewer opportunities in leadership roles.

In this paper, the researchers aim to further explore and understand the lived experience of the clergywomen within the National Capital Region of the Philippines. The researchers aim to dive deep into their roles, responsibilities, challenges, and ascension towards the leadership ministry, as well as their self-efficacy and self-fulfillment through their roles. Societal expectations shape perceptions of female leaders, often resulting in prejudice (Ferguson, 2017). Although the church is supposed to be an environment of security where they will feel like they belong, it has been brought to light that female pastors face many difficulties in the workplace (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2020), which is further explored in this paper as the researchers discovered the diverse challenges faced by these clergywomen as they journey into pastoral ministry. Furthermore, it is important to note that through this paper, the researchers seek to better understand that the female clergy also play an important role within the ministry.

This study explores the experiences of clergywomen within select Christian churches in the National Capital Region, with a focus on their encountered challenges, roles, and self-perception. Congregations, particularly women within them, will gain valuable insights into the experiences of clergywomen, fostering greater inclusivity and acceptance within church communities. Church leaders could utilize these insights to promote fairness and equality within their congregations. Additionally, this study will provide helpful information for future researchers and support groups advocating for women's rights in churches.

## Research Questions

This study aims to explore the lived experiences of clergywomen in the Philippines as well as contribute to the existing studies about clergywomen in the country. Specifically, this study aimed to answer the question:

1. What are the lived experiences of clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region, Philippines?

## Literature Review

### *Women from the Writings of the Holy Bible*

Interpretation of what the Bible teaches has successfully established the roles of women and men in society and gender as a social contract (Burk, 2019). Women of the bible have faced several hardships but fought with their faith and perseverance which continues to give hope to the women of recent years (Woods, 2023). However, it was said that their hard work is not recognized by the people in the bible. In biblical times, women were always treated with little respect for who they were as a person and what they did (MacArthur, 2016). It was revealed that justifying social and gender inequality should not be associated with the Bible (Bøsterud, 2021).

Women were valued and given roles by Jesus in the Bible (Borland, 2017). Jesus was birthed, loved, and protected by his mother; a woman named Mary (Lukey, 2020). Several women were mentioned in the bible who trusted God and played significant roles in biblical times including Sarah who was a woman who received strength from the above to deliver a baby in their married life (Adams, 2023; Ann, 2023). Another woman named Deborah, a prophet of God who led the Israelites during the time of oppression was appointed to be a judge over Israel (Adams, 2023). Lastly, Hannah who was unable to bear a child but her plea and prayers were heard by God who allowed her to conceive a son (Ann, 2023). For Christ, men and women are always equal and are always both below Christ therefore none of them should be able to receive unequal treatment and experience inequality (Borland, 2017). The literal interpretation of the Bible initiated the start of gender discrimination and inequality (McCluney, 2018). Whereas, it was revealed that the Bible was used in order to justify the existing inequality. In addition, it was said that women and men are given different but complementary roles in family and church (McCluney, 2018).

### *Sanctity of Holy Orders*

The cleric's life is sacred because he serves the faithful flock and lives a moral life, stressing the importance of preaching by virtue of facts (Farcasiu, 2015). The first and most important requirement for successfully carrying out the tasks associated with the ministry is holiness of life (O'Brien, 1936). The Protestant doctrine of the ministry of all believers maintains that all believers share in Christ's priestly status by virtue of their union with Christ, in contrast to the beliefs of the medieval church, and that there is no longer a priestly class of people within God's people (Fesko, 2021).

Clerics have an additional incentive to pursue holiness because of the ministry entrusted to them, which is in and of itself a holy, sacramental configuration to Jesus Christ (The Holy See, n.d.). The authority to administer the emblems of the flesh and blood of the Lord, who offered His life as a sacrifice for everyone, as well as the power to bless are inherent in the holy priesthood (Hinckley, 2016). Clerics are created like Christ and have a unique mark on them.

### *Sacred Service: Experiences of Clergywomen inside the Church*

Christian churches have a longstanding tradition of viewing women as deeply devoted to their faith, yet they consistently face barriers and challenges in their journey toward becoming pastors or leaders (Munoz, 2023). Despite their commitment, clergywomen encounter discrimination, gender inequality, and exclusion from leadership roles within the church (Cole, 2022). Some Christian societies reinforce the notion that men should hold positions of leadership, leading some women to internalize the belief that they shouldn't have authority in the church (Lin et al., 2010). Public rejection by clergy and the influence of unseen patriarchal and religious forces creates additional hurdles for women aspiring to leadership roles (Truman, 2010). Congregational insensitivity, lack of spousal support, and a shortage of female colleagues contribute to loneliness among female clerics (Smith, 2013).

Societal expectations shape perceptions of female leaders, often resulting in prejudice (Ferguson, 2018). While progress has been made in mainstream congregations, Pentecostal churches and ministries have played a limited but positive role in improving women's inclusion in leadership positions (Ikyernum, 2023). Furthermore, they presented female pastors' experiences, demonstrating how discrimination against them stems from their gender. Negative views encourage gender inequality, which has an impact on young girls as well as adult women through what they witness and experience (Foster, 2018). Although the church is supposed to be an environment of security where they will feel like they belong, it has been brought to light that female pastors face many difficulties in the workplace (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2020).

Certain female pastors encountered obstacles, hindrances, and patriarchal structures within that affected their elevation to pastoral leadership within their churches (Ferguson, 2018; Kgate, 2019; Nelms Smarr et al., 2018). Gender bias is typically an issue for women leaders in their taking the lead (Soklaridis et al., 2017). Therefore, gender roles and social norms frequently questioned women aspiring to be pastors, encouraging congregations and pastors to doubt if women are socially and biblically qualified to serve in a pastoral capacity position (Bumgardner, 2015; Hartman, 2013).

The findings of the North West Province study later verified that clergywomen frequently receive criticism from their male colleagues, impeding their ability to do their duties successfully (Sekano, 2012). Nevertheless, according to a different study, female clerics who experienced social equality, acts of inclusion, and the support of advocates had a higher chance of rising to the position of pastoral leadership based on the codes and themes (Cole, 2022). Additionally, another study explains that women are answering God's call. Many faced obstacles upon entering the ministry and serving in it thereafter, struggled to find female role models, and had to balance many responsibilities, most notably being a mother and a pastor (Bumgardner, 2005).

From the perspectives of theology, sociology, psychology, politics, and economics, secular researchers and religious scholars have documented the bias against women in ministry leadership and against clergywomen in church leadership (Nelms Smarr, 2016). As civilization develops, research studies are growing in accessibility with regard to disparities in gender across a variety of domains, including dispositional tendencies, personality traits, and leadership styles (Chapman & Luthans, 1975; Gardiner & Tiggermann, 1999; Phelan, 2022).

### *Opportunities and Roles of Women in Clergy*

Clergywomen, especially women pastors, continuously face struggles with the "stained-glass ceiling," despite having the majority of denominations ordaining female clergy (Matthews, 2022). Unequal opportunities are given to them compared to clergymen despite formal acceptance in the church, for the reason that women are more likely to hold lower positions while men clergy are most likely to have opportunities with higher positions, such as leadership roles in the church (Niemelä, 2011). Women lack official authority, while men are typically associated with power and legitimate authority (Truman, 2010). Women are recognized and considered to be the foundation of the church in terms of organizing church activities, yet they are unrecognized and prohibited as representatives of the church and from taking up higher positions like pastoral leadership (Frimpong, 2022).

The increasing number of female pastors joining ministries is an indication of the church's modernization (Niemelä, 2011). However, women's desire to be in leadership roles in pastoral care was denied the opportunity for many reasons (Cole, 2022). People do not consider women ministers capable enough of performing and presiding over sacred services such as weddings and funerals (Butler, 2020) for the reason that women first have to prove themselves to be allowed to be ordained into higher leadership positions (Wespath, 2023). Aside from that, women had a hard time trying to fit themselves into their churches. Women had to adjust and fit themselves to fulfill their roles in the church (Meehan, 2020).

Understanding the experiences of female pastors can encourage other women who aspire to be one themselves (Cole, 2022). The ordination of women in the church ministry changed congregations as well as women who have been ordained. Regardless of the different roles of women across churches, they are in a position to influence and bring change to churches (Niemelä, 2011). It takes time for women to advance in ministry positions and requires a lot of effort to prove themselves and gain respect from the people inside the church (Wespath, 2023). However, regardless of this objection, several women continue to show courage in performing their roles in their pastoral ministry (Hofileña, 1998).

It cannot be denied that women play a vital role in shaping the nation and developing humanity, particularly in the church. Their roles are essential in creating change and growth around the world (Frimpong, 2022; Hofileña, 1998). Women are of great importance in churches, for they mostly guide the ministry work in the church (Bishop, 2016). It was also revealed in a study that women also emphasize the significance of both men and women in pastoral care, even though men and women may have different leadership styles. However, most declared that women are capable of bringing distinct abilities and unique ways of ministering, considering their gender socialization (Steeves, 2017).

Findings from a study about Christian women expressed that while most women are satisfied with their place in the church, the majority of them seem like they were not given enough leadership opportunities and were underestimated by their leaders (Bishop, 2016). Another study stated that 43% of women assert that they do not get sufficient support from their churches because of the absence of women in pastoral leadership roles, which leads to women's change in their faith (Munoz, 2023), which hinders them from sharing their gifts of ministering and serving the church and congregations.

### *Perception of Oneself*

Individual's perceptions of themselves including their roles, abilities, beliefs, status, attitudes, values and the like are what the term self-concept explains (Sarsini, 2007). Self-concept plays a significant role in the growth and development of one person. Knowing, discovering and improving oneself all center on the idea of self-concept (Oyserman, 2001). In addition, it is how one individual defines his/her persona and adopts his/her development throughout life (Gillette, 2022).

Someone with a positive and high level of self-concept tends to have positive growth and effects on their surroundings (Wua et al., 2022). Some individuals like people in womanhood devalue their self-concept which makes them ignore their virtues, abilities, and also their vices (Kumthekar, 2004). Even though self-concept is all about themselves, women have devalued themselves due to cultural impacts and existing standards which shows that a person's environment affects the kind of self-concept that one can attain (Kumthekar, 2004; Wua et al., 2022). This also indicates that young people including students need to have a good and positive environment in order to have a positive self-concept (Wua et al., 2022).

Even though many studies have revealed that the self-concepts of females and males differ, it was still revealed that no difference occurs in the self-concepts of these people (Marčič & Kobal Grum, 2011). Females value themselves along with their abilities just as much as males do (Marčič & Kobal Grum, 2011; Pinquart & Sörensen, 2001). Despite the fact that no difference occurs between female and male self-concepts, it was revealed that difference occurs in terms of the interdependent self-concept or relationship with others of two biological sexes as females have a better interdependent self-concept (Marčič & Kobal Grum, 2011).

Self-concept does play a vital role in how one person perceives himself/herself (Sarsini, 2007). Their environment and surroundings should be considered in order to have a positive and high level of self-concept (Cherry, 2022; Gillette, 2022; Krueger & Trussoni, 2005; Kumthekar, 2004; Oyserman, 2001; Wua et al., 2022). Positive and negative self-concepts affect how an individual will think about themselves, their abilities and values (Gillette, 2022; Krueger & Trussoni, 2005; Sarsini, 2007).

These prior foreign studies and literature found by the researchers have recommended conducting a further study on women in religious leadership specifically their lived experiences inside the church of other localities (Bumgardner, 2005; Butler, 2020; Cole, 2022; Harris, 2018; Miller, 2015; Phelan, 2022; Steeves, 2017; Truman, 2011; White, 2015). Further study about female ministers is suggested as it may build and contribute knowledge in organizational leadership and the field of research (Steeves, 2017; White, 2015). In addition, a study done in Iloilo City recommended carrying out further studies regarding women in ministry outside of the city of Iloilo (Hofileña, 1995).

## Methodology

### Research Design

This study utilized a Phenomenological approach under the Qualitative research design. Phenomenology explores the lived experiences of individuals to uncover the essence of a phenomenon (McCombes, 2021). By using this approach, the researchers investigated the experiences of clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region, Philippines, providing deeper insights into their experiences.

### Participants

This study engaged five clergywomen representing diverse Christian Churches within the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippines. Purposive Sampling Technique was employed, deliberately selecting participants based on predefined criteria to align with the study's objectives (Bisht, 2024). Specifically, clergywomen serving in various Christian denominations across the Philippine National Capital Region were identified between 2023 and 2024. The selection process prioritized individuals with direct experience and necessary qualities of a clergywomen serving in a Christian Church. Notably, conducting interviews with only five participants can yield substantial insights and efficiently inform iterative improvements in qualitative research studies (Nielsen, 2000).

### Instruments

The researchers conducted one-on-one semi-structured interviews to gather comprehensive data on the experiences of clergywomen in selected Christian churches. The interview questions underwent content validation with a psychometrician, a language editor, and an expert in gender studies, who provided feedback via a content validity certification and validation form. After incorporating their comments and suggestions, the validated questions enabled an in-depth exploration of clergywomen's roles, challenges, and self-concepts in their church environments.

### Procedure

The data gathering procedure started by creating a request letter sent to the intended key informants, research adviser, and school explaining the objectives, process of data collection, and significance of the participants and their privacy. It was then followed by constructing the interview questionnaire that was used during the interview, which was later on consulted with a psychometrician, a language editor, and an expert in gender studies to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the interview questions. After asking for the consent of the key informants, the researchers eventually proceeded with meeting the intended key informants, followed by conducting a one-on-one semi-structured interview which was audio recorded for the researchers to use in their transcription and data analysis.

### Data Analysis

The study utilized thematic analysis to interpret and analyze the data obtained from the one-on-one semi-structured interviews with the key informants. The researchers followed a step-by-step procedure to ensure accurate data are collected from the key informants. This began by first identifying major themes that were discussed by three or more key informants. The researchers later on identified codes and sub-themes under those major themes and used those to create further accurate interpretations.

### Ethical Considerations

The researchers acted in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 throughout this study, applying the following measures of informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity. The researchers assigned different code names for the key informants to ensure their anonymity. Any and all sensitive information said in the one-on-one semi structured interview were redacted by the researchers. All of



the raw data gathered from this study, such as the audio recording used for transcription and data analysis, were only accessible by the researchers and were carefully disposed of after the necessary procedures of analysis.

## Results and Discussion

This part presents the findings of this paper according to the research question of the study. To examine the lived experiences of the key informants, thematic analysis was utilized.

Table 1. *Extracted Themes of the Lived Experiences of clergywomen in selected Christian churches*

Themes	Sub-Themes	Codes	Translation
Challenges Inside the Church	Financial Difficulty	KIA: "So, nagkakaroon po ng debate kapagkadating sa ano, usually nagkakaroon lagi ng problema pagdating sa pera, kaperahan." KIB: "yung mga nararamdaman mo, mga challenges, minsan walang pera. diba? minsan walang pera. Nag-poprovide si Lord pag kailangan mo na." KID: "pinaka biggest challenge is you need to live by faith. What do you mean by faith? We have no salary, we have no... we have no income."	KIA: "So debate comes when it comes to, usually problem about money always come, when it comes to money, funds of the church" KIB: "the things that you feel, the challenges, sometimes we have no money, right? Sometimes we have no money. The lord provides when you need it." KIC: "The biggest challenge is you need to live by faith. What do you mean by faith? We have no salary, we have no... we have no income"
	Mockery	KIA: "Ah habang nagsasalita ako, hindi lahat ng nakikinig is good listener no." "So... meron tayo talaga- may judgment talaga, so dumating po sa point nagsasalita po ako, pina-funny face ako..." KIC: "Oo sa plano ng mga- mga 'pag subok, minsan yung kinukutiya ka" KID: "Um, nu- number one was... was 'noh? Is pala. Number one was, before kasi, was ano um, ayaw nila ng, ng female pastor...Because... according to them, the Bible doesn't say to have female pastor. They don't want to, to hear... they don't want to hear female speaking in front.	KIA: "Ah while I'm preaching, not everyone is a good listener, right?" "So we have- we really have judgment, so there comes a time when I'm preaching, someone is pulling a funny face to me..." KIC: "Yes the plans of th- challenges, sometimes they're sneering at you" KID: "Um, n-number one was... was right? Is rather. Number one was, before they don't like female pastor... because... according to them, the Bible doesn't say to have female pastor. They don't want to, to hear... they don't want to hear female speaking in front. "
	Disagreement	KIA: "Ah, sa... medyo ano yan ano, kasi hindi nawawala ang uh debate, discussion, uh... sa loob ng church. Ah kasi, minsan may gusto kang gawin pero hindi yun nangyayari." KIB: "yung mga kasamahan ko minsan kinakainggitan ako... yun... challenge sa akin yun." KID: "Sometimes may mga, ah... may mga conflict lang din... conflict when it comes to ideas and concepts"	KIA: "Ah about... that's part of something, because there's always debate and discussion, uh... inside the church. Ah sometimes you want to do something but it does not happen." KIB: "the people I work with sometimes expresses their jealousy on me... that... is a challenge to me" KID: "Sometimes there are ah... there are conflict... conflict when it comes to ideas and concepts"
Ascension to Pastoral Ministry	Calling	KIA: "my daughter follow me and I will bless you, you and your family." KIB: "3 years na in the- sa church. From na born again ako na... na... na ano 'ko na... na... Nafeel 'ko na parang may calling ako." KIC: "Nadala na rin" KID: "Basta the Lord kept telling me one word, one key word, one important word, an- that- that word was obedience" "The Lord confirmed his calling, through two servants of the Lord. Through him- through... through both speakers. Through those speakers" KIE: "Inaffirm ng Lord 'yon na, may calling talaga"	KIA: "my daughter follow me and I will bless you, you and your family." KIB: "3 years in the- in the church. From me being a born again that... that... that I that... that... I felt that I had a calling." KIC: "Eventually, I was swayed" KID: "Just the Lord kept telling me one word, one key word, one important word, an- that- that word was obedience" "The Lord confirmed his calling, through two servants of the Lord. Through him- through... through both speakers. Through those speakers" KIE: "The Lord affirmed that, there's really a calling"
	Reason	KIA: "30 years ago nung tinawag ako ni Lord, ah kase ano eh, medyo personal pero dapat sabihin. Puno ako ng galit, uh, parang everything na makita 'ko sa paligid ko... Lagi kong tinutumbasan ng galit, kahit mabuti masama pa rin sa akin" "Kaya dumating sa point na... may kaibigan yung husband ko... na dumalaw sa bahay, ang tinatarget n'ya yung asawa ko, shine-shara-an n'ya ng gospel, but ako yung nainlove kay Lord nung shine-sharan n'ya yon" KIB: "Now, lahat kami syempre catholic nung nung...ako ay nag- na... na... na... nak- naborn again, na-encounter 'ko si Lord, nakapakinig ako ng salita ng diyos, nagbabasa ako ng bibliya, nagkaroon ako ng 'yun na tanong mo na realization" KIC: "hanggang sa ano, mataga- tumagal ng tumagal na realize ko rin na sasama nalang ako para ng- para wala nalang gulob, walang ano- hindi ka makakarinig ng ibang... salita kasi pagbaguhan ka mahirap, mahirap pa talagang uhm sumama"	KIA: "30 years ago when the Lord called me, ah because what eh, it's a bit personal but it has to be said. I was full of anger, like everything that I can see around me... I always equate it with anger, even if it's good it's bad for me" "So it went to a point that... my husband has a friend... that visits our house, the one he targets is my husband, he is sharing gospel to him, but I was the one for fell in love with the Lord when he was sharing that" KIB: "Now, of course we were all catholic when when... I became a born again, I encountered the Lord, I listened to the word of God, I was reading the Bible, I had that that you asked that realization" KIC: "Until what, after taking a lon- long long time I realized that I will just go so there's no trouble, nothing what- you won't hear other... words because if you're a newbie it's hard, it's hard to really uhm come along" KID: "So, I left my job, back then, and when I go- when I went on full time, I really lived by faith. That faith, that was really like, uh, no resources at all, except the Lord. But do you know?"



	Process	<p>KID: "So, I left my job, back then, and when I go- when I went on to full time, talagang I lived by faith. Yung faith na yon, was ano talaga, uh, no resources at all, except the Lord. Pero alam niyo po? Um, the Lord really, heed, heed. He became my provider talaga"</p> <p>KIE: "But when I came to know the Lord, d'on ko narealize na mahal ako ng Panginoon."</p> <p>KIA: "Ah, nag Bible school ako. So nag Bible school ako no'n, four years din, then after no'n natapos nakakatapos ako, nakagraduate ako."</p> <p>"after nun nagkaron na kami ng service"</p> <p>KIB: "Nag b-bible study na ako"</p> <p>"inencourage niya ako na mag attend ng discipleship every Friday"</p> <p>"Yung office doon kami nagkakaroon ng mid-week service"</p> <p>KID: "Consistently attending during Thursday service"</p> <p>"I underwent leadership training, discipleship training... and... um, ministry. Ayun, mga steps ko."</p> <p>KIE: "So nagstart 'yon nung paonti-onti, sumasama na ako sa mga Bible study"</p> <p>"Pero, after no'n, consistent padin yung training, mga Bible studies, mga small groups, mga devotion, so tuloy-tuloy parin 'yon"</p>	<p>Um, the Lord really, heed, heed. He really became my provider"</p> <p>KIE: "But when I came to know the Lord, that's when I realized that the Lord loves me."</p> <p>KIA: "Ah, I went to bible school. So I went to bible school before, also four years, then after that I finis-finished, I graduated."</p> <p>"after that, we had the service"</p> <p>KIB: "I was doing the bible study"</p> <p>KIE (head pastor) encouraged me to attend the discipleship every Friday"</p> <p>"Our office is the place where we do mid-week service"</p> <p>KID: "Consistently attending during Thursday service" "I underwent leadership training, discipleship training... and... um, ministry. Those are my steps."</p> <p>KIE: "So it started gradually, I tagged along to bible study" "But, after that, training is still consistent, the bible studies, the small groups, the devotions, so those are still continuous"</p>
Roles and Responsibilities of Clergywomen	Preacher	<p>KIA: "Nagpepreach ako once a month"</p> <p>KIB: "Ang potential 'ko is... to preach the word of God"</p> <p>KIC: "Ay hindi ako nagpi-preach"</p> <p>KID: "I was able to preach in the ministry"</p> <p>KIE: "hanggang sa dumating yung time na binigyan ako ng pagkakataong makapagpreach sa church."</p>	<p>KIA: "I preach once a month"</p> <p>KIB: "My potential is... to preach the word of God"</p> <p>KIC: "Oh, I don't preach"</p> <p>KID: "I was able to preach in the ministry"</p> <p>KIE: "Until the time came when I was given the opportunity to preach at the church."</p>
	Armor Bearer	<p>KIA: "So, yung time na yun may isang lalaki na kasama 'ko na gusto n'ya rin mag-pastor tapos eh ako yung pinakal-left hand ng pastor"</p> <p>KIB: "Ako ay naging armor bearer ng aming, uh, head pastor. Armor bearer, ito yung nag-aassist sa kanya. Ano man ang gagawin niya, everywhere he go."</p> <p>KIC: "Nadala niya na ako, sa tuwing may gawain minsan nasama, kaya minsan di nakakasama kasi sa pinansyal, kasi 'pag malayo [inaudible], pamasaha nalang"</p>	<p>KIA: "So, during that time, there was a man with me who also wanted to become a pastor, then and I was the pastor's left-hand"</p> <p>KIB: "I became the armor bearer of our, uh, head pastor. An armor bearer assists him. Whatever he does, everywhere he goes"</p> <p>KIC: "He took me with him whenever there was an event, sometimes I could join, but sometimes I couldn't because of financial reasons, especially if it's far [inaudible], just for the fare"</p>
	Minister of Visitation	<p>KIA: "'Tas may visitation din kami na ginagawa. So sa visitation kasama din ako, noh 'yon".</p> <p>KIB: "nag ano ako, nag- nag- vivisitation ako"</p> <p>KID: "I underwent um, mission training, sa Batangas po 'yon, sa mga bundok... Sa mga Aetas".</p>	<p>KIA: "Then, we also did visitations. So, I was also part of the visitations."</p> <p>KIB: "I did, I did- I did visitations"</p> <p>KID: "I underwent, um, mission training, it was in Batangas, in the mountains... among the Aetas".</p>
	Prayer Warrior	<p>KIA: "Then, pagdating dito sa church meron kaming, fasting and prayer. Ginagawa namin yun quarterly"</p> <p>KIB: "ah, naging prayer warrior ako"</p> <p>"naging prayer warrior ako. Which is nag enjoy ako doon sa prayer warrior"</p> <p>KIC: "minsan nag ano, prayer sa- sa 'pag nag simula na ang service"</p>	<p>KIA: "Then, when we got to the church, we had fasting and prayer. We did that quarterly"</p> <p>KIB: "ah, I became a prayer warrior"</p> <p>KIC: "sometimes, prayer during- during the start of the service"</p>
	Role Fulfillment	<p>KIA: "Ah, I'm not saying enough, kasi habang nabubuhay tayo may mga dapat pa tayong gampanan, so, that is not enough."</p> <p>KIB: "Yung mga roles na ginampanan ko?... uh hindi-hindi pa siguro... hindi pa siguro yung mga roles na ginampanan ko, ang ka- ang fulfillment ng isang pastor kung makikita mo successful ang lahat ng myembro ng church"</p> <p>KIC: (when asked if those roles is enough to fulfill her title as pastora) "Uhm hindi pa..."</p> <p>KID: "Ano? I- I don't think so kasi, again, uhm- kung enough na yun di dapat tumigil na ako parang siguro hindi pa enough"</p> <p>KIE: "Uhm...I don't think so, kasi uhm una yung calling ng Lord hindi sya natatapos eh, hanggat nandito tayo sa lupa may ipapagawa ang Lord."</p>	<p>KIA: "Ah, I'm not saying enough, because while we are alive, there are still things we need to do, so, that is not enough"</p> <p>KIB: "The roles I fulfilled?... uh, maybe not yet... maybe not yet the roles I fulfilled, the fulfillment of a pastor is if you see all the church members are successful"</p> <p>KIC: (when asked if those roles are enough to fulfill her title as pastora) "Uhm not yet..."</p> <p>KID: "What? I- I don't think so because, again, uhm- if that was enough, I should have stopped by now, so maybe it's not enough"</p> <p>KIE: "Uhm...I don't think so, because uhm first of all the calling of the Lord does not end, as long as we are here on earth, the Lord has something for us to do"</p>
How Clergywomen view themselves	Experiences of Clergy-women	<p>KIA: "So nag Bible school ako no'n, four years din, then after no'n natapos naka- nakatapos ako, nakagraduate ako. Talagang nakita 'ko yung process eh, kasi pagtapos ng graduat- ng graduation, na- ih- okay na 'tong church, naestablish na, tsaka 'ko tinawag sa labas..."</p>	<p>KIA: "So I went to Bible school for four years, then after that I was able to finish school, I was able to graduate. I really saw the process, because after graduat- graduation, the church was okay, it was established, after then I was called outside [of church matters]..."</p>

- "So nag ano, nagkaroon ng meeting, noh, yan ang number one. Tapos, ah, sa meeting doon na lumala-nagkakaron kami ng brainstorming pa'no namin gagawin. So may mga nagsusuggest ng ganito. Ang ginagawa madalas, may isang bond paper na, tapos may blocks blocks siya, tapos may price yon, ilalagay mo yung pangalan mo, magpepledge ka."

KIB: "Una kinabahan ako, syempre. Pag sinabi, "ikaw mag preach sa Wednesday", Wednesday lang, hindi naman Sunday kasi meron naman kami- "ikaw mag preach sa Wednesday", may- kabado ako doon. Pero, hindi ako nakadepende sa sarili ko. Dumepende ako sa holy spirit."

- "Sa sarili ko, I always depend on the holy spirit of God na nasa akin... Bakit 'ko sinabi na nasa akin? Dahil ang sabi ng bibliya na once you are born again, the holy spirit nasa iyo na, kasama mo na lagi."

- "Nagsusuportahan kami, nagtutulungan. At it- hindi- h- bukod s- bukod sa s- sa ganon, kung sino ang wala, tinutulungan."

- "nung nakikita 'ko na nung parang binabago na 'ko ng Lord nawawala na yung pagka supla- suplada ako nun, nawawala yung pagka suplada ko... tapos pasensosyo na ako... mayroon nga kami- mayron akong katulong na lumaban sa akin, hindi ako nabali, sabi 'ko "binago na talaga ako ni Lord" sabi kong ganun."

- "...bilang born again, bilang pastor din na experience 'ko na hindi ka pinagkukulang ng Panginoon, hindi ka nag... hindi ka pinagkukulang ng Panginoon sa anumang bagay na kailangan mo at... parang masaya ka lang kahit may problema..."

KID: "Number one was, before kasi, was ano um, ayaw nila ng, ng female pastor... Because... according to them, the Bible doesn't say to have female pastor. They don't want to, to hear... they don't want to hear female speaking in front."

- "I was able to go to different- different places, here and abroad, so I was able to minister to provinces, I was able to preach and speak sa ibang bansa like australia uhm... hmm... and I was able to talk to different uhm different kind of people, with different- different backgrounds."

- "Pero very challenging talaga ha to be a female ano leader, female pastor. Napaka challenging. Pero ayun nga we need to break the stigma. Ako I prioritize spiritual matters over ano, over the opinions of others,"

KIE: "So ngayon... bilang pastora masayang-masaya ako kasi alam ko ito yung gustong ipagawa ng Lord sakin..."  
"...kasi in reality kahit magawa natin yung gusto natin pero hindi natin nagawa yung gusto ng Lord, hindi pa rin tayo magiging masaya."

KIA: "Meron- meron talagang malaking impact 'to' sa aking sarili. Na develop ang aking personality, dito ako na...develop sa loob ng church. How to talk sa maraming tao."

KIB: "lalo ako naging malakas at naging matatag. Yung mga challenge, yung mga... naki... na experience ko sa kanila, kinakailangan magpakatatag ako, kinakailangan maging malakas ako para sa kanila."

KID: "naprove ko sa sarili ko, and prinove din ng lord at the same time na ano buhay talaga siya, powerful talaga siya."

"...ngayon yung na e- uh... I- naexercise 'ko yung being authority... Kahit babae, na- naexercise 'ko pa rin yung authority, kasi yung authority na 'yon was given to me by God so neexercise 'ko through leadership... na kahit babae pala, kahit babae pala kaya kong ano I can- I can, ano I can ano, I can smoothly... I can handle, I can handle smoothly the congregation."

KIE: "So nung dumating na kami sa church dun lang kami nakaencounter na parang ah pwede pa palang madevelop yung self-esteem, hindi lang ngayon pero unti-unti na

- "So, a meeting was held, well, that's number one. Then, ah, in that meeting was where it became worse- we had brainstorming on how to deal with it. So there was someone who gave suggestions. What is done often, there is a piece of bond paper that contains blocks, then it has a price where you'll pledge and put your name."

KIB: "At first, of course I was nervous. If [they] said, "you will be the one preaching on Wednesday", during Wednesday only, not during Sunday because we have- "you will be the one preaching on Wednesday", there's- I am nervous about that. But, I don't depend on myself. I depend on the holy spirit."

- "As for myself, I always depend on the holy spirit of God in me... Why did I say that it is in me? Because the Bible said that once you are born again, the holy spirit is already in you, it is with you always."

- "We support, help each other. And it- not- h- apart s- apart from s- that, those who are not present are helped."

- "When I saw that the Lord seemed to be changing me, my snobbish personality slowly disappeared since I was snobbish back then... then I became patient... we did have- we have a helper who fought with me, I did not waver, I said "the Lord have really changed me", I have said.

- "...As a born again, as well as a pastor, I experienced that the Lord does not fail you, you are not... the Lord does not fail you from anything you need and... as if you are just joyful even if there are problems..."

KID: "Number one was, before was um, they don't want a, a female pastor... Because... according to them, the Bible doesn't say to have female pastor. They don't want to, to hear... they don't want to hear female speaking in front."

- "I was able to go to different- different places, here and abroad, so I was able to minister to provinces, I was able to preach and speak in different countries like Australia uhm... hmm... and I was able to talk to different, uhm, different kind of people, with different- different backgrounds."

- "But it is very challenging to be a female leader, female pastor. Very challenging. However, we need to break the stigma. I prioritize spiritual matters over, over the opinions of others,"

KIE: "So now, as a female pastor, I am overjoyed for I know that this is what the Lord wants me to do..."

"... because in reality, even if we had done our wants but we haven't done what the Lord wants, we still won't be happy."

KIA: "It has- it has really a huge impact on myself. My personality has developed, here I was... developed inside the church. How to talk to a lot of people."

KIB: "I became stronger and more stable. The challenges, the... from what I have experienced with them, I need to be strong, I need to become strong for them."

KID: "I was able to prove to myself, and the Lord also proved at the same time that he is really alive, he is really powerful."

"...now that e- uh... I- can exercise being authority... Even though I am a woman, I can still exercise authority, because that authority was given to me by God so I still exercise it through leadership... that even though a woman, even though I am a woman I can I can- I can, I can, I can smoothly... I can handle, I can handle smoothly the congregation."

KIE: "So when we arrived at the church that's when we encountered that it is still possible to develop self-esteem, not only today, but the church has gradually developed my confidence."

View on  
oneself



Perspective of People Inside the Church	Respect	develop ng church yung confidence ko.” KIB: “Okay. Nakita ko doon sa- doon sa- sa loob ng church, nagsusuportahan. Nagsusuportahan, nagtutulungan at sila ay malaki ang respeto sa akin” KID: “Na- may narerespect naman yung one’s view, one’s ano- one’s ideas or one’s con- concept or hinohonor-honor and respect. Na- na- naayos yung conflict, uhm, because of ano, respect and- and honor.” KIE: “Uhm okay din naman very- very responsive sila and then alam mo na iisa yung spirit kasi we all agree dahil alam din nilang hindi naman tao lang yung nagsasalita pero leading ng Lord through his word dun sa mga tao, so I can see na yung mga co-workers, fellow pastors ko sila yung mga unang nag aamen, sila yung mga unang nag rerespond doon sa preaching, actually we practiced that sa lahat naman ng nag pepreach.”	KIB: “Okay. I saw at the- at the- the inside of the church, that they were supporting each other. Supporting, helping, and respected me.” KID: “Res- one’s view is respected, one’s- one’s ideas or one’s concept or honoring- honor and respect. The- the- the conflict is being fixed, uhm, because of, what, respect and- and honor.” KIE: “Uhm it was okay as well very- they were very responsive and you know that there was one spirit, because we all agree since they also know that it’s not just the person talking, but the Lord is leading through those people, so I can see that my co-workers, fellow pastors, they are the first ones to say Amen, they are the first to respond to the preaching, actually we practiced that to all of those preaching.”
	Particip-ation	KIB: “nung nakakapakinig sila sa salita ng... preaching ko at tsaka preaching na naririnig nila sa mga ano sabi niya, sa... sa... sabi nila, kasi syempre ahh face to face eh na nakakapagtanong ganon” KID: “Ah with the people? I think responsive naman sila yung experiences uhm... paano ba ‘to? General- generally speaking, responsive naman, responsive naman yung mga tao na everytime I- everytime I take a stand, everytime I preach” KIE: “sa church kasi by God’s grace, very participative yung mga... members ng church so wala namang natutulog” “Every Sunday, meron kaming mga takeaways, vinivideohan namin yung some few brethrens, mga kapatid kung ano yung natutunan nila, ano yung takesa- yung mga takeaways nila, what are the lessons na pwede nilang ma-apply so dun din na-ggauge namin”	KIB: “when they were able to listen to the word of... my preaching and the preaching that they hear at what they say, at... at... they say, because of course ahh face to face eh able to ask like that” KID: “Ah with the people? I think they are responsive the experiences uhm... how is this? General- generally speaking, they are responsive, the people are responsive everytime I- everytime I take a stand, everytime I preach” KIE: “because in the church by God’s grace, very participative are the... members of the church so none of them fall asleep.” “Every Sunday, we have takeaways, we take a video of some few brethrens, our members of what they have learned, what their takes- their takeaways, what are the lessons that they can apply so we can gauge.”
	Positive reaction and feedback	KIB: “mas... mas na aabsorb daw nila yung preaching ko kaysa sa... dito sa pakikinig dito sa ano... at nakikita ko naman yung ahm... gradually na pagbabago nila” KID: “lumalapit saakin after the service, after church service and they would tell uhm... blessed sila, tha- encouraged sila, corrected sila parang uhm... most of the time sinasabi nilang ‘The Lord dealt me with your message, the Lord spoke to me through you’. ‘Nakarelata po ako pastora kasi etong pinagdaanan ko eto yung ano, exact yung message ng Lord saakin and i’m blessed because lord spoke to me through you’.” KIE: “lahat naman ay nakikinig and... uhm makikita mo naman na very ano sila ah... uhaw din noh para makinig ng word of God.” - “napakahalaga ay pinagpepray ka sa preaching ah... kinokondisyon ng Lord, ng Holy spirit yung puso ‘ko at yung puso ng lahat ng makikinig kaya salamat sa Lord”	KIB: “they... they are able to absorb more of my preaching instead of... from listening to the... and I can see the ahm... them gradually changing.” KIF: “they come to me after service, after church service and they would tell uhm... that they are blessed, tha- they are encouraged, they are encouraged like uhm... most If the time they say ‘the Lord dealt me with your message, the Lord spoke to me through you.’ ‘I can relate pastora since what I am going through is the, exact message of the Lord to me and I’m blessed because Lord spoke to me through you.’” KIE: “All of them are listening and... uhm you can see that they are very ah... thirsty as well to listen to the Word of God.” - “It is very important that you are being prayed for in the preachings ah... the Lord is conditioning, the Holy Spirit my heart and the hearts of all who listen so thank you Lord.”

This table presents the results of the one-on-one semi-structured interviews conducted with the five key informants of this study. This study formulated 16 sub-themes based on the interpretation of the data obtained from the key informants which were then divided into five major themes. The first theme is entitled “Challenges inside the church” which tackles the challenges that the key informants face within their churches. The researchers formulated the theme of “Ascension towards pastoral ministry” as the second theme of this study which discusses the life of the key informants towards church leadership. Another theme entitled “Roles and responsibilities of clergywomen” was formed which discusses the different roles and responsibilities undertaken by the key informants. “How clergywomen view themselves” is the fourth theme explaining how the key informants understand and think of themselves. The last theme is the “Perspective of people inside the church” which tackles how the people inside the church view and think about the key informants.

### Challenges Inside the Church

This theme presents the sub-themes that were formulated after analyzing the collected data from the key informants. Several sub-themes were found such as Financial Difficulty, Mockery, and Disagreement. The themes surrounding their challenges are the following: “Financial Difficulty” pertains to a situation where they struggle due to monetary means, “Mockery” which emphasizes the insulting behavior directed at one person. Lastly, “Disagreement” which is defined as people having different opinions or decisions on certain issues.

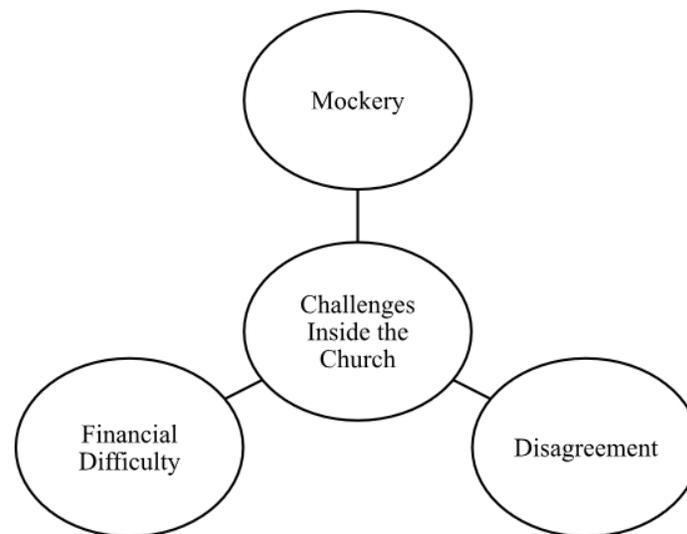


Figure 1. *Challenges Inside the Church*

Through the interviews held with the clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region of the Philippines, the researchers were able to identify the challenges of clergywomen within their churches. Financial difficulties happen when they struggle to manage finances inside the church. Key informant A revealed that difficulties inside the church happens when it comes to money whether it is by organizing it, allotting it, or making something out of it, “So, nagkakaroon po ng debate kapagkadating sa ano, usually nagkakaroon lagi ng problema pagdating sa pera, kaperahan.” [“So debate comes when it comes to, usually problem about money always come, when it comes to money, funds of the church”] she added. Key informant B also stated that when you work for the church, you will experience not having money and being penniless. She said “yung mga nararamdaman mo, mga challenges, minsan walang pera diba, minsan walang pera” [“the things that you feel, the challenges, sometimes we have no money, right? Sometimes we have no money. The lord provides when you need it.”], she emphasizes the problem of not having money which shows the difficulty she experiences while working in the church. Likewise, key informant D also defined being a clergywoman as the noblest job as you will not experience having lots of money and “pinaka biggest challenge is you need to live by faith. What do you mean by faith? We have no salary, we have no... we have no income.” [“The biggest challenge is you need to live by faith. What do you mean by faith? We have no salary, we have no... we have no income”], she added. But they all admitted that when you respond to the call of God, he will provide the things you need in life.

The theme “Mockery” discusses their experiences inside the church where they felt that they are ridiculed for being a female clergy. Key informant A revealed that she experienced being mocked at during her preaching and she also added that some people inside the church are not a good listener. “So... meron tayo talaga- may judgment talaga, so dumating po sa point nagsasalita po ako, pina-funny face ako...” [“Ah while I’m preaching, not everyone is a good listener, right?”], “hindi lahat ng nakikinig is good listener ‘no’ [“So we have- we really have judgment, so there comes a time when I’m preaching, someone is pulling a funny face to me...”] she added. On the other hand, key informant C revealed that she felt sometimes that she was being ridiculed in their church. She said “mga ‘pag subok, minsan yung kinukutiya ka” [“Yes the plans of th- challenges, sometimes they’re sneering at you”] which shows the mockery that she experienced inside the church. Key informant D also stated “Um, nu- number one was... was ‘noh? Is pala. Number one was, before kasi, was ano um, ayaw nila ng, ng female pastor...Because... according to them, the Bible doesn’t say to have female pastor. They don’t want to, to hear... they don’t want to hear female speaking in front.” [“Um, n-number one was... was right? Is rather. Number one was, before they don’t like female pastor... because... according to them, the Bible doesn’t say to have female pastor. They don’t want to, to hear... they don’t want to hear female speaking in front.”] when she was asked about her challenges inside the church. The challenges they experienced surrounding the theme “Mockery” shows that some of the people in the church are not interested in listening to them when they preach because they are women.

Key informant A discusses how disagreement is frequent in her church which will result to debate. She added “Ah, sa... medyo anong yan ano, kasi hindi nawawala ang uh debate, discussion, uh... sa loob ng church. Ah kasi, minsan may gusto kang gawin pero hindi yun nangyayari” [“Ah about... that’s part of something, because there’s always debate and discussion, uh... inside the church. Ah sometimes you want to do something but it does not happen.”]. Key informant B also revealed that when she started in the ministry, the people around her were envious of her as she got to attend their religious activities for free and was favored by their senior pastor which will then result to disagreement in their church. “Yung mga kasamahan ko minsan kinakainggitan ako... yun... challenge sa akin yun” [“the people I work with sometimes expresses their jealousy on me... that... is a challenge to me”] she added. Key informant D specified that disagreement and misunderstanding happen when it comes to ideas and concepts that they have. “Sometimes may mga, ah... may mga conflict lang din... conflict when it comes to ideas and concepts” [“Sometimes there are ah... there are conflict... conflict when it comes to ideas and concepts”] she said. These are the challenges that they experienced when they are with their

coworkers. However, they affirmed that they discussed these disagreements and conflicts to make one decision and continue their relationships inside the church.

The five key informants talked about their struggles and challenges inside the church when they became clergywomen. They experienced financial difficulty, disagreement, misunderstanding, co-workers' envy, and preference of the congregation which contributed to their challenges inside the religious institution. There are no current studies discussing what are the challenges of clergywomen in their respective churches and this is the gap that this study wishes to fill. The findings aligned with assumption number one which discusses that clergywomen faced unpleasant and painful experiences. The data obtained also aligned to the one idea in assumption number two concerning that clergywomen experience discrimination as revealed that they are ridiculed and mocked by the people inside the church but opposed the assumption of clergywomen experiences exclusion. In addition, the challenges revealed by the key informants did not align with assumption number three which assumed that clergywomen experience gender stereotyping. The study revealed certain challenges that were outside the assumptions of the researchers such as financial difficulty and disagreement.

All key informants faced diverse struggles and challenges throughout their journeys. Most of them take these challenges as a way for them to develop their personality and hone their skills. Filipino women clerics experience discrimination and stereotyping in this male-dominated country which contributes to their challenges (Hofileña, 1998). Challenges they face during leadership such as conflicts within the congregation and their co-workers, is deemed as an unavoidable experience. However, one of their main struggles comes with the financial burden of pursuing a career within the clergy, and how it is important for them to live by faith. Although, a similar thought shared amongst them is that throughout all of their challenges, they state that the Lord becomes their provider.

When clergywomen are exposed to a handful of challenges, it becomes a difficult task for them to serve (Mupangwa & Chirongoma, 2020). The authors stated that even though women can obtain positions in the pastoral field, clergywomen felt that this phenomenon has not been openly adopted as they still experience operational challenges. These prevailing challenges have led the clergywomen to not view the church as a safe place. Despite the growing number of women being called to pastoral leadership, resistance still exists and female pastors in leadership roles are still viewed as a rarity about females (Franklin, 2008). As shared by Meehan (2020), even though Christ was the one who invited women to partake in the ministry, not everyone agrees on to what extent. This also confirms how the stained-glass ceiling is still a prevailing issue within the clergy (De Gasquet, 2010).

### Ascension to Pastoral Ministry

This theme provides the discussion of how the clergywomen took the path of pastoral leadership in their respective churches. The data from the key informants formulated three sub-themes specifically labeled as Calling, Reason, and Process.

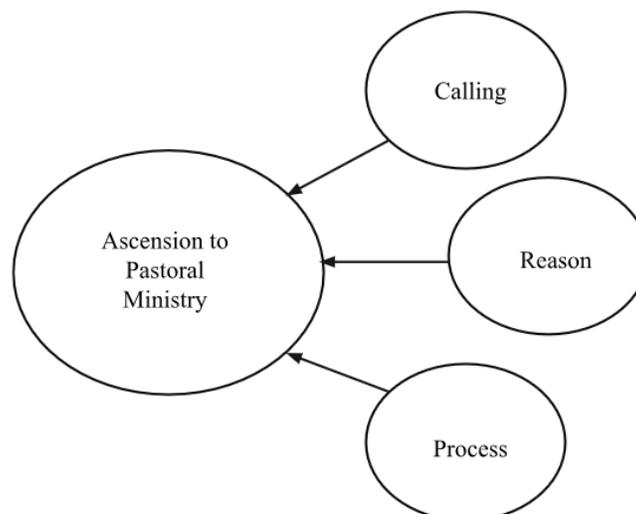


Figure 2. *Ascension to Pastoral Ministry*

The theme “Calling” pertains to the proof that God himself calls the clergy and the things they do come with devotion and direction to respond to his calling, summons, and services. Key informants A, B, D, and E stated that they experienced calling. Key informant A stated that she experienced calling during her younger days 30 years ago. She stated that the Holy Spirit told her “My daughter follow me and I will bless you, you and your family” that became a significant factor for her to answer her calling. During her 3rd year as a born-again, Key informant B experienced calling and mentioned that her calling is preaching “3 years na in the- sa church. From na born again ako na... na... na ano 'ko na... na... Nafeel 'ko na parang may calling ako.” [“3 years in the- in the church. From me being a born again that... that... that I that... that... I felt that I had a calling.”] She added. “Asawa 'ko nga yung diba, nauna yung asawa 'ko nag born-again”, “Nadala na rin” [“Eventually, I was swayed”]. Key informant C said that she experienced no calling, instead, she was heavily influenced by his husband who was a pastor. Key informant D mentioned “Basta the Lord kept telling me one word, one key word, one important word, an- that- that word was obedience” during the year 1990, key informant D experienced calling, and kept

hearing one important word which is “Obedience”. She then mentioned that her calling was confirmed by two different people both serving the Lord “The Lord confirmed his calling, through two servants of the Lord. Through him- through... through both speakers. Through those speakers”. Key informant E started when she was 13 “Inaffirm ng Lord ‘yon na, may calling talaga” [“The Lord affirmed that, there’s really a calling”] she mentioned that the Lord affirmed her and confirmed that she has a calling.

The theme “Reason” is referred to as the justification that explains why certain things happen, and what causes it to occur. Key informant A shared a moment in her life when she was full of anger and disbelief “30 years ago nung tinawag ako ni Lord, ah kase ano eh, medyo personal pero dapat sabihin. Puno ako ng galit, uh, parang everything na makita 'ko sa paligid ko... Lagi kong tinutumbasan ng galit, kahit mabuti masama pa rin sa akin” [“30 years ago when the Lord called me, ah because what eh, it's a bit personal but it has to be said. I was full of anger, like everything that I can see around me... I always equate it with anger, even if it's good it's bad for me”] a friend of his husband visited them to influence him. However, she was the one who was swayed by the word of God “Kaya dumating sa point na... may kaibigan yung husband ko... na dumalaw sa bahay, ang tinatarget n'ya yung asawa ko, shine-shara-an n'ya ng gospel, but ako yung nainlove kay Lord nung shine-sharan n'ya yon” [“So it went to a point that... my husband has a friend... that visits our house, the one he targets is my husband, he is sharing gospel to him, but I was the one for fell in love with the Lord when he was sharing that”]. Key informant B was trained to serve the Lord and be religious since she was young and that affected her decisions in life. Her realization started when she became a born again and encountered the Lord, “Now, lahat kami syempre catholic nung nung...ako ay nag- na... na... nak- naborn again, na-encounter 'ko si Lord, nakapakinig ako ng salita ng diyos, nagbabasa ako ng bibliya, nagkaroon ako ng ‘yun na tanong mo na realization” [“Now, of course we were all catholic when when... I became a born again, I encountered the Lord, I listened to the word of God, I was reading the Bible, I had that that you asked that realization”] she added. Key informant C was influenced by her husband and became a reason for her to pursue pastoral leadership. “hanggang sa ano, mataga- tumagal ng tumagal na realize ko rin na sasama nalang ako para ng- para wala nalang gulo ba, walang ano- hindi ka makakarinig ng ibang... salita kasi pagbaguhan ka mahirap, mahirap pa talagang uhm sumama” [“Until what, after taking a lon- long long time I realized that I will just go so there’s no trouble, nothing what- you won’t hear other... words because if you’re a newbie its hard, its hard to really uhm come along”] she said. Key informant D stated that when she decided to leave her job and live by faith Lord became her provider. “So, I left my job, back then, and when I go- when I went on to full time, talagang I lived by faith. Yung faith na yon, was ano talaga, uh, no resources at all, except the Lord. Pero alam niyo po? Um, the Lord really, heed, heed. He became my provider talaga” [So, I left my job, back then, and when I go- when I went on full time, I really lived by faith. That faith, that was really like, uh, no resources at all, except the Lord. But do you know? Um, the Lord really, heed, heed. He really became my provider”]. Key informant E stated that ever since she knew the lord she realized that he loves her, “But when I came to know the Lord, d'on 'ko narealize na mahal ako ng Panginoon” [“But when I came to know the Lord, that’s when I realized that the Lord loves me.”] she stated.

The “Process” is a series of steps and actions carried out that is progressive and interdependent that is done to achieve an end or a particular result. The key informants have similar experiences in the “process” of becoming a Clergywoman. Key informant A stated that she went to a bible school for 4 years, studied theology for 4 years, attended mid-week services and underwent discipleship “So nag Bible school ako no’n, four years din”, “nag-aral ako... ng Bachelor of Theology oo, four years din yan” [“Ah, I went to bible school. So I went to bible school before, also four years, then after that I finis-finished, I graduated.”], “after nun nagkaron na kami ng service” [“after that, we had the service”] she added. Key informant B went to bible studies, and underwent discipleship and attended mid-week services “Nag b-bible study na ako” [“I was doing the bible study”], “inencourage niya ako na mag attend ng discipleship every Friday” “He (head pastor) encouraged me to attend the discipleship every Friday”, “Yung office doon kami nagkakaroon ng mid-week service” [“Our office is the place where we do mid-week service”]. Key informant D constantly attended Thursday services, leadership training, discipleship, and ministry “Consistently attending during Thursday service”, “I underwent leadership training, discipleship training... and... um, ministry. Ayun, mga steps ko” [“I underwent leadership training, discipleship training... and... um, ministry. Those are my steps.”]. Key informant E attended bible studies, devoted herself, and was ordained as a clergywoman. “So nagstart ‘yon nung paonti-onti, sumasama na ako sa mga Bible study” [“So it started gradually, I tagged along to bible study”], “Pero, after no’n, consistent padin yung training, mga Bible studies, mga small groups, mga devotion, so tuloy-tuloy parin ‘yon” [“But, after that, training is still consistent, the bible studies, the small groups, the devotions, so those are still continuous”].

Most of the key informants experienced similar situations in their ascension to pastoral leadership. The findings showed that throughout the journey of women to pastoral leadership, they are heavily influenced by people. It can either be their pastors, family members, or other members of the church, but they were all encouraged by the people around them to answer their calling in the ministry. Key informants A, B, C, and D mentioned how they are influenced by other people during the “process” of ascending to pastoral leadership that encouraged them to answer their “calling”. Despite the struggles, the key informants were able to ascend. The key informants mentioned how they felt a sense of connection with God and preaching seems to be their purpose. The data obtained were able to reveal information about the experiences of clergywomen in entering the leadership ministry. It was also revealed that the assumption number four which assumed clergywomen receive lack of support in pursuing leadership roles is opposed to the findings of this study as it was found that the key informants are heavily influenced and supported by the people inside the church.

As most of the respondents were able to experience a calling, they were able to share how it is something they feel was predestined and sacred, and that they were meant to become a clergywoman. This contrasts the statement made by Smith (2013), wherein they share how loneliness due to the lack of support from their spouses, limited numbers of female colleagues and congregational

insensitivity, become a source of loneliness for the clergywomen. Another study by Munoz (2023), states that 43% of women assert that they do not get sufficient support from their churches because of the absence of women in pastoral leadership roles.

It's easier for women to ascend to pastoral leadership once they experience social equality (Cole, 2022). In a field dominated by men, women are struggling getting the recognition they deserve. Despite the rise in progress of clergywomen in pastoral leadership, they still haven't reached the equality they deserve with men (Butler, 2020). Now is the time for women to be recognized and be given the same right in ministries to be called as pastors (Sayger, 2019). Knowing that the society is still new with the system, recognition seems to be hard for women to attain. However, now that society has changed, being open to new possibilities could lead to better results. The rise in numbers of women ascending to pastoral leadership shouldn't be questioned, instead accepted and recognized.

### Roles and Responsibilities of Clergywomen

The data obtained from the key informants were able to create several sub-themes that fall under the theme of Roles and Responsibilities of Clergywomen. This theme is composed of four sub-themes that were titled as Preacher, Prayer Warrior, Armor Bearer, and Ministry of Visitation. This theme explores the different roles undertaken by clergywomen within their respective churches. Specifically, the theme "Preacher" pertains to clergywomen who deliver sermons and teachings, interpreting and conveying religious doctrines to their congregations. The "Armor Bearer" theme describes clergywomen who assist the head pastor in various duties and support roles, ensuring smooth church operations. The "Minister of Visitation" theme emphasizes clergywomen who offer pastoral care by visiting and counseling church members in times of need. Lastly, the theme "Prayer warrior" relates to clergywomen who are dedicated to intercessory prayer and spiritual advocacy on behalf of their congregations, showing spiritual guidance and support. Together, these themes underscore the diverse responsibilities and contributions of women in leadership positions within religious institutions.

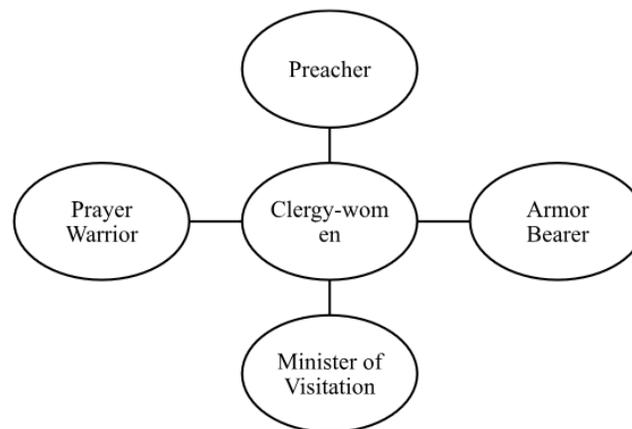


Figure 3. Roles and Responsibilities of Clergywomen

When examining their roles and responsibilities, key informant A emphasized her monthly preaching commitments, stating, "Nagpreach ako once a month" ["I preach once a month"] this highlights her consistent involvement in delivering sermons within the church community. Similarly, key informant B shared her aspirations and capability to preach, saying, "Ang potential 'ko is... to preach the word of God" ["My potential is... to preach the word of God"] this indicates her desire and readiness to take on the responsibility of delivering the word of God to the congregation. Key informant D brought forward her experience in sermon delivery, mentioning, "I was able to preach in the ministry" this showcases her proven ability and experience in conveying spiritual messages effectively. Lastly, key informant E described her journey and opportunities in preaching, sharing, "hanggang sa dumating yung time na binigyan ako ng pagkakataong makapagpreach sa church" [Until the time came when I was given the opportunity to preach at the church], this narrative illustrates her progression and the opportunities she grabbed to contribute through preaching within the church. However, when asked about her preaching experience, key informant C responded, "Ay hindi ako nagpi-preach" ["Oh, I don't preach"] suggesting potential limitations in opportunities to preach.

Regarding their roles as "Armor Bearers", key informant A illustrated her close support to the pastor, saying, "So, yung time na yun may isang lalaki na kasama 'ko na gusto n'ya rin mag-pastor tapos eh ako yung pinaka-left hand ng pastor" ["So, during that time, there was a man with me who also wanted to become a pastor, then and I was the pastor's left-hand"] this emphasizes her dedicated and supportive role as the pastor's right-hand assistant. Similarly, key informant B highlighted her responsibilities as an armor bearer, stating, "Ako ay naging armor bearer ng aming, uh, head pastor. Armor bearer, ito yung nag-aassist sa kanya. Ano man ang gagawin niya, everywhere he go" ["I became the armor bearer of our, uh, head pastor. An armor bearer assists him. Whatever he does, everywhere he goes"] this showcases her commitment to providing consistent assistance to the head pastor in all his activities and responsibilities. Additionally, key informant C shared her persistent commitment despite financial constraints, mentioning, "Nadala niya na ako, sa tuwing may gawain minsan nasama, kaya minsan di nakakasama kasi sa pinansyal, kasi 'pag malayo, pamasaha nalang" ["He took me with him whenever there was an event, sometimes I could join, but sometimes I couldn't because of financial reasons, especially if it's far [inaudible], just for the fare"] this highlights her dedication to her role as an armor bearer, even in challenging

circumstances.

As for the theme of “Minister of Visitation”, key informant A underscored her involvement in church visitations, stating, “Tas may visitation din kami na ginagawa. So sa visitation kasama din ako, ‘no ‘yon” [“Then, we also did visitations. So, I was also part of the visitations.”] this highlights her active participation in reaching out and connecting with the congregation through visitations. Similarly, key informant B detailed her commitment to visitations, mentioning, “nag ano ako, nag- nag- vivisitation ako” [“I did, I did- I did visitations”] this further emphasizes her role in engaging with and supporting the church community through regular visitations. Additionally, key informant D highlighted her missionary training experiences, stating, “I underwent um, mission training, sa Batangas po ‘yon, sa mga bundok...Sa mga Aetas” [“I underwent, um, mission training, it was in Batangas, in the mountains... among the Aetas”] this showcases her preparedness and dedication to extending the church’s outreach beyond its immediate community.

In their roles as “Prayer Warrior”, key informant A emphasized her commitment to fasting and prayer within the church community, sharing, “Then, pagdating dito sa church meron kaming, fasting and prayer. Ginagawa namin yun quarterly” [“Then, when we got to the church, we had fasting and prayer. We did that quarterly”] this illustrates her active involvement in nurturing the spiritual life of the congregation through regular fasting and prayer sessions. Key informant B showcased her dedication to prayer, stating, “ah naging prayer warrior ako” [“A lot, ah, I became a prayer warrior”]. This highlights her commitment to intercessory prayer and spiritual warfare. Key informant C indicated her participation in prayer sessions during church services, saying, “Minsan nag ano, prayer sa- sa ‘pag nag simula na ang service” [“sometimes, prayer during- during the start of the service”] this further emphasizes her role in initiating and participating in prayer sessions to spiritually uplift the congregation during church gatherings.

However, when questioned about their satisfaction with their roles, the clergywomen expressed similar sentiments. Key informant A reflected, “Ah, I’m not saying enough, kasi habang nabubuhay tayo may mga dapat pa tayong gampanan, so, that is not enough” [“Ah, I’m not saying enough, because while we are alive, there are still things we need to do, so, that is not enough”]. This suggests a belief that there are always additional responsibilities to fulfill as long as one is alive, indicating a desire for continuous growth and contribution. Key informant B shared, “Yung mga roles na ginampanan ko?... uh hindi- hindi pa siguro... hindi pa siguro yung mga roles na ginampanan ko, ang ka- ang fulfillment ng isang pastor kung makikita mo successful ang lahat ng myembro ng church” [“The roles I fulfilled?... uh, maybe not yet... maybe not yet the roles I fulfilled, the fulfillment of a pastor is if you see all the church members are successful”]. This highlights the perspective that the fulfillment of a pastor's role is not solely based on individual tasks, but rather on the collective success and well-being of all church members. Similarly, key informant C indicated, “(when asked if those roles are enough to fulfill her title as pastora) Uhm hindi pa...” [“Uhm not yet...”] suggesting that her current roles may not fully satisfy her expectations or the requirements of her pastoral title. Key informant D expressed doubts, stating, “Ano? I- I don’t think so kasi, again, uhm- kung enough na yun di dapat tumigil na ako parang siguro hindi pa enough ““What? I- I don’t think so because, again, uhm- if that was enough, I should have stopped by now, so maybe it’s not enough”]. This reflects a relief that there is always more to achieve and contribute, indicating a desire for continual growth and development. Lastly, key informant E paralleled the sentiment, saying, “Uhm...I don't think so, kasi uhm una yung calling ng Lord hindi sya natatapos eh, hanggat nandito tayo sa lupa may ipapagawa ang Lord” [“Uhm...I don't think so, because uhm first of all the calling of the Lord does not end, as long as we are here on earth, the Lord has something for us to do”]. This underscores the ongoing nature of the Lord's calling and the perpetual tasks to fulfill as long as one is on Earth, suggesting a sense of purpose and duty beyond current responsibilities.

Clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region described their roles in the conducted interview which supported the assumption number five about clergywomen not having enough opportunities to ascend higher leadership roles as they only obtained roles in pastoral ministry and not much higher than that. The key informants also revealed experiences of limited roles within their churches, aligning with assumption number six. Their roles are limited to performance-like roles rather than having the opportunity to lead the congregation like administering sacraments. Additionally, the roles assigned to the key informants were based on their physical attributes and gender, corresponding to assumption number seven. This is shown by the limited roles that they have inside the religious institution.

These experiences resonate with Role Congruity Theory, which addresses biases and challenges faced by clergywomen, particularly concerning limited opportunities within church communities. This theory explains how societal gender role expectations influence perceptions of leadership capabilities, impacting clergywomen's pursuit of leadership roles. Similarly, this theory aligned with the assumption that clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region experience limited opportunities to ascend higher leadership position and to obtain more roles within their churches.

Clergywomen prioritize “Performance” tasks like mentoring and counseling (Niemelä, 2011), as seen with key informant A and B, while both genders equally value their role’s function. Clergywomen lean liberal, addressing social issues through religion, aligning with the findings, evidenced by their community outreach (Niemelä, 2011). In contrast, clergymen emphasize Church function (Niemelä, 2011), illustrated by key informant A and B's support as armor bearers. Both genders share a commitment to prayer, as shown by key informant A, B, and C's roles as Prayer Warriors.

The clergywomen highlighted their struggles as female pastors, managing traditional roles such as wife, daughter-in-law, and mother, which they sometimes perceive as conflicting with their pastoral responsibilities (Lin et al., 2010). Clergywomen in the interviews struggle with their roles as pastors and their other traditional roles, like being wives and mothers. It shows how they find it hard to

balance these different parts of their lives, which is similar to what the clergywomen in the interviews experienced. This shows that female pastors often face challenges in managing their different responsibilities, affecting how satisfied they feel with their roles.

Their roles and ascension towards the pastoral ministry and being ordained also share similar processes. Discipleship, or where they are trained to follow in the likeness of God, is a shared experience through all the key informants. Along with other roles that trained them for their leadership roles, such as becoming leaders or active members within the other ministries within the church, have led them to the many roles they hold in the present. Women are appointed and called to service not because they are women but because of their talents and capabilities in serving God in the church (Sekano, 2012; Steeves, 2017). This shows that no matter the role assigned to them, women in the clergy will still be able to do the work properly. Despite having many roles, they all share the sentiment of not being in fulfillment of their title as being a pastor.

### How Clergywomen View Themselves

This major theme specifically discusses the “experiences of clergywomen” and their “positive view on oneself” in light of the roles they have inside the church and the challenges they have experienced in ministry. This pertains to how they understand and think of themselves, perform their roles and recognize their abilities, beliefs, and values.

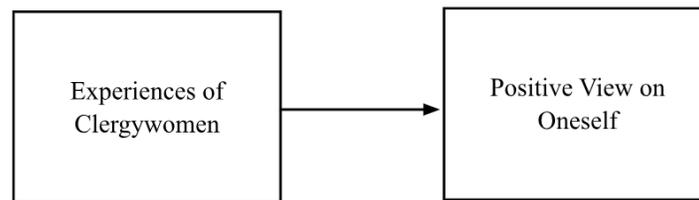


Figure 4. *How Clergywomen View Themselves*

During the interview, most of the key informants have openly shared how they view themselves as clergywomen serving inside the church when asked about how their roles and challenges affected how they perceive themselves. Key informants A and B expressed the significant influence that their challenges have had on the development of their personalities. As per key informant A, “Meron-meron talagang malaking impact ‘toh sa aking sarili. Na develop ang aking personality, dito ako na...develop sa loob ng church. How to talk sa maraming tao” [“It has- it has really a huge impact on myself. My personality has developed, here I was... developed inside the church. How to talk to a lot of people”]. She explained how the church honed and developed her skills, such as how she learned to communicate and interact in public. Moreover, she also shared some of her experiences that had a huge influence on her as a clergywoman. “So nag Bible school ako no’n gasp, four years din, then after no’n natapos naka- nakatapos ako, nakagraduate ako. Talagang nakita ‘ko yung process eh, kasi pagtapos ng graduat- ng graduation, na- ih- okay na ‘tong church, naestablish na, tsaka ‘ko tinawag sa labas...” [“So I went to Bible school for four years, then after that I was able to finish school, I was able to graduate. I really saw the process, because after graduat- graduation, the church was okay, it was established, after then I was called outside[of church matters]...”], she stated. Likewise, key informant B revealed how her challenges positively influenced her and made her become the strong woman she now knows of herself clearly, “lalo ako naging malakas at naging matatag. Yung mga challenge, yung mga... naki... na experience ko sa kanila, kinakailangan magpakatatag ako, kinakailangan maging malakas ako para sa kanila” [“I became more stronger and stable. The challenges, the... from what I have experienced with them, I need to be strong, I need to become strong for them”], she stated. She also shared her experience as a clergywoman first time preaching in their church, “Una kinakabahan ako, syempre. Pag sinabi, ‘ikaw mag ppreach sa Wednesday’, Wednesday lang, hindi naman Sunday kasi meron naman kami- ‘ikaw mag ppreach sa Wednesday’, may- kabado ako doon. Pero, hindi ako nakadepende sa sarili ko. Dumepende ako sa holy spirit” [“At first, of course I was nervous. If [they] said, ‘you will be the one preaching on Wednesday’, during Wednesday only, not during Sunday because we have- ‘you will be the one preaching on Wednesday’, there’s- I am nervous about that. But, I don’t depend on myself. I depend on the holy spirit”].

Key informant D, on the other hand, shared some of her experiences as a clergywoman. She shared how she was able to go to different places to preach and talk to different kinds of people with different backgrounds, “I was able to go to different- different places, here an- and abroad, so I was able to minister to provinces, I was able to preach and speak sa ibang bansa like australia uhm... hmm... and I was able to talk to different uhm different kind of people, with different- different backgrounds”. She also revealed how her love for God grew even more, which allowed her to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. “naprove ko sa sarili ko, and prinove din ng lord at the same time na ano buhay talaga siya, powerful talaga siya. Yung effect sa buhay ko lalo kong minahal ang Lord, lalo kong si- nag- lalo akong nagserve sa Lord and... magpa- nagpatuloy, magpapatuloy ako hanggang ano dumating siya” [“I was able to prove to myself, and the Lord also proved at the same time that he is really alive, he is really powerful”], she added. Through the challenges she had experienced, she was able to prove to herself, and at the same time, learn how God proved that God really is alive and powerful. Additionally, she also highlighted how she can freely exercise her authority as a woman leading the church, “...ngayon yung na e- uh... I- naexercise ‘ko yung being authority... Kahit babae, na- naexercise ‘ko pa rin yung authority, kasi yung authority na ‘yon was given to me by God so neexercise ‘ko through leadership... na kahit babae pala, kahit babae pala kaya kong ano I can- I can, ano I can ano, I can smoothly... I can handle, I can handle smoothly the congregation” [“...now that e- uh... I- can exercise being authority...

Even though I am a woman, I can still exercise authority, because that authority was given to me by God so I still exercise it through leadership... that even though a woman, even though I am a woman I can I can- I can, I can, I can smoothly... I can handle, I can handle smoothly the congregation”]. This shows how key informant D sees herself as a woman capable of leading and performing greater than what she is expected to do.

Key informant E expressed how she feels about being able to serve God and the church. “So ngayon... bilang pastora masayang-masaya ako kasi alam ko ito yung gustong ipagawa ng Lord sakin...” [“So now, as a female pastor, I am overjoyed for I know that this is what the Lord wants me to do...”], she stated. She perceives herself with overflowing joy knowing the purpose God has given her to fulfill. “...kasi in reality kahit magawa natin yung gusto natin pero hindi natin nagawa yung gusto ng Lord, hindi pa rin tayo magiging masaya” [“... because in reality, even if we had done our wants but we haven’t done what the Lord wants, we still won’t be happy”]. In addition, she also expressed how the church has helped her develop her self-esteem and confidence, “So nung dumating na kami sa church dun lang kami nakaencounter na parang ah pwede pa palang madevelop yung self-esteem, hindi lang ngayon pero unti-unti na develop ng church yung confidence ko” [“So when we arrived at the church that’s when we encountered that it is still possible to develop self-esteem, not only today, but the church has gradually developed my confidence.”]. This indicates how the church has positively influenced her confidence as a woman serving in the church.

This explains how the key informants view themselves positively given the roles they have and the challenges they have encountered serving God and the church. Most of the key informants emphasized how their challenges and roles greatly influenced how they view themselves making them aware of their abilities to successfully perform a task. Despite the challenges they have encountered, it did not affect the way they perceive themselves negatively; rather, it became a huge factor as to why they continuously view themselves positively. The roles given to clergywomen allowed them to develop and establish a positive and high level of perception on themselves and their abilities. Therefore, the Self-Efficacy Theory aligns with this theme as it shows how clergywomen see themselves as capable of performing their roles and overcoming challenges because of their positive view on themselves and their capabilities to succeed. This also aligns with the study’s assumption number eight that clergywomen in selected Christian churches in the National Capital Region perceive themselves as capable of performing higher leadership roles in their local church. In addition, this also aligns with the assumption number 9 that the clergywomen perceived themselves based on the roles given to them inside their churches. Lastly, the result showed the roles assigned to them influence the way they feel about themselves corresponding to assumption number 10.

All of their experiences being clergywomen have greatly impacted the way they perceived themselves as well as their own personalities. It is through facing their challenges and becoming clergywomen that they were able to say that they were strong women. Gallagher (2012), stated that individuals can be empowered by personal and environmental factors which can determine their perception and capability to perform a designed task. Someone with a positive and high level of self-concept is more likely to have positive growth and impact on their surroundings (Wua et al., 2022), which can be applied to most of the key informants. As shared by Wua et al. (2022), their positive outlook on themselves was able to transcend into a positive impact on their environment, specifically their congregation. Key informant E shares that it was through the other pastors in their church that she learned how to become strong and Independent. They also share that these experiences have only drawn them closer to God. Through the challenges they have experienced as clergywomen serving inside the church, they were able to discover and develop how they view themselves and influence their environment positively.

### Perspective of People Inside the Church

The data obtained revealed several themes surrounding the topic of perspective of people inside the church. “Respect” discusses the admiration of the people inside the church. The theme of “Positive reflection and feedback” pertains to the reaction of the congregation. “Participation” explains the attentiveness of people inside the church whenever the clergywomen are teaching inside the church.

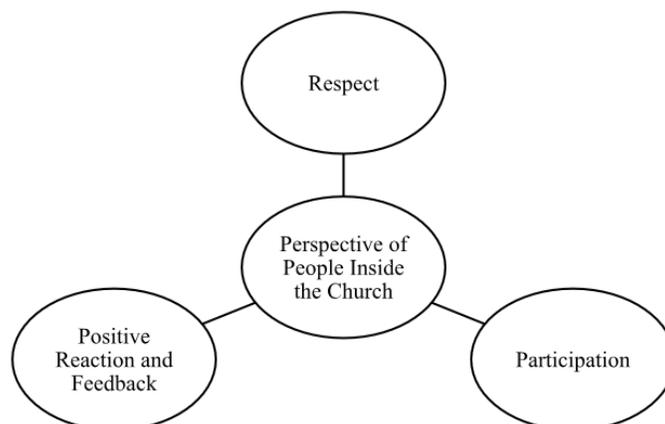


Figure 5. *Perspective of People Inside the Church*

Through the interview held with the clergywomen in the National Capital Region (NCR), the researchers were able to identify what is the perspective of people inside the church on clSSergywomen's preaching. Key informants B, D, and E received respect from people within the church which shows that people within the church view them positively and admire them. Key informant B said "Okay. Nakita ko doon sa- doon sa- sa loob ng church, nagsusuportahan. Nagsusuportahan, nagtutulungan at sila ay malaki ang respeto sa akin" ["Okay. I saw at the- at the- the inside of the church, that they were supporting each other. Supporting, helping, and respected me"]. She explained that people in their church support and respect each other. Key informant D said "Na- may narerespect naman yung one's view, one's ano- one's ideas or one's con- concept or hinohonor- honor and respect. Na- na- naayos yung conflict, uhm, because of ano, respect and- and honor" ["Res- one's view is respected, one's- one's ideas or one's concept or honoring- honor and respect. The- the- the conflict is being fixed, uhm, because of, what, respect and- and honor."]. She revealed that each person among them gives respect to each other because of the relationship that they have established and respect that they have with one another. Key informant E stated "Uhm okay din naman very- very responsive sila and then alam mo na iisa yung spirit kasi we all agree dahil alam din nilang hindi naman tao lang yung nagsasalita pero leading ng Lord through his word dun sa mga tao, so I can see na yung mga co-workers, fellow pastors ko sila yung mga unang nag a-amen, sila yung mga unang nag rerespond doon sa preaching, actually we practiced that sa lahat naman ng nag pepreach" ["Uhm it was okay as well very- they were very responsive and you know that there was one spirit, because we all agree since they also know that it's not just the person talking, but the Lord is leading through those people, so I can see that my co-workers, fellow pastors, they are the first ones to say Amen, they are the first to respond to the preaching, actually we practiced that to all of those preaching"]. This shows that people inside the church respect one another because of same religious faith they have.

From the gathered information, key informants B, D, and E get the participation of people with them when they arrive inside the church. Key informant B said "nung nakakapakinig sila sa salita ng... preaching ko at tsaka preaching na naririnig nila sa mga ano sabi niya, sa... sa... sabi nila, kasi syempre ahh face to face eh na nakakapagtanong ganon" ["when they were able to listen to the word of... my preaching and the preaching that they hear at what they say, at... at... they say, because of course ahh face to face eh able to ask like that"]. This explained that the people inside the church participate in her preaching and give their insights on the things that she had preached about. Key informant D stated that "Ah with the people? I think the experiences are responsive uhm... how is that? Generally speaking, people are responsive, responsive every time I- every time I take a stand, every time I preach" This also explains how the congregation in her church participate and responded whenever she preaches. Likewise, the experiences of key informant E revealed that the people inside the church are participative. "Sa church kasi by God's grace, very participative yung mga... members ng church" ["because in the church by God's grace, very participative are the... members of the church so none of them fall asleep.'], "Every Sunday, meron kaming mga takeaways, vinivideohan namin yung some few brethens, mga kapatid kung ano yung natutunan nila, ano yung takesa- yung mga takeaways nila, what are the lessons na pwede nilang ma-apply so dun din na-ggauge namin" ["Every Sunday, we have takeaways, we take a video of some few brethens, our members of what they have learned, what their takes- their takeaways, what are the lessons that they can apply so we can gauge."]. she added.

Key informants B, D, and E got positive reactions and feedback from the perspective of people around them. informant B stated that "...mas na aabsorb daw nila yung preaching ko kaysa sa... dito sa pakikinig dito sa ano... at nakikita ko naman yung ahm... gradually na pagbabago nila" ["they... they are able to absorb more of my preaching instead of... from listening to the... and I can see the ahm... them gradually changing"]. This showed that the congregation displayed positive reaction and feedback when she is fulfilling her preaching role as they are changed and they absorbed the things that she is preaching. Likewise, key informant D also revealed that the congregation expresses their reactions and feedback to her preaching. "lumalapit saakin after the service, after church service and they would tell uhm... blessed sila, tha- encouraged sila, corrected sila parang uhm... most of the time sinasabi nilang 'The lord dealt me with your message, the lord spoke to me through you'. 'Nakarelate po ako pastora kasi etong pinagdaanan ko eto yung ano, exact yung message ng lord saakin and 'i'm blessed because lord spoke to me through you', " ["they come to me after service, after church service and they would tell uhm... that they are blessed, tha- they are encouraged, they are encouraged like uhm... most If the time they say 'the Lord dealt me with your message, the Lord spoke to me through you.' 'I can relate pastora since what I am going through is the, exact message of the Lord to me and I'm blessed because Lord spoke to me through you'."] she added. Key informant E also revealed that the people inside the church expresses their eagerness to learn the word of God by listening and having calm heart or conditioned heart and mind as defined by her. "lahat naman ay nakikinig and... uhm makikita mo naman na very ano sila ah... uhaw din noh para makinig ng word of God." ["All of them are listening and... uhm you can see that they are very ah... thirsty as well to listen to the Word of God."], "napakahalaga ay pinagpepray ka sa preaching ah... kinokondisyon ng Lord, ng Holy spirit yung puso 'ko at yung puso ng lahat ng makikinig kaya salamat sa Lord" ["It is very important that you are being prayed for in the preachings ah... the Lord is conditioning, the Holy Spirit my heart and the hearts of all who listen so thank you Lord."], she added.

In the overall interpretation of the perspective of the people inside the church, key informants B, D and E get respect, participation, and positive reflection and feedback from the people. The congregation's support and affirmations give them hope that they are becoming more effective preachers and teachers. Their confidence and determination to carry on with passion and dedication in their ministry are greatly enhanced by this encouraging feedback. Although the assumptions made in this study did not cover this major, the findings of these themes contribute to additional and recent knowledge about the lived experiences of clergywomen.

White (2015), stated that people will typically pursue objectives, areas, and relationships that promote their need for satisfaction.

Female pastors who encountered social equality, acts of inclusion, and the assistance of advocates were more likely to ascend to pastoral leadership (Cole, 2022). Being surrounded by a positive support system and accepting congregations allow the clergywomen to also have a positive effect on themselves (Wua et al., 2022). This is clearly seen through the experiences shared by key informant E who comes from a female dominated church, where it opposes the idea in which women frequently oppress other women (Smith, 2013).

## Conclusions

The researchers therefore concluded with the exploration of the lived experiences of clergywomen in selected Christian churches of the Philippines. The findings show that throughout the journey of women to pastoral leadership, they are heavily influenced by people. Most key informants are influenced by those around them who encourage them to answer their calling. The findings also show that while clergywomen fulfill their roles and responsibilities within their church communities, many express dissatisfactions. Despite their diverse roles, tasks, and contributions, they feel that fulfilling their titles as pastors is an ongoing process with unmet expectations. The key informants also experienced conflicts and mockery inside their respective churches. On the other hand, they receive support and participation from the congregation while serving in front of the church. Most of their preaching experience with people inside the church is great because people find their preaching effective and really interests people to participate and pay attention in every teaching or lecture. The findings show that the effects of the challenges the key informants experienced positively influenced how they viewed themselves as clergywomen serving in the church. They have also emphasized that through those challenges, they were able to develop their personalities and build deeper relationships with God.

The limited resources and studies affected the overall paper. Taking into consideration that there are limited local studies and literature about this topic that became the gap this study seeks to fill. There are also limited clergywomen within the national capital region that made it hard for the researchers to find the informants for this study. During the gathering of data, it was revealed that some informants lack experience when it comes to preaching. However, despite the limitations of this study, the researchers were still able to gather data effectively that contributed to the success of this study. This research was able to fill the gap it sought to fill.

Considering the lack of local studies about the lived experiences of clergywomen, the researchers recommend (1) conducting further studies about the lives of women in clergy in the Philippines. Aligned with this, the researchers also recommend (2) carrying out a quantitative phase of this study as it allows a larger number of key informants to gather more accurate results and data that is objective in nature. In order to determine different perspectives about the topic, the researchers recommend (3) conducting studies focused on clergywomen with different backgrounds or civil status such as single and married clergywomen to find out if the findings will be the same. (4) Conducting further studies on other members of religious institutions such as the LGBTQ+ members are also recommended. The larger the amount of the informants, the more reliable information can be obtained providing better results for the study. Eventually, future researchers can achieve better outcomes exploring other recommended areas for this topic.

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