THE INFLUENCE OF SPIRITUAL DIRECTION ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF THE STUDENTS IN FORMATION AT MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, KENYA

JOSEPH KARBO
PSI/JK/40/17

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL INSTITUTE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL THERAPY AND COUNSELLING

MARIST INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

A CONSTITUENT COLLEGE OF THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

NAIROBI – KENYA

MAY 2019

DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented to any other University or institution for academic grading. All sources have been appropriately cited and dully acknowledged.

Signature: ………………………   Date: …………………………

Joseph Karbo

PSI/JK/40/17

RECOMMENDATION

This Masters Thesis has been presented for examination with our recommendation as:

First Supervisor: ………………………   Date: ………………………….

Sr. Dr. Elizabeth Ngozi Okpalaenwe Mshr.
Psycho-Spiritual Institute (PSI)
Marist International University College
A Constituent College of Catholic University
Of Eastern Africa
Nairobi, Kenya

Second Supervisor: ………………………..   Date: ………………………….

Fr. Dr. Hubert Pinto, sdb.
Tangaza University College
Catholic University of Eastern Africa

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the glory of God the Father who has called us out of darkness into his wonderful light and made us ambassadors of reconciliation and peace; to all the men and women dedicated to helping others in their spiritual journey and to my late father; Mr Jean Baptist Upaah Karbo my first spiritual teacher.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Abstract

Spiritual direction has become part of the formation program for religious and priests in the Catholic Church as a means of inspiring spiritual growth and maturity in the formation Houses. This research focused on the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students of formation in Marist International Centre, Kenya. The study employed a descriptive design, mixed methods. The research objectives were to explore how spiritual direction influence psychosocial wellbeing, to find out the challenges faced in spiritual direction, to determine how spiritual direction can be used as a coping mechanism for psychosocial wellbeing. The theoretical framework of Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs motivation theory informed the research. The target population was 72 participants comprising of 67 temporary professed Marist brothers and 5 formators in Marist International Centre, Kenya; who were purposively sampled to participate in the study. Questionnaires were used to collect data from 52 students, open-ended questionnaires for 5 formator and 8 participants were interviewed. The study used descriptive and inferential statics for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data. Data generated was computed using the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. A partial correlation was done to establish the relationship between spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. The findings of the study revealed that despite the challenges students face in spiritual direction, there is a positive influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing. The study concluded that there was indeed a relationship between the experience of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. 82.7% of the students agreed that spiritual direction influenced their psychosocial wellbeing positively. The study recommended that formators need to create more awareness to enhance the influence of spiritual direction for the psychosocial wellbeing of students, there needs to be ongoing formation and supervision for spiritual directors. It is envisaged that the results of this research will inform the decisions of superiors and formators in formation program and planning.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Abbreviations

MIC: Marist International Centre

SD: Spiritual Direction

SA: Spiritual Accompaniment

PWB: Psychosocial Wellbeing

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The primary aim of this study is to explore the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation at the Marist International Centre (MIC) Nairobi. This chapter presents the background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, and scope of the study. The chapter also presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

There is a profound and growing recognition of the importance of spiritual direction in the lives of pastoral agent and those in religious formation in the Church in Africa. This is to enhance their psychosocial wellbeing. For this reason, spiritual direction has become part of the formation to enable candidates to discover how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives. Barrette (2002) underscored the importance of spiritual direction in the life and ministry of pastoral agents as a phenomenon that cannot be underestimated. It has scriptural roots, was practiced in the early church, goes back to the beginning of monasticism, and is affirmed by Second Vatican Council. The Church has a long tradition of spiritual direction going back to the desert fathers. In his work, "The Five Models of Spiritual direction in the Early Church", Demacopoulos (2007) talks about the long standing tradition of spiritual direction in the early church with reference to the distinction between lay and monastic Christians and the positive influence it had on their spiritual life.

Having interacted with some students and formators the researcher is aware of a growing concern about students who do not see the value or see the need of spiritual direction. Some seem

to avoid it or are suspicious about spiritual direction as part of their spiritual development. Many students come into formation thinking only of the results (profession or ordination) and giving less importance to spiritual and psychosocial development. The reasons for this lack of understanding in some students are yet to be verified in this research. This study would like to find out how these issues will influence their psychosocial wellbeing.

One's prayer life and commitment to service are best understood and evaluated when one seeks perspective through the guidance and advice of another (Merton, 1989). This idea of Merton summarizes the essence of spiritual direction as a helping and guidance relationship in which a more experienced person helps another to see and respond to spiritual truths beyond one's self. It is a human relationship, the realization and understanding of which is beyond human comprehension (May, 1982).

Modern pastoral counselling is built on the Rogerian premise that people have the capacity to comprehend themselves and their problems and can change the direction of their spiritual growth if they are treated as people of worth. While spiritual direction on the other hand is built on the premise that God provides life directions that can be discovered through faith-filled interaction of two people (Lamontagne, 2002). This idea forms the basis for providing the ministry of spiritual direction for students of formation.

In spiritual direction, another person is asked to listen with the directee to the Spirit of God from within our relationship with God (Bakke, 2000). Human relations exist whenever people establish a links and interact with each other. The stranger becomes an acquaintance, then a friend, then a confidant. This friend shares personal secretes, hope, disappointments, and pain. This experience can often be therapeutic, bringing wholeness.

Sindjalim (2000) proposed that, spiritual direction today must be culturally sensitive and be cognizant of the stage of peoples' spiritual journey. This idea underscores the growing recognition of the important of spiritual direction when it takes into consideration the psychosocial context of its beneficiaries especially students in formation. Could this be an important factor that needs consideration if spiritual direction is to thrive among students in formation?

In the light of the above, spiritual direction has come to be a part of the structure of most formation programs in the Catholic Church. In the context of formation spiritual direction can take various forms. Sometimes it is called spiritual accompaniment in which a formator or more experienced member journeys with a less experienced member to guide him/her in dealing with some challenges about his/her life, relationship with God or vocation.

This kind of spiritual accompaniment and spiritual direction is found in the majority of formation centers in the Catholic Church. In this kind of spiritual accompaniment the educator-formator becomes an elder brother in religious experience and discipleship, who shares with the younger brother a stretch of the road of life, to help know himself better and the gift that God has given him so that he may respond with freedom and responsibility (Cencini, 1994).

In Marist International Centre, students in formation are provided with both spiritual accompaniment and spiritual direction as part of their formation program and vocation discernment. The Marist brothers of the schools, commonly known as Marist Brothers are an international lay religious congregation of pontifical right for men. St. Marcellin Champagnat founded the Marist Brothers on 2nd January 1817 in Lyons, France. They were founded with the goal of educating young neglected people. They have over 3,150 members globally. Most Brothers minister in school settings, others work with young people in parishes, retreat houses, spiritual

3

accompaniment, at-risk youth settings and young adult ministry in about 79 countries in Africa, Europe, the Americas, Asia, and Oceania. Presently, they have 26 provinces and 5 districts. Marist International Centre belongs to the Conference of Superiors of Africa and Madagascar. The aim of religious formation is to equip the formants with intellectual, pastoral, human and spiritual growth and development for the ministry a head, and to be able to live a well-balanced life.

In this light, Cencini (2011) points out three important aspects in the dynamics of formation, namely educating, forming and accompanying. The importance of education in formation is to draw out to the level of awareness, the potentials of the formants so that they can be fully utilized. The formation part implies that there is a model to which the formant is working towards, in order to acquire a very new identity through self-transcendence. The spiritual accompaniment involves journeying together with a more experienced person along the whole length, sharing "the bread of the journey" of faith, of the experience of God and of the wisdom of the Spirit. In this sense, spiritual direction is seen to have a very positive formative function.

Formation in essence is meant to touch the past, present, and future life of both the person being formed and the institution to which they belong and the church at large. Thus, it is initial and permanent, a pedagogical system that is meant to mold the thoughts, emotions, and behaviour of the individual to a certain level of maturity for a life of service and consecration to God (Cencini, 2011). Spiritual direction and accompaniment and the whole formation program are oriented to the psychosocial wellbeing of the candidate of formation. When mention is made of psychosocial wellbeing in formation, it refers to the combination of cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual and how this dynamic process leads to wellbeing.

There is a certain sense in which the process of spiritual accompaniment is said to bring about transformation in formation. Growth takes place in the school of life through the daily events of life where a person learns to relate meaningfully to God, others and self (Vattamattam, 2012). The documents of the Church on priestly and religious formation insist on the need for integral formation that involves the whole person in every aspect of his personality (Song, 2009). The notion of spiritual formation captures in a certain sense the experience of spiritual direction and accompaniment. Spiritual formation is thus a process; implying development and progression. This necessarily includes struggle and learning, meaning that we have not yet reached a goal that we are aiming at. The question is, does this relate to how students of formation experience spiritual direction in MIC, and if not, what is the problem? Could it be the manner in which spiritual direction is offered, a lack of appreciation for spiritual direction or a need to change perceptions of spiritual direction among formees?

Spiritual direction is a form of spiritual formation and is something that happens to everyone at different levels. Copan (2016) believes that the spiritual side of the human being, Christian or non-Christian alike, develops into the reality, which it becomes for good, or ill. Everyone receives spiritual formation, just as everyone gets an education. The question is whether it is a good one or bad one. Whether we want to be or not, we are being formed every day of our lives. Copan went on to say that Hitler was spiritually formed and Mother Teresa was spiritually formed; but their spiritual formation was profoundly different. In other words, when there is positive and balanced spiritual formation it can lead to self-actualization and psychosocial integration and wellbeing. This research is interested in exploring how spiritual direction as a very important component of spiritual formation contributes to psychosocial wellbeing.

Ryff and Keyes (1995) described a theoretical model of psychosocial wellbeing that encompassed 6 distinct dimensions of wellness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Psychosocial health includes the mental, emotional, social and spiritual dimensions of what it means to be healthy. It is the result of the complex dynamics between a person's history, their thoughts about and interpretation of the past and what it means for the present (Zinger, 2006).

Psychosocial wellbeing has other dynamics beyond those already stated by Ryff & Keyes (1995) that must be taken into account like personality traits, learned helplessness vs learned optimism and life span maturity. All these are factors that could affect positively or negative the process of psychosocial wellbeing. The process of spiritual direction and accompaniment will do well to understand these background issues if it is to help the formation student achieve psychosocial wellbeing and move towards self-actualization.

In a research paper by Rapheal (2013) on "spiritual correlates of psychological wellbeing", done among 126 college students selected from three colleges in India, she investigated the significances of spiritual intelligence in ensuring psychological wellbeing of individual and collective life. Correlation and ANOVA results confirmed the significant role played by spiritual intelligence in psychosocial wellbeing of participants. The components of spiritual intelligence that were examined and found to be highly significant in the psychological wellbeing included transcendental awareness, personal meaning production, and conscious state expansion while critical existential thinking was found to be only moderately significant.

Jacobs & van Niekerk (2017) did a study in South Africa on the role of spirituality as a coping mechanism for South African traffic officers. The study uses an interpretative, qualitative

approach utilizing purposive sampling in which 10 officers participated in in-depth interviews. In line with the interpretative paradigm, data was analyzed using content analysis. The research finding indicated that when utilizing spirituality to various degrees in their work place, traffic officers displayed adaptive coping capabilities.

The formation program and formators in Marist International Centre are very much aware of the importance of spiritual direction and accompaniment and have incorporated it into their formation guide, making it a pedagogical requirement for students of formation (Vives, 1994). However, it will be very important to find out how this valuable experience of spiritual direction is influencing the psychosocial wellbeing of students, their spiritual growth, and maturity for the challenging pastoral ministry ahead.

In an environment in which formators journey with formants in the process of vocation discernment, where student could be discontinued from the formation process; students may become uncomfortable and develop mistrust for spiritual direction. This may result in students going for spiritual direction but are not open to process and be still living in a mask. They may go through the process but remain untouched and still deeply disconnected and wounded from their past. In such situations can spiritual direction have any influence on their psychosocial wellbeing.

Some of the studies cited above, Raphael (2013) done in India dealt with spiritual intelligence and Jacobs & van Niekerk (2017) done in South Africa explored spirituality as coping mechanism and not spiritual direction and psychosocial well-being. This points to a gap and the need to do a study among the students in MIC to fill in knowledge gap. It is envisaged that this research will help students of formation and formators in MIC understand and appreciate the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students of formation and the

psychospiritual interventions that will encourage a positive approach to spiritual direction. It is hope that the findings of this study will encourage students to maximize the use of spiritual direction for their own psychosocial wellbeing.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This study investigates the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial well-being of students of formation in MIC. Spiritual direction guides people to personal growth but seems to be sidelined among students in formation due to issues of confidentiality and lack of trust. Spiritual direction is meant to compliment the intellectual, pastoral and human growth in order to prepare the formants for the challenges of the ministry ahead of them. An important component of this kind of formation is how it influences the psychosocial wellbeing of the formants. However, the perception that spiritual direction may have an influence on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation has not being researched into in order to ascertain or dispute the claim so that formators and students alike can be able to approach spiritual direction with more awareness and clarity. There is provision for regular spiritual direction, but it seems like those who make use of it seem to do it out of duty to fulfil the requirement while others go because they have found it very helpful in their personal growth. Which begs the question: is there a relationship between spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing?

Since spiritual direction sometimes take place within the context of formation and vocation discernment through the agency of formators, it may pose challenges for those in formation. They can be caught between the goal of making it through formation to become religious or priests and the usefulness of spiritual direction for their own psychosocial wellbeing.

If the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students is anything to go by, then perhaps attention should also be given to the challenges that prevent the harnessing of this influence for their psychosocial wellbeing and personal growth. Some of the challenges may relate to the fact that some of the spiritual directors are formators and have responsibility over the assessment of the formants progress into religious life or priesthood. This state of affaire may create fear and suspicion between spiritual directors and formants. It could perpetuates a negative attitude toward spiritual direction. This also means that many formation students could be deprived of the much-needed spiritual guidance for their spiritual growth. This lack of spiritual guidance could in turn affect their personal growth and psychosocial wellbeing. It is the aim of this study to find out the impact of spiritual direction from the formation students point of view and create awareness for formators and students in Marist International Centre – Nairobi, come to a better understanding of the hindrances that could stop students from benefiting from this important ministry. Furthermore, as indicated in the background study, others have focused on other perspective and not on the influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing within MIC and this has informed this research with the aim of filling the existing gap.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study will be guided by the following objectives:

1. To explore the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation of Marist International Centre, Kenya.
2. To find out the challenges faced by students in formation over spiritual direction and accompaniment at Marist International Centre, Kenya

3. To determine how spiritual direction can be used as a coping mechanism and means of psychosocial wellbeing among students in formation at Marist International Centre, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How does spiritual direction influence the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation of Marist International Centre, Kenya?

2. What are the challenges faced in spiritual direction and accompaniment by the formation students of Marist International Centre, Kenya?

3. How can the students in formation at Marist International Centre, Kenya, use spiritual direction as a coping mechanism and means of psychosocial wellbeing?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study will assist formators at different level in the Church and students in formation to discover the immeasurable value of spiritual direction as a means of psychosocial wellbeing, integration and tool for self-care. The findings will help promote a positive attitude toward spiritual direction and make it more valuable. Different religious congregations can adapt the finding of this study to improve on existing formation programs and the input of spiritual direction and practice of spiritual direction.

The findings from this study could inform and guide the institutions involved in the professional training of spiritual directors. People organizing retreats, those going for retreats and spiritual directors can all benefit from the finding in order to help address the challenges that people face in spiritual direction.

This study will help create awareness in the need for spiritual direction among students of formation and personal spiritual growth in Marist International Centre Nairobi. It is hoped that the findings of this proposed study will inform and influence the work of those responsible for the planning of formation programs for students in formation at Marist International Centre, Nairobi, to consider the need for choosing spiritual directors outside the formation team to journey with students.

This study will assist formators at different level in the Church to rethink the concept of spiritual direction and reorganize methods and techniques of spiritual direction in formation houses. It is hoped that the findings from this study will serve as a resource of Knowledge and a reference for subsequent researchers in this area, as well as scholars and authors. Finally, the researcher will be able to use the study to create awareness, organize seminars and workshops for formators, students and other Christians as beneficiaries.

1.6 Scope and Delimitations

The research was done among 67 Marist students in formation all of whom are male. The delimitation of this work was in the area of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. However, there were other aspects of formation that could be included such as spiritual growth, pastoral ministry etc. There are many other people and Christians in general who could need spiritual direction and could benefit from it with whom this study could have been carried out. The fact that this study was done in MIC made it difficult to generalize the findings and information. The researcher living among the MIC students was careful not to influence students to give researcher-oriented information. To mitigate this danger the researcher carried out a sensitization and awareness about the importance of the study.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This research was guided by Abraham Maslow's (1908-1970) "Hierarchy of Needs Motivation theory" as the theoretical framework with which to understand the relationship between spiritual direction and its impact on the psychosocial wellbeing of students of formation in Marist International Centre, Nairobi.

1.7.1 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

Abraham Maslow's (1908-1970) theory of hierarchy of needs informed this research. According to Maslow, our behaviors and actions as human beings are motivated in order to achieve certain needs. Maslow first introduced his concept of a hierarchy of needs in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation". This theory guides this study to find out if spiritual direction can be a motivating factor leading to fulfilment of self-actualization needs among students of formation.

Maslow was more interested in learning what motivates people and what people do to achieve happiness. Maslow believed that people have an innate desire to be self-actualized; that is the desire to be all they can fully be (Mawere, Mubaya, Reisen, & Stam, 2016). For Maslow the goal of psychology should not just be that of helping, us deal with mental illnesses or disorders but also help us flourish; then understanding what constitutes psychological wellbeing is equally very important. Maslow in his studies discovered that what distinguishes the psychological well and the sick is the ability to self-actualize. This theory can help this study investigate whether spiritual direction has does contribute to self-actualization, and psychosocial wellbeing.

According to Maslow, humans are driven to satisfy a hierarchy of needs and the highest of them is self-actualization. We begin to self-actualize when we have satisfied the more basic physiological and safety needs, the psychological needs of belonging and love, and esteem; and self-actualization needs. In the light of the above needs, Maslow's theory of needs guides the present study to explore whether spiritual direction has any influence on belonging and love, esteem and psychosocial well-being. These needs can be divided into deficiency needs and, growth needs, the first four are often referred to as (D-needs) and the top level is known as (B-needs) (McLeod, 2018).

For Maslow self-actualization refers to the need for personal growth and discovery. For him, a person is always becoming and never static. In self-actualization, a person comes to find meaning in life that is important to them (McLeod, 2018). It is important to note that self-actualization is a continual process of becoming rather than a perfect state of happiness one reaches once and forever (Hoffman, 1988). This concept guided the present study to understand if spiritual direction does help people fulfill the need for personal growth and discovery.

Maslow's five-stage model has been extended to include cognitive and aesthetic needs (Maslow, 1970) and later transcendence. In transcendence needs, a person is motivated by values, which transcend beyond the self (e.g mystical experiences, certain experiences with nature, aesthetic experiences service to others, the pursuit of science, religious faith, etc.). Maslow believed that self-actualization could be measured through the concept of peak experiences, for example, when a person experiences the world for what it is through nature and there are feelings of euphoria, joy and wonder (McLeod, 2018). This theory assists this study in throwing more light on the concepts of self-actualization and transcendence and how spiritual direction can enhance these constructs for psychosocial wellbeing.

1.7.1.1 Strengths of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

The theory has proven to be helpful within the context of perspective on growth as Maslow emphasized the potential of every human being. In Maslow's reasoning, the individual is seen as the most important actor and his/her own individual agency supersedes other motivational actions. Being a humanist, Maslow's theory affirmed the belief that every person has a strong desire to realize their full potential, reach a level of self-actualization and find meaning in life (Mawere, Mubaya, Reisen, & Stam, 2016). The theory helps us to learn and understand what motivates people and also comprehend what people do in order to achieve what makes them happy.

1.7.1.2 Weaknesses of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory

According to Gambrel and Cianci (2003), it is questionable how successfully Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory will work in a collectivist culture. Literature review findings suggest that a hierarchy of needs based on a collectivist culture will be different from Maslow's original model. In a collectivist culture, the basic need is belonging; self-esteem is eliminated and self-actualization is attained in terms of meeting societal development needs (Gambrel, 2003).

Maslow's needs theory can appear to be very simplistic in explaining a very complex issue of human needs and motivation. The theory was not scientifically tested and was culturally influenced. Maslow studied people within his own western environment and not outside of it. Hence, the theory appears to be individualistic. The needs are fulfilled at an individual level without taking into consideration the social connections and environment that contribute to the fulfilment of these needs.

1.7.2 Relevance of the Theory to the Study

This research assumed that there is relationship of influence between psychosocial wellbeing and spiritual direction and accompaniment. Maslow's hierarchy of needs and motivation theory states that human motivation is based on people seeking fulfilment (wellbeing) and change through personal growth. Maslow's theory puts self-actualization and transcend at the top of these motivational needs, which refer to the need for personal growth and fulfilment and finding meaning in life. Spiritual direction as a relationship between the director and directee focuses on examining our human experiences with the aim of discerning the action or presence of God. It is about giving religious meaning to our human experiences (Barry, 2004). According to McLeod (2018), the needs are organized in a hierarchy of prepotency, and the highest of these needs is self-actualization. An individual's needs must be met at each of these levels before that person can ever truly be healthy. Failure to meet one of these levels interferes with the individual's ability to address the other levels.

This theory helped this study understand how these unmet or fulfilled motivational needs could influence psychosocial wellbeing. Within the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, it important to situate the individual who is the subject of formation who is going to received spiritual direction for psychosocial wellbeing.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a research tool intended to assist a researcher to develop a better understanding and awareness of the situation being investigated and communicate it. When it is clearly articulated it, a conceptual framework has the potential to become a useful tool in assisting the researcher to make meaning of subsequent findings (Kombo, 2006).

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE   **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

| A |

| Spiritual Direction | ⟹ | Psychosocial Wellbeing |

- Understanding of spiritual direction
- Students years of formation
- Dual relationship

| B |

- Prayer
- Discernment
- Acceptance

- Self-awareness
- Ability to relate well
- Stress management

INTERVENING VARIABLE
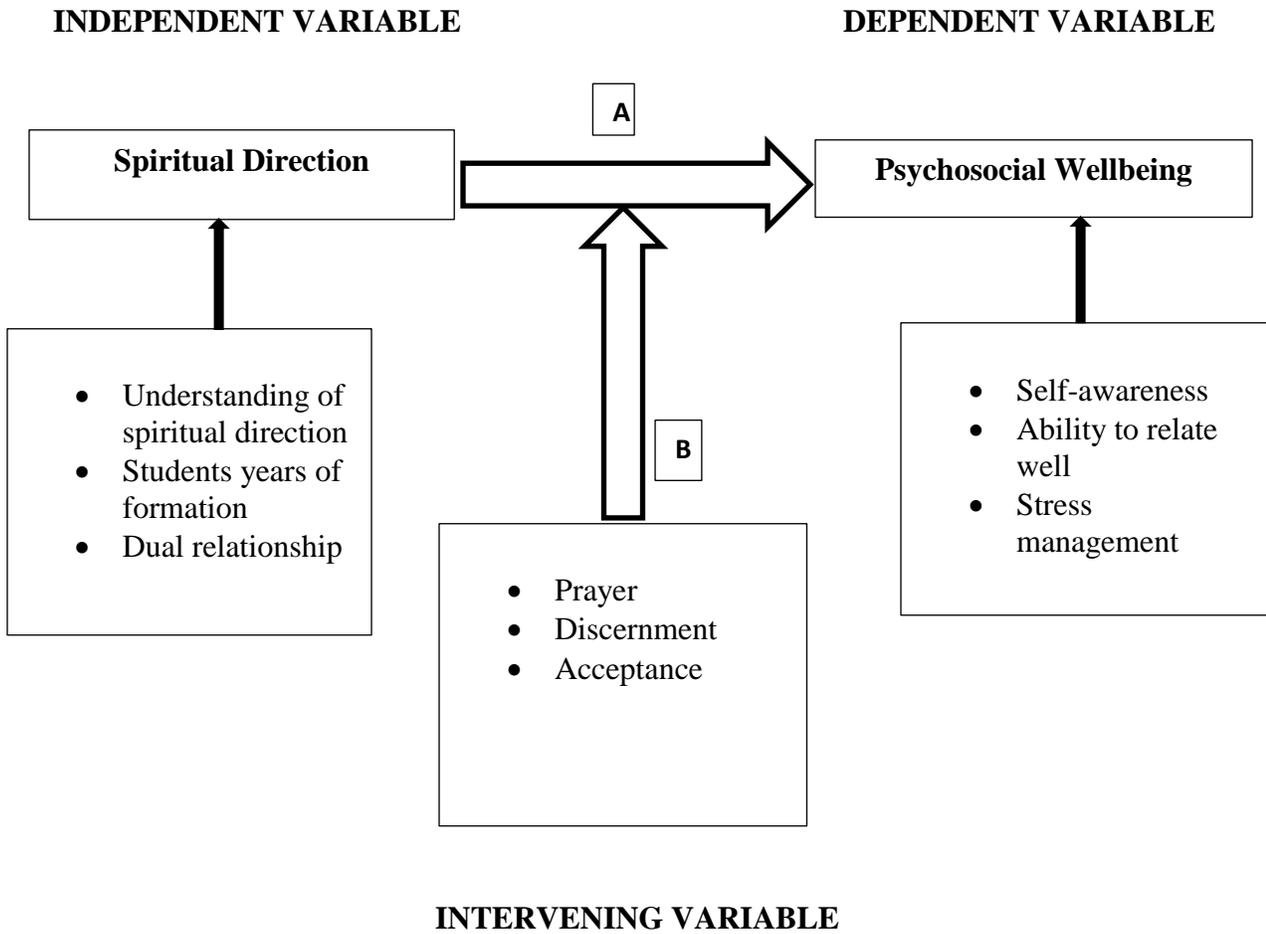
Figure 1.1: A conceptual framework showing influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing.

This research was aimed at exploring the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation in Marist International Center Nairobi. Hence, spiritual direction was the independent variable with the arrow A in figure1 that influences the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation identified as the dependent variable. Spiritual direction is the relationship between a spiritual director and a directee in which the director helps the directee explore their relationship with God and how God is directly or indirectly working in their life. This research wants to investigate if the phenomenon of spiritual direction – their understanding of

spiritual direction, students' years of formation and dual relationship has any influence on the dependent variable – psychosocial wellbeing.

Psychosocial wellbeing refers to the psychological and emotional disposition of the student in formation – their thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, perception and behaviors, the social environment, and other relationships. It includes particularly self-awareness, ability to relate well and stress management. The intervening variables are indicated by arrow B in figure 1 and they are prayer, discernment and acceptance of spiritual direction. These variables will influence the relationship between independent variable and the dependent variable.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Spiritual direction: refers to the spiritual guidance given by a more experience person to another to help them better understand their perception of God, how to relate with him in prayer and how to live out this relationship in daily life. In this study, spiritual direction and spiritual accompaniment are used interchangeably.

Spiritual accompaniment: refers to the help given by a formator usually a more experienced person in spiritual matters within the same religious community to a student of formation, which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication in his life.

Spiritual director: is the one who is trained to help or accompany another in their spiritual journey to recognize and to follow the inspirations of grace in his life, to become more fully who they are created to be in order to arrive at the end to which God is leading.

Students in formation: refers to the brothers belonging to the Marist Religious Institute of the little Brothers of Mary who are on temporary vows, living, and studying in the Marist International Centre, Kenya.

Psychosocial Wellbeing: in this study term refers to the students' thoughts processes, emotions and behaviors and their interaction among themselves, formators, staff, and other relevant members of MIC; and how these affect their perception and feeling of being contented and healthy physically, psychologically, spiritually, socially, and morally. It involves their sense of meaning and purpose in life. It also refers to achieving a state of balance and satisfaction in inner self-experience and environmental factors.

Formators: the term refers to the animators and mentors responsible for the supervision, guidance and training of the students in formation and usually resident with the students.

Moral development: refers to process of growth in making value judgement about how we perceive right and wrong and how these perceptions affect our attitudes, behaviors and moral choices.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presented a review of relevant literature on the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation at MIC. The literature review was based on the research objective themes. It ended with conclusion and research gap.

2.1 Influence of Spiritual Direction on Psychosocial Wellbeing

Christian spiritual direction always aims ultimately at fostering an individual's relationship with God. It is the help given by one Christian to another Christian, which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her (Connolly, 2010). In other words, spiritual direction focuses on how to make sense and meaning of religious experience – ones relationship with God, its implications and demands.

The students come to formation with a number of background challenges of a psychological, social, spiritual and moral nature that needs to be addressed if they are to be adequately prepared for the pastoral ministry that awaits them after their formation program. Spiritual direction gives them the opportunity to address some of these challenges in the light of their relationship with God. A number of studies have examined the mediating factors in the relationship between spirituality and psychological health (Paine, 2018). There is also a body of substantial literature supporting a positive association between religiosity and mental health outcomes, including less depression and higher self-esteem, less loneliness (Kirkpatrick, 1993). This means that spirituality has an influence on psychological health.

Religiosity and spirituality are often integral facets of human development. In a study carried out in Americans using data from a cross-sectional observational study, Meanley (2016) examined how components of religiosity / spirituality were associated with psychological well-being among spiritual-identified participants - young gay and bisexual men ((YGBM). An overwhelming majority 79.5% identified as religious / spiritual with most YGBM 91.0% reporting spirituality as a coping source. This study was not done in Kenya however; it highlights the importance of religious / spiritual matters - like spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing, which this study is also interested.

In another study conducted among fifty-one African Americans with end stage renal disease (ESRD) by Song (2009) to show relationship between psychosocial –spiritual wellbeing and end of life preferences and values in African American dialysis patients, showed varied levels of psychosocial and spiritual wellbeing. The study used the baseline interview data from the 51 individuals who participated in a randomized clinical trial of an end-of-life communication intervention. Data was collected using a brief written questionnaire, a structured chart review and in-person interview. The study showed an association between individuals' spiritual coping style and their preference for life sustaining treatment (Song, 2009). This study was done in America and not in Kenya but the result support assumptions of this research. Although this study did not deal directly with spiritual direction, its findings however, underscore the influence of spiritual activities on psychosocial wellbeing.

Spiritual direction aims at fostering a deeper awareness of our encounter with God through our subjective experience by seeking the accompaniment and guidance of another person to find meaning and fulfilment in this experience (Barry, 2004). In this sense, spiritual direction can be seen as a process in the direction of self-actualization according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs

motivation theory (McLeod, 2018). In a study conducted by Fiorito (2007) on "spirituality and psychosocial well-being a mediator-moderator study", he examined the religion-wellbeing link within a spiritual means-ends motivational framework utilizing two means dimensions and five ends dimensions. Both moderation and mediation effects were examined using regression analyses. A measurement scale (M-E SQ) was use to assess (261 male and 311 female) participants questionnaire reports of their spiritual / religious goals. The findings confirmed the ability of spiritual means to moderate the relationship between spiritual goals and wellbeing. Furthermore, the examination of mediation effects revealed that only devotional means mediates the spiritual goals-wellbeing relationship.

In a research paper by Rapheal (2013) on spiritual correlates of psychological wellbeing, done among 126 college students selected from three colleges in India, she investigated the significances of spiritual intelligence in ensuring psychological wellbeing of individual and collective life. Correlation and ANOVA results confirmed the significant role played by spiritual intelligence in psychosocial wellbeing of participants. The components of spiritual intelligence that were examined and found to be highly significant in the psychological wellbeing included transcendental awareness, personal meaning production, and conscious state expansion while critical existential thinking was found to be only moderately significant.

A review of the international medical literature was done in the University Of Witwatersrand Johannesburg, South Africa by Jane van Rensburg, Myburgh, Szabo, and Poggenpoel (2013) on the role of spirituality in the discipline of psychiatry. A descriptive thematic method was used to analyze the literature on spirituality and psychiatry. Most of the literature recorded was qualitative investigation or essays. The themes identified in the literature were synthesized and integrated into the following summary:

(1) Orientation in terms of spirituality and religion in psychiatry; (2) Reality of spirituality and religion for practitioners and users; (3) Routine assessment of spirituality and religion in psychiatry; (4) Training of spirituality in psychiatry; (5) Scope and boundaries of spirituality in psychiatry; (6) Referral and collaboration on spirituality in psychiatry.

These six theme highlight growing need to recognize the social function of spirituality as well as the internal validation of the individual spirituality, the positive association of spirituality and better health outcomes. The review underscored the importance of assessment because spirituality and religion may affect aspects of the presentation and symptoms of illness in different clinical scenarios. Spirituality for example, can influence the particular content of psychotic symptoms. Hence, it becomes necessary to be able to differentiate between pathological and non-pathological religious involvement. From the literature, it became apparent that mindfulness towards spirituality should be encourage and that spirituality should be incorporated in the approach to specialist psychiatric practice and training within the professional scope of the discipline (Jane van Rensburg, Myburgh, Szabo, & Poggenpoel, 2013).

In South Africa there is a recognition that African traditional practice consists of a significant religious and spiritual component, in addition to just being part of people's cultural background. This is underscored by the promulgation of the Traditional Health Practitioner's Act no.35 of 2004 (Jane van Rensburg, et al., 2013).

2.2 The Challenges Faced in Spiritual Direction

According to Rakocy (n.d) the effects of global interdependency, increasing multicultural and interreligious character of our cities and neighborhoods, and voices of racial and ethnic minorities poses a challenge to modern spiritual directors. How do you accompany those diverse

in culture, religion, race, ethnic background, sexual identity etc.? She opined that these differences present three areas of challenge for spiritual directors: reflecting on the diversity of their experiences as directors, becoming more culturally self-knowledgeable and self-aware, and developing inter-pathy in relation to gender and religion. Rakocy's (n.d) concern are indeed very salient for spiritual direction as communities are becoming more and more multicultural like in MIC. The multicultural dimension of spiritual direction can be very relevant to this study given the international composition of the students in formation at MIC. Perhaps a culturally sensitive spiritual direction could be of great benefit to the students in formation.

In his doctoral dissertation on overcoming the unique spiritual formation challenges experienced by large-church staff, Whaley (2017) observed the following: a crisis of faith among large-church staff, loss of meaning, loss of sacred space and loss of spiritual guide for church staff whose spiritual leader or guide was also their employer. He states that "An abusive spiritual leader can cause great damage to the staff member's experience of God. An abusive lead pastor can disrupt the employee's emotional, mental and spiritual equilibrium". The study proposed three key elements as helpful in addressing these challenges: the availability of a spiritual director to the staff (outside the church the community), an enhance belief in the sacredness of each ministry role, and an intentional workplace rhythm of life. The infusion of these elements into staff culture will mitigate against emotional and spiritual despondency and significantly enhance spiritual formation. This is what Whaley (2017) says about a spiritual director who has a dual relationship with the directee:

> In spiritual direction, it is paramount that the directee feels safe. When the spiritual director is the directee's employer, it is highly unlikely that the directee will feel the safety to share openly and honestly. Because spiritual direction is primarily focused on one's relationship with God, a staff member who is experiencing a crisis of faith or participating in activities

or behaviors inconsistent with their church's doctrine, is likely to experience great concern about sharing that information openly with their lead pastor/employer (p.105).

Whaley's scenario can be liken to what could happen in formation settings in which the formants go for spiritual accompaniment to the formators responsible for their supervision and training.

Juma, Merwe, and Toit (2017) carried out a qualitative study in South Africa, which described and interpreted the lived experienced of African Roman Catholic Seminarians. The interpretative lens employed was worldview, a conceptual tool extensively used in African-centered psychology. 16 African seminarians between 21-31years were purposively selected for an in depth interview. Additional data was collected through reflexivity notes and observation notes. The findings revealed that participants had difficulties adjusting to seminaries where teaching and living predominantly reflects a western worldview. The finding points to the importance of acknowledging the worldviews and cultural heritage of seminarians in their training.

The study also highlighted a major component of the personal development of seminarians as spiritual growth. This was nurtured by the tradition of having a spiritual director who may be a man or woman. The spiritual director or formator has certain psychospiritual characteristics and skills to provide spiritual direction for those who need it. However, 63% of seminarians expressed disbelief that they would be understood by their spiritual directors and formators. Participants felt misunderstood because of the cultural differences while some also feared that what was disclosed to their spiritual director might be used against them. Having an elderly woman as a spiritual director was an affront to one seminarian. African cultural taboos prohibits sharing sensitive issues between genders and even generations. Insights from study done in South Africa can be useful for this research in MIC to take into account the cultural background of formees.

2.3 Spiritual Direction as a Coping Strategy for Enhancing Psychosocial Wellbeing

Coping in spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing is referring to the use of spiritual and psychological perception, beliefs, attitudes or practices to minimize or deal with the emotional stress caused by difficult life situations and events. The practice of spiritual direction can be found in different form in the history of the church and the practice may look different throughout many faith traditions. The central concept of spiritual direction, regardless of how it was manifested, was developing and fostering a relationship with God (Michael, 2004).

According to Sperry (2003), there are eight functions of spiritual direction.

(1) The first of these is spiritual assessment, which is gathering information about the person's spiritual experiences, beliefs and orientation. Spiritual assessment may also include information about spiritual upbringing, God image, spiritual community and prayer.

(2) Another function of spiritual direction is differentiating spiritual experiences from psychopathology. Since some mystical experiences have similarities with psychosis it is necessary that we have a proper understanding of the experience in order to deal with it appropriately either in psychotherapy or spiritual direction.

(3) Spiritual direction also serves to address transformation - having a change of heart or changing more into the image of God.

(4) Triadic relationship - spiritual direction is about fostering the relationship between God and the directee.

 (5) Spiritual direction also involves advising about prayer and spiritual practices.

(6) Spiritual direction involves discernment, which is the mutual process of seeking the leading of the Holy Spirit.

(7) Spiritual direction like psychotherapy deals with resistance as well. In other words, spiritual direction addresses the directee's resistance to spiritual experience, resistance to spiritual direction as well as the director's resistance to the directee. These resistances like in psychotherapy may arise from unresolved emotional or spiritual concerns that are brought into spiritual direction.

(8) Finally, spiritual direction deals with transference and counter-transference, there is the possibility of directees bringing unresolved emotional issues to the spiritual direction relationship (Sperry, 2003).

The above function of spiritual direction can be seen as mediating factor in the process of religious formation because they help to address the needs and goals of the spiritual components of formation. This is very close to what Cencini (2004) calls "affective maturity" and "freedom", a formation of the heart.

Wachholtz, et al., (2007) in an article exploring the relationship between the experience of pain and religious and spiritual forms of coping (such as prayer and seeking spiritual support) with the aim of understanding not only why people rely on their spiritual faith to cope with pain; but also how religion may impact the experience of pain and help or hinder the coping process. In this article, he reiterated that spiritual beliefs and practices might influence cognitive and emotional processes, which then influence biological mechanisms, thereby directly affecting pain.

Spirituality may increase or decrease pain responsiveness depending on the valence of the spiritual practice. Positive spirituality may reduce the impact of pain by reducing stress distracting from pain, acting as a kind of support for and providing social interaction. He also

noted that there are positive and negative coping, some religious and spiritual coping are adaptive and others are maladaptive. Examples of positive coping includes collaborative problem solving with God, helping others in need, and seeking spiritual support from the community and a higher power. Negative religious and spiritual coping includes deferring all responsibility to God, feeling abandoned by God, and blaming God for difficulties. When confronted with physical and psychological negative events people tend to draw from both secular and spiritual resources (Wachholtz, 2007).

Koening et al. (as cited by Wachholtz et al., 2007) indicted that a large body of research suggests that individuals rely on their spiritual and religious faith when dealing with illness and this coping is generally associated with positive health outcomes, including less depression and longer survival. Research further demonstrated that religious and spiritual coping correlates with feelings of spiritual support, spiritual connection, peace, calmness, and decreased anxiety and results in an improvement of mood. This study was done in the USA and not in Kenya, it does not deal directly with spiritual direction, however it points to the influence of religious and spiritual coping such as prayer and spiritual support (which is at the heart of spiritual direction) on psychosocial wellbeing.

Pendleton, Cavalli, Pargament, and Nasr, (2002) in a research carried out among children with cystic fibrosis (CF) in America. The participants were a convenience sample of 23 patients with CF, ages 5 to 12 years and their parents in an ambulatory CF clinic. They used a focused ethnography design including in-depth interview with children drawings, and self-administered written parental questionnaires and used grounded theory. The main outcome measures were participants' views on religion/spirituality in coping with illness. The following were the 11 coping strategies that were examined. (1) Declarative religious/spiritual coping, (2) petitionary

religious/spiritual coping, (3) collaborative religious/spiritual coping, (4) belief in God's support, (5) belief in God's intervention, (6) belief that God is irrelevant, (7) spiritual social support, (8) ritual response, (9) benevolent religious/spiritual reappraisal, (10) punishing religious/spiritual reappraisal, (11) discontent with God or congregation. The findings revealed that children with CF reported a variety of religious/spiritual coping strategies they nearly always associated with adaptive health outcomes.

Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) observed that even though a body of literature suggests that people often turn to spirituality (or religion) when dealing with painful event; no published studies seem to have attempted to quantitatively synthesize the research on religious coping methods and quantitatively determine their efficacy for people dealing with stressful situations. He therefore set out to research on the gap. The purpose of his study was to synthesize the research on situation-specific religious coping methods and quantitatively determine their efficacy. A meta-analysis of 49 relevant studies was with a total of 105 effect size was conducted in order to quantitatively examine the relationship between religious coping and psychological adjustment.

The findings of the study generally supported the hypotheses that positive and negative forms of religious coping are related to positive and negative psychological adjustments to stress, respectively. Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) conceptualized religious coping using Pargament's (1998) model which refers to use of religious beliefs or behaviors to enable problem solving prevent or ease the negative emotional consequences of stressful life circumstances. They identified the following positive and negative religious coping strategies. The positive included (1) religious purification / forgiveness (2) religious direction / conversion (3) religious helping (4) seeking support from clergy / members (5) collaborative religious coping (6) religious focus

(7) active religious surrender (8) benevolent religious reappraisal (9) spiritual connection; and (10) marking religious boundaries.

The negative strategies included: (1) spiritual discontent, (2) demonic reappraisal, (3) passive religious deferral, (4) interpersonal religious discontent, (5) reappraisal of God's powers, (6) punishing God reappraisal and; (7) pleading for direct intercession: (Pargament, et al. as cited in Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005). The finding lends further support to the notion that positive religious coping strategies may serve some adaptive function; that individuals who used positive religious coping strategies experienced less depression, anxiety and distress.

Individual who are faced with difficult or stressful situations often resort to religious coping methods such as prayer and seeking spiritual support. A review of research on religious coping indicates that the prevalence of religious coping ranges from 30% to 80% across different samples (Harrison et al., 2001).

Trevino et al. (2001) did a study in the USA among 429 patients of HIV/AIDS of Caucasian and African American decent on the relationship between positive religious coping (e.g, seeking spiritual support) and spiritual struggle (e.g, anger with God) versus viral load, CD4 count, quality of life, HIV symptoms, self-esteem, social support, and spiritual well-being. Data was collected via chart review and patients' interview and questionnaires were administered by trained interviewers at baseline. The results of the study indicated that positive religious coping was associated with positive outcomes while spiritual struggle was associated with negative outcomes.

Jacobs and van Niekerk (2017) did a study in South Africa on the role of spirituality as a coping mechanism for South African traffic officers. The study uses an interpretative, qualitative

approach utilizing purposive sampling in which 10 officers participated in in-depth interviews. In line with the interpretative paradigm, data was analyzed using content analysis. The research finding indicated that when utilizing spirituality to various degrees in their work place, traffic officers displayed adaptive coping capabilities. The officer associated less spirituality or a lack of it with weaker coping capability. The study further revealed that spirituality among the traffic officers was informed by their spiritual or religious foundation, their purpose in work and life, their connection to a spiritual source, and the fruit of spirituality. The study also discovered that the coping ability of the traffic officers is influenced by their upbringing and background, by stressors in their work environment and by their coping mechanisms. Finally the role of spirituality in the coping of the officers culminated in their ability to interpret the meaning they give to spirituality and implementing spirituality as a coping mechanism.

2.3.1 Spiritual Coping

The spiritual and human dimensions are two important pillars of religious formation and are meant to complement each other. Each of these dimensions has resources and potential that can be harnessed for psychospiritual growth. Formation assumes the existence of such resources and aims at making possessor aware of them (Cencini, 2011).

Tarakeshwar et al. (2005) did a study for the development and implementation of a spiritual coping group intervention for adults living with HIV/AIDS. The study was done in an urban city in Northern United States. It was an 8 session intervention based on the cognitive therapy of stress and coping, and the framework of spiritual coping addressed stressors unique to HIV/AIDS. The study evaluated changes in spiritual coping and mental health using group pretest-posttest design. The results showed that participants at the post-test intervention reported

higher self-rated religiosity, more use of positive spiritual coping, lower use of negative spiritual coping and lower depression.

In a review done by Breitbart (2001) in New York, on spirituality and meaning in support care: spirituality and meaning-centered group psychotherapy interventions in advance cancer; he examined the construct of spirituality and end-of-life care, faith/religious beliefs and meaning/spiritual wellbeing in terms of their role in supportive care. Finally, he also reviewed existing psychotherapeutic interventions for spiritual suffering and describes a novel meaning-centered group psychotherapy for advance cancer patients greatly influenced by the work of Viktor Frankl. In his review, he points out that palliative care has expanded beyond pain and physical symptoms control to existential and spiritual issues such as hope and meaning, demoralization, achieving a sense of spiritual peace, and improving relationship with loved ones etc. In his review, he referred to seven interventions used for spiritual suffering adopted by Rousseau (2000) apart from traditional psychotherapy, and these include the following;

(1) Controlling physical symptoms, (2) Providing a supportive presence, (3) Encouraging life review to assist in recognizing purpose, value and meaning, (4) Exploring guilt, remorse, forgiveness, and reconciliation, (5) Facilitating religious expression, (6) Reframing goals, (7) Encouraging meditative practices, and focusing on healing rather than cure.

What Rousseau's work (2000) suggests is the need to develop new novel psychotherapeutic interventions aimed at improving spiritual wellbeing and sense of meaning that could be used in individual psychotherapy of group psychotherapy. This is what has motivated the description of a novel, "meaning-centered group therapy" intervention in this study (Breitbart, 2001). This studies is not focused primarily on spiritual direction and

psychosocial wellbeing, however, it has relevant interventions that touch on spiritual and psychosocial wellbeing that this research objective wants to address.

Jesse and Reed (2004) did a descriptive study of 120 women to determine the relationship of spirituality and psychosocial well-being to health risk behaviors in pregnant Appalachian women. The instruments used were the spiritual perspective scale and religiosity items from the Jarel Well-Being Scale. The results of the study indicated that high levels of spirituality such as spiritual perspective and religiosity were significantly correlated with greater satisfaction with social support, higher levels of self-esteem, and decreased levels of smoking. Sociodemographic, psychosocial, and spiritual variables explained 25% of the variance in frequency of smoking and in the logistic regression analysis; psychosocial stress was the only variable that significantly predicted substance abuse. The study further indicated that high level of spirituality and lower levels of stress are associated with decreased health risks behaviors among pregnant women from Appalachia. The study also revealed that when spiritual resources increased and stress decreased during pregnancy there was the potential to improve health promotion efforts in pregnancy with women from Appalachia (Jesse & Reed, 2004). Although this study does not focus specifically on spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing but its finding, support the influence of spiritual intervention on health and wellbeing.

2.3.2 Prayer

According to Maton and Wells (1995), social and behavioral scientist assumed the buffering role of religious involvement. In times of crisis, spiritual faith may serve as a motivating force in people's life and protect them from harm. Many people have resorted to the spiritual involvement of prayer to deal with the challenges of life. Ai, Peterson, Bolling and

Koenig (2002) carried out a study at the cardiac clinic at the University of Michigan Medical Center in America. The purpose of the study was to investigate the use of private prayer among middle-aged and older patients as a way of coping with cardiac surgery and prayer's relationship to optimism. The study was carried out among 246 patients awaiting cardiac surgery. The measure of prayer included three aspects: belief in the importance of private prayer, faith in the efficacy of prayer based on previous experiences, and intention to use prayer to cope with the distress associated with surgery. The review of literature in the study revealed the following: prayer has been linked with positive health and mental health outcome, a survival advantage in a large sample of older adult, an inverse relationship between public religiosity and risk of depression. The results of the study indicated that, private prayer predicted optimism, along with older age, better socioeconomic resources, and healthier affect. This study which was done in America and not Kenya reveals that prayer has been successfully use as a coping mechanism in challenging times to improve wellbeing.

In recent times there is a growing attention being given to meditation – relaxation strategies as a way of improving physical health, emotional wellbeing and fostering spiritual growth. In an article reviewing research done in the last 25 years related to health of the elderly by Lindberg (2005); the result support the hypothesis that meditation and spiritual practices could promote significant social and emotional benefits for those in social isolation.

2.3.3 Meditation

Kang, Choi, and Ryu (2009) in South Korea, did a study among nursing student to examine the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation on stress, anxiety and depression using a nonequivalent, control group, pre-test design. A convenience sample of 41 nursing students were

randomly chosen for experimental and control groups. Nine participants were excluded because they did not complete the study. Results for the two groups showed the following: a significant difference in stress scores (f=6.145, p=0.020), a significant difference in anxiety scores (f=6.985, p=0.013), no significance in depression scores (t=1.986, p=0.056). the study revealed that a stress coping program based on mindfulness meditation was an effective intervention for nursing students to decrease their stress and anxiety and could be used to manage stress in student nurses. This study was done in South Korea and not Kenya however, it indicates that mindfulness meditation can serve as a possible intervention for psychosocial wellbeing.

Yong, Kim, Park Seo, and Swinton (2011) did a study in South Korea on the effects of a spirituality training program on the spiritual and psychosocial wellbeing of hospital middle manager nurses in Korea. The study focused particularly on the following aspects of psychosocial wellbeing: spiritual wellbeing, spiritual integrity, leadership practice, job satisfaction, and burnout. The study was done using an experimental design. The engaged two groups (the experimental vs. the control). Participants were enrolled for 5 weeks, with 24 nurses in the spirituality program and 27 in the control group. After the spirituality training program, the findings revealed that spiritual wellbeing, spiritual integrity, and leadership practice and burnout was reduced significantly in the experimental group compared with the control group. The study concluded that the spiritual training program was effective in improving psychosocial and spiritual wellbeing of middle manager nurses. It was recommended that the program could be a resource for continuing education and staff development offerings to enhance the wellbeing of nurses and the spiritual care of patients. This study was not done in Kenya and was not on the influence of spiritual direction, however its conclusion allude to the influence of spiritual activities and programs on psychosocial wellbeing.

Hammermeister and Peterson (2001) did a study among 462 college students at two separate colleges in the Pacific Northwest, USA. The study examined the different levels of spiritual wellbeing and 11 psychosocial health-related characteristics. The study assessed the hypothesis that spiritual health is a powerful contributor to overall health. A survey assessing multiple dimensions of health was administered. The questionnaire consisted of 176 health and spirituality related items. Multivariate analysis of variance was employed to compare high and low spiritual well-being groups on health characteristics. The findings of the study indicated that those subjects scoring higher on the measure of spiritual health showed better outcomes on psychosocial measures such as loneliness, self-esteem, and hopelessness. Alcohol and drug use were also significant discriminators between the high and the low spiritual well-being groups. The results of this study suggest that spiritual well-being interventions may be useful to address a variety of adverse health indicators in a college student population. The reviewed study points to the significant relevance that spiritual perspectives and interventions such as spiritual direction can have over psychosocial well-being, which is in line with what the present research is out to investigate.

Shahsavarani, Zoghifard, Mishamandani, Mahmoodabadi, Mohammadi, and Sattari (2016), did a study in Iran on the efficacy of psycho-religion training on the improvement of organizational behaviour and mental health. The study used an experimental design approach. A group of 120 white collar personnel (60 females and 60 males) chosen by cluster sampling and divided randomly into two equal experimental and control groups (30 females and 30 males). The experimental trial was the administration of the psycho-religious training for three week, which consisted of twelve 120 minutes discussion group sessions during 12 weeks. The results of the independent and dependent t-test indicate the positive effect of psycho-religious training on the

mental health of participant.in the experimental group in indices of anxiety, insomnia, severe depression, and total health (PC.05). There was no significant gender difference. These finds suggest that incorporation of religious training with the usual modalities of psychological interventions would be beneficial and increase the level of mental health and organizational behaviour.

In a study done in South Africa by Edwards (2016), to promote global coherence, research and health, he used an integral theoretical positive psychological paradigm to introduce HealthMath and Global Coherence Initiatives as evidence based interventions for promoting coherence, research, health and well-being. Among the interventions used are various wisdom, knowledge and spiritual traditions such as ancestral consciousness and reverence, Buddhism, Christianity and Islam. The article reviews research evidence in relation to psychophysiological coherence which is associated with synchronization between various psychological systems, positive emotions, athletes "zone" experience, enhance spirituality, effective prayer personal, social and global coherence and health. The study further revealed that, from a practical positive psychological perspective, HealthMath tools and techniques provide intervention, alleviation and management of everyday human problems, suffering, stress, tension, anger, anxiety, and depression (Edwards, 2016).

Uberoi (2016) did a study in Ireland among the member of the Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) majority of whom are African migrants. The CAC is a Pentecostal and African initiated church that emerged from the Yoruba *Aladura* movement of early twentieth-century Nigeria. In this study she examined the concept of "dancing away sorrow" one of the distinctive rituals that members of the CAC Dublin brought with them from Nigeria. She explored members' beliefs about well-being and its link with spirituality and community, and examine how music and dance

help to facilitate connection with God and fellow worshippers. The members understand dancing in church as a more successful means of alleviating sorrow and therefore a spiritual activity that takes place exclusively within the sacred setting of the church. Members of this community hold a holistic view of personhood in which the spirit, soul, and body are interconnected. They believe that the spiritual and physical worlds can affect each other.

Part of Uberoi's findings is expressed in this quotation:

> The ability of dance to remove sorrow and induce joy for members of CAC Dublin rests upon both its spiritual and communal nature. In Yoruba culture (and in Africa more generally) mental and physical states are often associated with spiritual matters. The physical and spiritual realms are thought to be connected and thus able to influence one another. Dance, as a physical activity taking place within religious ritual, is believed to influence the spiritual world, both repelling evil forces and attracting God's blessing. Emotional wellbeing is also understood to be contingent upon community. Music and dance help to build community and facilitate communal interaction, raising levels of happiness and wellbeing. While such perspectives are clearly rooted in Yoruba worldview, in CAC Dublin they are placed within a biblical narrative, with the story of King David's dance providing a pattern to follow (Uberoi, 2016, p. 138).

Kristen, Van der Walt and Viljoen (2009) in a study on "Health, well-being and wellness: Anthropological eco-systemic approach" done in South Africa, advocated for a paradigm shift in the approach to health science and care. This means going beyond the biomedical model inspired by Hippocrates to a new holistic paradigm. In their work, they affirmed and revisited the work of Fritjof Capra who called for a paradigm shift in his book *Turning Point* (1982). In this book, he called for a unified approach to the mind/body system. Kristen et al. used a constructivist-interpretive approach. They did a literature survey to establish how health, well-being and wellness have been approached in post-1982 publications and came up with their own concept; an anthropological eco-systemic approach. This approach recognizes that the human being is a whole,

a complete person with distinguished attributes but never separated. It holds that well-being, health and wellness is multi-dimensional and multi-disciplinary. This approach recognizes the bio-psycho-spiritual nature of the human being, living in an ecological and metaphysical context. The approach also talks about a wellness-illness continuum, which sees the promotion of well-being as a life-long process. This study underscores the perception that for any intervention to be effective in bringing about psychosocial well-being it must take into account the person as a whole and be holistic in approach.

Monareng (2013) did a study in South Africa to explore how spiritual nursing care is applied in clinical nursing practice for the holistic care of patients. The study employed a generic qualitative, explorative and descriptive design based on symbolic interactionism as the philosophical base. The target population comprised of professional nurses working in a 800 bedded academic public hospital. Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling methods. Data collection was done using individual, focus group interview and observation. The data collected was analyzed using the *NUD*IST* computer program, coding, constant comparison method and Tesch's guidelines on data analysis. The findings of the study revealed that nurses struggled to conceptualize spiritual nursing care and to differentiate it from emotional, social or psychological care. However, prayer with or for patients and singing spiritual songs had the highest count of intervention perceived to be effective. In general, the findings suggest that the participants identified that the outcome of their spiritual intervention had a positive therapeutic effect on their patients.

2.4 Summary of Literature Review and Knowledge Gaps

The review of the related literature had revealed the fact that there was quite a significant number of research findings that point to the growing recognition of the importance of

spirituality and spiritual activities in psychosocial wellbeing. The literature reviewed also showed a significant relationship between spiritual interventions and spirituality and psychosocial wellbeing. Much of the reviewed studies were done among sick patients, LGBT, women etc., but this study was done among students in formation. Some of the reviewed literature did not deal with dual relationship and the ethical issues that could arise within a formation setting between the student and formator spiritual director. Some of the studies used either qualitative or quantitative methods of research but the present study will adopts a mixed method approach.

While the gathered literature continue to demonstrate an appreciable level of positive influence between spirituality and psychosocial wellbeing, there was however a noticeable gap in literature on the influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing in Africa. Literature found was not much and focused on other perspectives rather than spiritual direction and psychosocial well-being. This noticeable gap in literature and knowledge makes the study relevant.

CHAPTER THREE

DESIGN AND METHODOLGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology that were used to investigate the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students of formation in Marist International Centre. It dealt with the identification and description of the research design, and other methodology such as, participants, and sampling procedures, instruments of data collection, procedure of data collection, data analysis, ethical issues, reliability and validity.

3.1 Research Design

This study used a mixed methods descriptive design to collect and analyze data in order to obtain answers for the research question. The researcher choose this method because the major purpose of this design is to describe the state of a phenomenon, as it exists. Descriptive studies are not only restricted to fact-finding, but also may result in the formulation of important principles of knowledge and solution to significant problems (Kombo, 2006).

3.2 Target Population

The target population in this study were the students in formation and some formators at the Marist International Centre (MIC). MIC is a post novitiate formation center, for the temporary professed young Marist brothers from Africa and Madagascar; with a focus on academic and professional development. The Brothers come from the following provinces: Province of Southern Africa (Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). Province of East Central Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Kenya, Rwanda and

Tanzania). District of West Africa (Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Equatorial Guinea, Liberia). Province of Madagascar and Province of Nigeria.

They comprised of 67 temporary professed Marist brothers, involved in teaching, youth ministry and pastoral outreach and 5 formators totaling 72. A population is a group of individuals, objects or items from which the sample is drawn for measurement. The researcher believed that the respondents were representative of the population who were able to answer the questions that the research was addressing (Kombo, 2006).

3.3 Description of Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Sampling is the procedure a researcher uses to gather people, places or things to study. It is the process of choosing the number of individuals or items from the population to represent all the characteristics of the population under study (Kombo, 2002). Research generalizations and conclusions are only as good as the sample they are based on.

This research therefore used a purposive sample design to generate the data it needed for the research questions because the researcher needed respondents who are reliable for the study and are able to give rich information for the in-depth analysis of the research question. 52 participants were purposively selected for self-administered questionnaires and open-ended questions, while 8 participants were purposively selected for an in-depth interview and 5 formators for open-ended questionnaire.

Table 3.1: population and sample size

Students/Formators	Target population	Sampling size	Sampling procedure	Percentage
1st year	23	21	Purposive	31.9%

2nd year	17	15	purposive	23.6%
3rd year	18	16	purposive	25.0%
4th year	9	8	purposive	12.5%
Formators	5	5	purposive	6.9%
Total	**72**	**65**		**100%**

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

Interview for 8 selected students: The researcher used in-depth interview method of data collection. This was meant to give the participants the flexibility and the opportunity to express their opinions and beliefs. This method enabled the researcher to ask the same questions in the same way each time but free to alter the sequence of the questions and to probe for more information. Some items were semi-structured while others were open and respondents were given freedom to answer the questions in any way they choose. The researcher had appropriately obtain permission to tape-record the interviews from the respondents.

Questionnaires for 52 students in formation: The researcher developed a self-administered questionnaire with semi-structured questions that were used to collect data. The research questions included: students demographic information such as age and academic stage; experience of spiritual direction, influence of spiritual direction; the challenges of spiritual direction; spiritual direction as a coping strategy, and the interventions that can improve the experience of spiritual direction. The questionnaire also has a section with open-end questions that the students were required to fill in.

The researcher provided time limit for the respondents while respecting their rights to participate or decline from participation. He ensured that the questions were simple and clearly worded, and was able to prepare the respondents well ahead before administering the questionnaire.

Questionnaires for 5 formators: There was a questionnaire for the five formators involved with the spiritual accompaniment and formation of the students. The questionnaire dealt with their experience and training as spiritual directors, how students benefited from spiritual direction, the challenges students faced and how to improve the experience of spiritual direction. The data collected was used to help the researcher triangulate the data from the students.

3.5 Validity of the Instruments

The researcher was cognizant of the fact that no instrument can have 100% validity and reliability and therefore made sure that experts and supervisors examined the instruments to indicate the degree to which they measured the attainment of the objectives of the study. The researcher was also mindful of the fact that some respondents may give inaccurate responses or provide false answers to particular questions for reasons best known to them. Respondents might also give incorrect answers to impress the interviewer (Kombo, 2006).

The research instrument (questionnaire) was pilot tested to make sure they it was before it was administered to the respondents. A pre-test sample group of ten students who were not brothers of the Marist International Centre was carried out. The pre-test helped the researcher to validate the instrument and gave him an idea of how effective it was in reality. The pilot testing also enabled the researcher to identify some items in the questionnaire that needed correction and modification before being given to the participants.

3.6 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability is described as the extent to which a measuring instrument is able to provide consistent results with repeated measurement of the same variable. In other words it refers to the stability of scores over time when comparing the results of repeated measurements (Thorndike and Hagen, 1969).The researcher was mindful of the need to ensure reliability by working to the requirements of the study design and interview guide. The interviews were carried out in consultation with the respondents. A scheduled arrangement was made to help the participants prepare adequately, and the researcher was actively involved in the data collection by being faithful to the interview guide.

Internal consistency refers to the consistency of the results across items measuring the same variables (Selvam, 2017). The researcher further applied triangulation between the quantitative data and qualitative data, and reflexivity. The researcher was very aware of and took note of his assumptions, prejudices, and biases that he was bringing into the study and included them in the conclusion section.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data collection refers to the gathering of information to prove some facts. In research, data is collected to further a researcher's understanding of a puzzling issue. Data collection help clarify the facts (Kombo, 2006). To enable the researcher collect data for this study, authorization and a permission letter was sought from the Research Ethics Committee of the Psycho-Spiritual Institute and Marist International Centre Nairobi, Kenya. A meeting with the students in formation was held in which the aim and objectives of the study was made known and the questionnaires distributed. The in-depth interview was guided by semi-structured questions to allow the participants to express themselves more freely. The interviews took between 25 to 40 minutes. To

ensure accuracy of the data the discussions were recorded and later transcribed verbatim. Permission was also sought from Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (Nacosti).

The self-administered questionnaire that was distributed contained close ended and semi-structured questions and they took on average between 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Those who participated in the interview were not given self-administered questionnaires. The researcher was directly involved in the distribution of questionnaires and conducting the interview.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The study used descriptive and inferential statistics analysis methods for the qualitative and quantitative data from the interview and survey questionnaires. According to Kombo (2006), data analysis is process of examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. The quantitative data collected from the respondents was computed with the aid of the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. The statistical analysis generated from the SPSS was used to answer the research questions and to examine whether spiritual direction has an influence on psychosocial well-being.

In addition, the study used interviews and open-ended questionnaires to generate the qualitative data needed. Interview transcripts were coded and analyzed in a narrative form. Braun and Clark (2006) hold that; thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns and themes in data. The researcher then analyzed the content of the data collected from the interviews into recurring themes and this enabled him to confidently make general deductions and inferences about the findings. The researcher himself was involved in the distribution of the questionnaire and conducting the interviews.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

A mixed methods descriptive design research involves personal and in depth contact with people and asking them to be open in disclosing details about their lives. Often this means that you are dealing with very private matters about people. This kind of contact and interaction must be conducted with sensitivity to the feelings of the participants. The researcher therefore took into account the following guiding principles: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, honesty and respect. . Permission was sought from the Psycho-Spiritual Institute (PSI), the board responsible for research in Kenya (Nacosti) and the superior of the Marist International Centre formation house to be able to conduct interviews and the distribution of a self-administered questionnaire to the students in formation and formators.

Research involving human subjects can pose complex ethical issues which require careful thought and consideration both on the part of the researcher and the participants. The researcher therefore must obtain informed consent from any subjects used in the study and must ensure that all subjects participate voluntarily (Kombo, 2006). The researcher ensured that all prospective participants are given adequate information of both the possible risks (if any) and the potential benefits of their involvement in the research to allow them to make informed decisions about whether to participate or not in the research. The researcher was also aware that consent is a process and not just a form. He therefore resolved that, should there be any need in the course of the research for the consent to be revised due to some change in the study that might affect the participants, they would be informed.

The researcher was committed to maintaining confidentiality at all times. According to Kombo (2006), only certain people conducting the survey, interview or administering the instrument should know the identity of the participants. The chief way that researchers seek to

protect research participants from the accidental breaking of confidentiality is through the process of anonymization. Ethical guidelines and methods textbooks all note the importance of anonymization of research participants through the use of pseudonyms (Wiles, 2008). The researcher in this study ensured that there was confidentiality and the anonymity of the participants was respected so as not to jeopardize their lives and vocation considering that they are students in formation.

Given the sensitivity involved in the information shared by participants in research, the researcher was open, honest and respectful in dealing with other researchers and research subjects. The researcher did not exploit subjects by changing agreement made with them. The researcher was cognizant of the fact that subjects are autonomous and therefore should be given the time and opportunity necessary to make a decision about participating in the study without being pressured into participation. While full explanation before the participation was essential to gain informed consent, the researcher would make sure that he inform the participants about the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results, interpretation and discussion of data collected. The study investigated the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of the students in formation at Marist International Centre. In this chapter the researcher discussed the return rate of the participants, the coding of the respondents and the demographic information about the participants. The researcher did not collect the demographic information for those who were interviewed. From all indications the result of this work is presented using tables, bar charts and interview was codded and presented in a narrative form .The study had three objectives from which questions were generated. The objectives are to explore the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation of Marist International Centre, Kenya. To find out the challenges faced by students in formation over spiritual direction and accompaniment at Marist International Centre, Kenya, to determine how spiritual direction can be used as a coping mechanism and means of psychosocial wellbeing among students in formation at Marist International Centre, Kenya.

4.1 Participants Return Rate

The return rate of participants is presented in table 4.1

Table 4.1: *Participants Return Rate*

Participants	Sample size	Answered questionnaires	Unanswered questionnaires	Percentage
1st Group Students	59	52	7	72.2%
2nd Group Formators	5	5	0	6.9%
3rd Group Interviewees	8	8	0	11.1%
Total	**72**	**65**	**7**	**90.2%**

Table 4.1 shows that this study was conducted with 72 participants as the sampling size, but 65 responded to the data information. Out of 59 students, 52 responded. 7 participants did not respond. This is because the participants returned the questionnaires unanswered. They did not quite give the reasons though they had the freedom to respond or not. The 5 formators and 8 interviews responded. The total number of those who participated in this work were 65. In this analysis only 65 participants who responded were analyzed. The number that participated is appropriate since the percentage is 90.2%, which is on the above average, and positive side and it is still considered enough for the data analysis. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2009) the percentage of respondents to questionnaires is adequate if it 50% or more. In this light, the return rate was considered very good for the purpose of data analysis and reporting of the findings. The participants are divided into 3 groups; 1st Group are the Students 52 in number. The 2nd Group are the formators who are 5 in number. Group 3 are those interviewed who are 8 students different from those who answered the questionnaires.

4.1.1 Coding of Participants

This section present the coding of participants according students interview and formators open-ended questionnaire.

4.1.1.1 Coding of Interviewed Participants

Participants of the interview were coded as indicated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 *Coding of Participants' Interview*

No.	Participants	Academic class
1	Participant 1	Year 1
2	Participant 2	Year 1
3	Participant 3	Year 2
4	Participant 4	Year 2
5	Participant 5	Year 3
6	Participant 6	Year 3
7	participant 7	Year 4
8	participant 8	Year 4
Total	**8**	

Table 4.2 shows the coding of participants for the face-to-face interview. Two students where purposively sampled from each academic class from year one to year four making 8 respondents.

4.1.1.1 Coding of Formators

The formators were coded as seen in table 4.3.

Table 4.3 *Coding of Formators*

No.	Participants
1	Formator 1
2	Formator 2
3	Formator 3
4	Formator 4
5	Formator 5
Total	**5**

Table 4.3 shows the coding of formator who answered the open-ended questionnaires. It also indicates that there was a 100% response from the formators.

4.2 Demographic Information of Participants

Data was collected on demographics such as age, academics, and frequency of spiritual direction and years of training of formators. Results are presented according to students followed by formators.

4.2.1 Age of Students

The age of students is presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4 *Age of Students*

Age	Frequency	percentage
20-25	14	26.9
26-30	27	51.9
31-35	10	19.2
36-40	1	1.9
Total	**52**	**100**

Table 4.4 shows the statistical distribution of the age of students who answered the self-administered questionnaire. The table illustrated that 51.9% of the respondents were between the ages of 26-30 years, 26.9% were between the ages of 20-25, 19.2% between the ages of 31-35, and 1.9% were between the ages of 36-40 years. The result of age demographics shows that 97.7% of the respondents in the study were young adults between the ages of 20 - 35.

4.2.2 Participants Academic Class Distribution

Students' academic class distribution is presented in table 4.5.

Table 4.5 *Academic Class*

Class	Frequency	Percent
1st Year	19	36.5
2nd Year	13	25.0
3rd Year	14	26.9
4th Year	6	11.5
Total	**52**	**100.0**

Table 4.5 shows distribution of respondents according to academic class. The table indicates that year one has the largest number of students accounting for 36.5%, followed by year three 26.9, year two 25% while year four forms the small class with 11.5 %.

4.2.3 Participants Frequency at Spiritual Direction

This section presents the participants frequency at spiritual direction illustrated in table 4.6.

Table 4.6 *Students Spiritual Direction Encounter*

Attendance	Frequency	Percent
Weekly	46	88.5
Once in 2 weeks	3	5.8
Monthly	3	5.8
Total	**52**	**100.0**

Table 4.6 illustrates the distribution of students' attendance and frequency at spiritual direction. The table shows that 88.5% of the student respondents' attended spiritual direction on a weekly basis, 5.8% once in two weeks and another 5.8% on a monthly basis.

4.2.4 Age Distribution of Formators

The age distribution of formators is illustrated in table 4.7

Table 4.7 *Age of Formators*

Age	Frequency	Percent
36-40	1	20
41-50	1	20
51-60	2	40
61-75	1	20
Total	**5**	**100**

Table 4.7 shows a distribution of the formators age range, indicating that a majority of the formators who participated in the study are above 36 years. This show that 80% the formators are at least older than the rest of students and presumably more experienced in matters of lived faith, which is an important aspect of being a spiritual director.

4.2.5 Training of Formators

The data on the training of formators is presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 *Formators Years of Training*

Years of training	Frequency	Percent
1	0	0
2	3	60
3	2	40
Total	**5**	**100**

Table 4.8 shows the demographic representation of formators years of training. The distribution indicated that 60% of the respondents had two years of training while 40% had three years of training in spiritual direction. This implies that the formators have had some form of preparation for the task entrusted to them.

4.3 Presentation of Findings

To achieve the research objectives 65 participants comprising of 52 students, 5 formators and 8 interviewees took part in the study. A Likert scale questionnaire, open-ended questionnaire, and an in-depth interview was used to collect data from the participants. The findings were presented and discussed according to the research objectives.

4.3.1 Influence of Spiritual Direction

The study collected data for objective one under three indicators: the experience of spiritual direction, the influence of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. Five statements were used to find out the experience of spiritual direction, 8 statements to measure the influence of spiritual direction and 9 statements to investigate psychosocial wellbeing. Tables 4.9, 4.10 and 4.11 illustrate the outcomes of the experience of spiritual direction, the influence of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. Participants were requested to tick their answers on the Likert scale using the following score: **SD** = Strongly Disagree   **D** = Disagree   **N** = Neutral **A** = Agree   **SA** = Strongly Agree

4.3.1.1 Experience of Spiritual Direction

Data was analyzed on participants' experience of spiritual direction. Table 4.9 shows the statistical distribution of participants' response to their experience of spiritual direction.

Table 4.9 *Experience of Spiritual Direction*

Experience of spiritual direction	Percentage (%)					
STATEMENTS	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
I like going for spiritual direction/accompaniment	5.8	1.9	11.5	40.4	40.4	100
I find spiritual direction/accompaniment helpful in my personal growth	1.9	00	5.8	44.2	48.1	100
I find spiritual direction/accompaniment interesting and exciting	3.8	9.6	26.9	32.7	26.9	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has increased my sense of purpose and meaning in life	1.9	00	9.6	57.7	30.8	100
A well trained spiritual director is a huge boost to spiritual direction and accompaniment	00	00	9.6	25.0	65.4	100

There were 5 statements used to investigate respondents experience of spiritual direction. They were asked if they liked going for spiritual direction 40.4% of the respondent indicated strongly agree, another 40.4% indicated agree, 11.5% were neutral, 1.9% disagreed and 5.8% strongly disagreed. Finding out whether the experience of spiritual direction was helpful in their personal growth and 48.1% strongly agreed, 44.2% agreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed. On the statement, spiritual direction has increased my sense of purpose and meaning in life 57.7% agreed, 30.8% strongly, and 1.9% strongly disagreed. When asked whether they found spiritual direction exciting 32.7% agreed, 26.9% strongly agreed, 26.9% neutral, and 3.8% strongly disagreed. Finding out if spiritual direction has increase their sense of purpose and meaning in life 57.7% of respondents agreed, 30.8% strongly agreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed. When asked if a well-trained spiritual director was a boost for spiritual direction 65% strongly agreed, 25% agreed, and 9.6% were neutral. The data indicated that 90% of the respondents agreed that a well-trained spiritual director was a boost. In general, the findings on the experience of spiritual direction show

on average 80% of the respondents agreed that it had an influence on their personal growth, and sense of purpose and meaning in life.

4.3.1.2 Influence of Spiritual Direction

There were 8 statements used to measure the influence of spiritual direction from the participants. Table 4.10 shows the results of the data from respondents on the influence of spiritual direction.

Table 4.10 *Influence of Spiritual Direction*

Influence of spiritual direction	Percentage %					
STATEMENTS	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**TOTAL**
I would recommend spiritual direction/accompaniment for students in formation	00	5.8	1.9	28.8	63.5	100
I am motivated by the integrity of the spiritual director	1.9	3.8	21.2	55.8	17.3	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has made me feel better than those who do not go for it.	5.8	9.6	34.6	34.6	15.4	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment is important for my formation	00	00	1.9	48.1	50.0	100
My sense of appreciation and gratitude in life has improved because of spiritual direction/accompaniment	1.9	00	17.3	50.0	30.8	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me grow in love of God	3.8	00	7.7	40.4	48.1	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment is good but not necessary for well-being	21.2	30.8	28.8	5.8	13.5	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment is good but adds no value to my life	48.1	36.5	1.9	7.7	5.8	100

Table 4.10 showed the statistical distribution of the various responses indicating the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students. There were 8 statements finding out the influence of spiritual direction. Asked if they would recommend spiritual direction for students in formation 63.5% strongly agreed and 28.8% respondents agreed to recommend spiritual direction for formation. When asked whether they were motivated by the integrity of the spiritual director 55.8% agreed, 17.3% strongly agreed, 21.2% neutral, 3.8% disagreed and 1.9% strongly disagreed. Investigating whether spiritual direction had negative influence making them feel better than those who do not go for spiritual direction 34.6% agreed, 34.6% were neutral, 15.4% strongly agreed, 9.6% disagreed and 5.8% strongly disagreed. The students were asked about the importance of SD in their formation and 50% of the respondents strongly agreed to its importance while 48.1% agreed that spiritual direction was important for their formation and 1.9% were neutral.

Investigating whether spiritual direction had an influence on their sense of appreciation and gratitude in life 50% of respondents agreed that it has improved their sense of appreciation and gratitude in life, 30.8% strongly agreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed. Asked if spiritual direction had any influence on respondents' relationship with God 48.1% of respondents strongly agreed, 40.4% agreed that spiritual direction has helped them grow in love of God, and 3.8% disagreed. Responding to the statement, spiritual direction is good but adds no value to their lives 48.1% respondents strongly disagreed, 36.5% disagreed, and 5.8% strongly agreed. The findings show that a cumulative 80% of respondents agreed to the influence of spiritual direction on formation, sense of appreciation and gratitude in life, and love of God.

4.3.1.3 Psychosocial Wellbeing

There were 9 statements used to collect data on psychosocial wellbeing from respondents.

Table 4.11 shows the outcomes of the data from participants on psychosocial wellbeing.

Table 4.11 Psychosocial Wellbeing

Psychosocial Wellbeing	Percentage %					
STATEMENTS	SD	D	N	A	SA	TOTAL
Spiritual direction/accompaniment makes me feel uncomfortable	34.6	38.5	13.5	5.8	7.7	100
I fear personal process/journey in spiritual direction/accompaniment	30.8	38.5	21.2	7.7	1.9	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me change my life positively	3.8	1,9	11.5	50.0	32.7	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has contributed to my spiritual growth	1.9	3.8	3.8	57.7	32.7	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped improved my prayer life	1.9	3.8	11.5	50.0	32.7	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has improved my image of God	3.8	1.9	7.7	51.9	34.6	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me to relate better with people	1.9	3.8	9.6	40.4	44.2	100
I have grown in self-awareness and acceptance due to the help of spiritual direction/accompaniment	5.8	3.8	5.8	40.4	44.2	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment has improved my sense of joy and happiness	3.8	3.8	23.1	26.9	42.3	100

Table 4.11 shows the participants response to the statements investigating impact of spiritual direction psychosocial wellbeing. There were 9 statements used to find out the impact of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing. Asked whether spiritual direction makes them

uncomfortable 38.5% of respondents' disagreed, 34.6% strongly disagreed, and 5.8% agreed. Asked if they feared personal process in spiritual direction, 38.5% disagreed, 30.8% strongly disagreed, 21.2% neutral, and 1.9% strongly agreed. On the statement, spiritual direction has helped me change my life positively, 50% agreed, 32.7% strongly agreed, and 1.9% disagreed. Finding out if spiritual direction has contributed to participants' spiritual growth 57.7% of respondents agreed, 32.7% strongly agreed, and 1.9% strongly disagreed.

Investigating if spiritual direction has improved their image of God, 51.9% respondents' agreed, 34.6% strongly agreed, and 1.9% disagreed. About the statement, spiritual direction has helped me relate better with people 44.2% strongly agreed, 40.4 % agreed, and 1.95 strongly disagreed. When asked whether they have grown in self-awareness and acceptance due to spiritual direction 44.2% strongly agreed, 40.2% agreed, and 3.8% disagreed. Finding out if spiritual direction has improved their sense of joy and happiness, 42.3% strongly agreed, 26.9% agreed, 23.1% neutral, and 3.8% strongly disagreed. The findings indicate that a cumulative 80% of respondents agreed to the influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing.

4.4. Challenges of Spiritual Direction

Data was collected for objective two to find out the challenges of spiritual direction using 7 statements. Table 4.12 shows the results.

Table 4.12 *Challenges of spiritual direction*

Challenges of SD	Percentage %					
STATEMENTS	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**TOTAL**
I find spiritual direction/accompaniment boring	23.1	28.8	32.7	9.6	5.8	100
The life style of the spiritual director puts me off	28.8	34.6	13.5	11.5	11.5	100

I prefer other spiritual directors other than my formators	15.4	15.4	11.5	19.2	38.5	100
I don't see any value in spiritual direction/accompaniment	61.5	23.1	9.6	3.8	1.9	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment is for those with spiritual problems	67.3	25.0	00	5.8	1.9	100
I am suspicious of spiritual direction/accompaniment in formation	26.9	30.8	19.2	11.5	11.5	100
I go for spiritual direction/accompaniment because it is a requirement in formation.	28.8	30.8	11.5	15.4	13.5	100

Table 4.12 illustrates the statistical distribution of participants' response to the statements on the challenges of spiritual direction. There were 7 statements investigating the challenges of spiritual direction. Asked whether they found spiritual direction boring 32.7% were neutral, 28.8% disagreed, 23.1% strongly disagreed, 9.6% agreed and 5.8% strongly disagreed. Participants were asked if the life style of the spiritual director puts them off and 34.6% disagreed, 28.8% strongly disagreed, 13.5% were neutral, while 11.5% responded strongly agree and agree to the statement. Investigating the statement, I prefer other spiritual directors other than my formators 38.5% respondents strongly agreed and 19.2% agreed. 11.5% were neutral while an equal percentage of 15.4 disagreed and strongly disagreed. This indicates that a cumulative of 57.7% respondents agreed that they preferred other spiritual directors other than their formators.

Investigating whether students had any negative perception in not seeing any value in spiritual direction 61.5% strongly disagreed, 23.1% disagreed, and 1.9% strongly agreed. Student were asked if spiritual direction is for those with spiritual problem; 67.3% strongly disagreed, 25% disagreed, and 1.9% strongly agreed. Asked whether they are suspicious of spiritual direction in formation 30.8% disagreed, 26.9% strongly disagreed, 19.2% were neutral, 11.5% equally agreed

and strongly agreed. When asked if they go for spiritual direction because it was a requirement; 30.8% respondents disagreed, 28.9% strongly disagreed, 11.5% were neutral, 15.4% agreed and 13.5% strongly agreed. The findings indicate that 50% of respondents acknowledge that the challenges faced in spiritual direction did not hinder them from making use of it.

4.5 Coping Strategies

Data was collected for objective three on coping strategies in spiritual direction using four statements. The findings are shown in table 4.13

Table 4.13 Coping Strategies

Coping Strategies	Percentage (%)					
STATEMENTS	**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**TOTAL**
Spiritual direction helps me cope with stress	3.8	11.5	15.4	48.1	21.2	100
Spiritual direction/accompaniment does not help me cope with stress in my formation	48.1	26.9	11.5	7.7	5.8	100
Spiritual direction helps me cope with psychosocial challenges	3.8	1.9	11.5	59.6	23.1	100
Spiritual direction helps me calm my fears	5.8	1.9	15.4	46.2	30.8	100

Table 4.13 shows a statistical representation of participants' response to the statements on coping strategies. Asked whether spiritual direction helped them cope with stress 48.1% of respondents agreed and 21.2% strongly agreed. This indicates that there was a cumulative 69.3% who agreed that, spiritual direction helps them cope with stress. Table 4.11 also shows that 15.4% of respondents' were neutral, and 3.8% strongly disagreed. Investigating whether spiritual direction helped students cope with their psychosocial challenges 59.6% agreed, 23.1% strongly agreed, and 1.9% disagreed. When asked if spiritual direction helps them calm their fears 46.6%

agreed, 30.8% strongly agreed, and 5.8% strongly disagreed. The findings show that 70% of respondents agreed that spiritual direction served as a coping mechanism.

4.6 Relationship between Spiritual Direction and Psychosocial Wellbeing

The first objective of this study was to explore the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation at Marist International Centre. In order to find out if there was a significant relationship between spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing a Pearson's correlation was conducted to determine the significance relationship between these variables: spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. A bivariate correlation was used because it helps to determine the existence of a relationship between variables and how significant there was a relationship.

Table 4.14 *Correlation between Influence of SD and PWB*

		Influence of SD	Psychosocial Well-Being
Influence of SD	Pearson Correlation	1	.021
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.881
	N	52	52
Psychosocial Well-Being	Pearson Correlation	.021	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.881	
	N	52	52

Tables 4.14 presents the correlation calculated between the independent variable and the dependent variable. There is a correlation between experience of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing; partial correlation (r = 0.01), (p=.021), and (n=52). This indicates that there is a positive correlation between the influence of spiritual direction and the psychosocial well-being at 0.01 significant level.

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the highest need we all have in common is seeking self-actualization, which involves having a meaningful and fulfilling life; McLeod (2018) also affirm this opinion that in self-actualization a person comes to find meaning in life that is important for him. From the relationship between spiritual direction and psychosocial well-being, the experience of spiritual direction can make a significant contribution to psychosocial wellbeing leading towards self-actualization.

4.7 Qualitative Data Analysis for Students' Open-ended Questionnaire

This section presents the findings of the open-ended questions of the students self-administered questionnaire. There were 4 open-ended questions investigating the impact of spiritual direction on the formation process, influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing, how students cope with the challenges of spiritual direction and how to improve the experience of SD.

4.7.1 What Impact has Spiritual Direction/Spiritual Accompaniment had in your Formation Process?

Respondents were asked to indicate the impact of spiritual direction/spiritual accompaniment on their formation process and outcomes are shown.

Analysis of the qualitative data indicate that more than half of the respondents acknowledge SD has helped to increase their self-awareness through self-discovering and growth, and has led to maturity in dealing with issues. Respondents reported that spiritual direction has helped in understanding others better and relating well with them despite individual differences. Majority of

respondents acknowledged that spiritual direction has helped them to deepen their image of God through personal prayer.

Few respondents indicated that spiritual direction has helped them to be open to share their personal issues with formators and others, and that they feel relieved after sharing. Spiritual direction has also helped some of them to appreciate their vocation/religious life in general. It has equally assisted some to overcome their fears, understand the reality and challenges of life. Only very few of the respondents indicated that spiritual direction has some negative impact on them, as it tends to find fault rather that offer help. From the responses, it was clear that spiritual direction has a lot of positive impact on the respondents. According to the researcher, these findings point to the fact that the influence of spiritual direction goes beyond the spiritual grow and touches on an essential pillar of religious formation, which is the human formation. Spiritual direction contributes to the building of well integrated pastoral agents who are ready to take up the challenges of the ministry ahead of them as underscored by Cencini (2011).

The qualitative data analysis showed that SD has helped respondents to understand themselves and others and learn to relate with them. It has helped respondents learn how to manage their personal issues in a positive way. Others indicated that spiritual direction has assisted them to develop a sense of humor, positive self-image and acceptance. It has also helped some to develop good relationship with nature, better manage their anger and succeeded in accepting people the way they are. The findings showed that spiritual direction has positively influenced more than 50% of the respondents.

4.7.2 What Influence has Spiritual Direction had in your Psychosocial Wellbeing?

Majority of the respondents agreed that spiritual direction has been of great help to them in different aspects of their life. They said it has helped in their social life by improving the way they relate with people.

In the analysis of the qualitative data, almost all the respondents agreed that the absence of spiritual direction would have negative effects on them. This is because there will be no avenue for sharing their feelings of joys and sorrows in order to be healed. They also agreed that personal growth would be difficult without spiritual direction. Some said that without spiritual direction in the formation process they might not be able to attend to the needs of those they minister to.

Participant 4 said:

> When I miss spiritual direction for a while, I easily get discouraged when faced with problems because there is nobody to talk to again. It is as if I am going back to my old life pattern. For instance, I will be in the chapel, praying and concentrating very well. However, after a long time without spiritual direction, I discovered that when distraction comes, I would just fall to it. The absence of spiritual direction will cause more harm than even doing good to the person (8 March 2019).

4.7.3 How do you Cope with the Challenges of Spiritual Direction/Spiritual Accompaniment?

With regard to coping with the challenges of spiritual direction, respondents gave the following responses: In life, people encounter challenges and developing the resilience needed to overcome these challenges is very important; and awareness of the challenges encountered in spiritual direction and accepting them as part of formation. From the analysis of the qualitative data respondents indicated that openness during spiritual accompaniment helped them to cope with the challenges. Other respondents reported that accepting that there is a need to grow on their part and coming to terms with the fact that the spiritual directors are human beings with their shortcomings helped them to cope with the challenges. Few of them indicated that they ask for

clarification when things were not clear. Some said their trust in the spiritual director as a helper and guide enabled them cope with the challenges. Moreover, adequate preparation before going to meet the spiritual director and seeing spiritual direction as a beneficial process was important. Few students indicated that they take challenges to God through prayer.

From the data, it can be inferred that student were determined to continue with spiritual direction despite the challenges they encounter and the reason may not be farfetched since they talked about how it positively improved their relationship with others and their sense of purpose and meaning in life.

4.8 Qualitative Data Analysis from Formators

This section deals with the data obtained from the open-ended questionnaire administered to the 5 formators. The data is presented according to the questions asked.

4.8.1 What kind of Training have you Received for Spiritual Direction?

Formators were asked to indicate the kind of training they have received for SD. From the responses, there was a clear indication that all of them received training on spiritual direction. The experience and number of years spent as well as the formation courses attended differed from one formator to the other. The number of years spent in spiritual direction training among the formators ranged from 1- 3 years in different formation programs.

4.8.2 How do you See Yourself Influencing Psychosocial Wellbeing as a Spiritual Director?

Responding to this question some formators said they influence psychosocial wellbeing through personal advice especially on one on one basis and direct intervention in matters related

to social behavior. Others said through availability and presence of doing spiritual direction. Through the encounter of spiritual direction students grow in self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-transcendence.

Some formators felt that spiritual direction helps students to integrate their spiritual life with social life, which positively influences their sense of judgement, and thus considered beneficial. These responses support the views of Paine (2018) and Kirkpatrick (1993) that there is positive association between spirituality, spiritual practices and psychological health. students become more reflective about their life and commitment to their formation activities: studies, personal prayer, responsibilities and fraternal life. They grow in their ability to relate well with men and women through self-discovery, awareness and acceptance. These findings further affirm the observations of Meanley (2016) that components of spirituality were associated with psychological wellbeing.

From the above responses, spiritual direction has great impacts on the psychosocial wellbeing of students.

Respondent F1 said:

> Spiritual direction helps the students to know themselves, to accept themselves as they are before God and before others; thus they can engage in relationships with freedom without competing with others or feeling threatened by them. Knowing themselves, they can put their talents at the service of others (3 March 2019).

This response underscores the views of Connolly (2010) that spiritual direction enable a person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her. In other words, spiritual direction orients a person to make sense and meaning of religious experiences – one's relationship with God, and its implications and demands for others and themselves.

4.8.3 Formators Response to Improvement of the Experience of Spiritual Direction for Students

Formators gave the following opinions on how to improve the experience of spiritual direction among students. For a better experience, students need to be helped to develop a positive attitude and perception towards spiritual direction. This could be done by giving them proper orientation about the importance and benefits of the experience.

This is what one formator said: "The attitude and perception of the students towards spiritual direction, will gives them freedom to do it according to their needs and not see it as something forced on the formation program (Formator 5, 9 March, 2019)".

Majority of the formators agree that students should not be forced to go for spiritual accompaniment; preferably, they should be given the freedom to go according to their need. Another salient point made was that spiritual direction should not be done by formators who are living with the students. Spiritual directors should preferably come from outside – from other congregations. Moreover, spiritual directors should be carefully chosen for their aptitude and suitability for the task.

Participant 2 emphasized that:

> Trust and confidentiality should be upheld at all times with a sense of mutual respect. Students need to be helped to develop faith in God's spiritual interventions as well as humility the to know that spiritual direction is God's work through the director (4 March 2019).

Other important aspects that were mentioned included; helping students develop a life of prayer, spiritual reading, reception of the sacraments, review of the day and keeping a spiritual journal. Monareng (2013) who opined that in general, the outcomes of spiritual interventions had a positive therapeutic effect on wellbeing confirms these findings. The findings suggest that given

the right support and atmosphere, spiritual direction facilitates the process of self-actualization and transcendence.

4.8.4 How have Students Benefited from Spiritual Direction?

The five formators who participated in the study were asked to indicate in writing their experience of how students have benefited from spiritual direction. The benefits students derive from spiritual direction, according to the formators, was revealed in; students' growth in their spiritual life and respect for each other in community. They learn to appreciate their Christian vocation. Another benefit was that they discover themselves more deeply through self- reflection, which leads to living a life of self-awareness and fulfilment. Moreover, spiritual direction help students to change for good through feedbacks received. Students learn to integrate social and spiritual dimensions of life. They benefit by having a confident person to talk to and get help when in difficult moment. In other words, spiritual direction helps them to move towards self-actualization, striving to live at a transpersonal level.

Respondent F1 said:

> In times of desolation, it is hard to cling on gospel values. The students are happy to find someone who can listen to them, to understand them and help them to understand what is going on in their life (3 March, 2019).

According to the Marist formation guide No 288, Vives (1994), initial formation only ends at the moment of perpetual profession. The findings about the benefit of spiritual direction are therefore aligned to the aspirations of the post-novitiate formation which involves a process of interiorized activity or reflection on lived experience, by means of accompaniment. These findings confirm the opinion that spiritual direction has been observed to have had positive effects on the lives of monastic religious communities in the early church as underscored by Demacopoulos

(2007). The implications for these findings are very significant and far reaching in the context of contemporary formation planning.

4.8.5 How Would you Describe your Experience with Students as a Spiritual Director?

For some formators, it has been a gracious moment, a journey of faith and a humbling experience; a very transformative experience which has both moments of joy and sorrow. The observation of others is that, some students see spiritual direction as a formational duty to be fulfilled though others students see it as a necessary exercise for human growth. There was also report of difficulty on part of students establishing trust and openness so that they could freely share their stories. Some formators, as spiritual directors, said they experienced resistance from some students. Some give excuses for not coming or not entering fully into it while some experience true freedom, friendliness and social interactivity. Formators reported that they feel Self-fulfilled and happy to help students know themselves and begin to change for good.

Formator F1 reported:

> Spiritual direction in a formation house is not always well understood. Some students tend to think that it is an exercise that is part of the formation house. If it was not they would not look for it. Others understand its importance as a means for spiritual growth, and then they see themselves growing in spiritual life (3 March 2019).

4.8.6 What in your Opinion could Improve the Experience of Spiritual Direction for Students?

Formators gave the following opinions on how to improve the experience of spiritual direction. For a better experience, students should develop a positive attitude and perception towards spiritual direction. Students should be given the freedom to do it according to their needs and not forced on the formation program. Students should be educated on the importance of

spiritual direction and the process of SD evaluated to determine the level of progress made by the students.

Some formators were of the opinion that spiritual directors should be from other congregations or sourced outside the formation team. Also, openness should be encouraged among students during spiritual direction while trust and confidentiality should be upheld with a sense of mutual respect. Spiritual direction should be seen as spiritual exercise where God is at the center.

4.8.7 What Challenges do Students Encounter in Spiritual Direction?

Formators responded that students in spiritual direction encounter the following challenges. Students struggle with openness, sense of trust and fear of the spiritual director. Formator 3 explained:

> Being accompanied by a formator triggers fear and this creates difficulty to open up and share authentically. Accompaniment is done too often for many of them and not being to convinced of its importance in their lives poses a challenge and this is sometimes intensified by a lack of skills and knowledge on the part of the spiritual director (6 March 2019).

Lack of passion to confront their weaknesses, a perception that they are forced to go for spiritual direction, and fear or not being comfortable accompanied by their formators who live with them were common challenges. The frequency of spiritual direction (for example, weekly meetings), lacking understanding of the importance of spiritual direction, lack of skills and knowledge on the part of the accompanier (spiritual director), and fear of being misunderstood are challenges students have to deal with. Another challenge highlighted was the difficulty student have in finding time to follow up on and be consistent with meditation, spiritual exercises, and prayer; thinking that they are not needed. There is also the lack of understanding in the spiritual life of prayer – that prayer evolves. The responses showed clearly that in as much as spiritual

direction has a positive influence on the psychosocial wellbeing of students, they also face some challenges.

These challenges can easily dissuade participant to avoid going for spiritual direction. However, to the researcher's surprise despite all these issues majority of students in Marist International Centre still go for regular spiritual direction. The research thinks this outcome is linked to the positive overall effect of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students. In other words, students are aware of the benefits, of both spiritual and physical, they stand to gain when they avail themselves to the experience of spiritual direction, as underscored by Uberoi (2016).

4.8.8 In your Experience, What Impact does Spiritual Direction have on the Psychosocial Wellbeing of Students?

It helps them to integrate their spiritual life with social life, which influences their sense of judgement. There is a positive impact, which means that it is beneficial and they become more reflective about their life. It brings about emotional maturity and awareness enabling them to be in touch with themselves. It fosters commitment in their formation activities: studies, personal prayer, responsibilities and fraternal life, and the ability to relate well with men and women. Spiritual direction enhances self-discovery, awareness and acceptance. Students discover their weaknesses and it challenges them to play active role in their formation and development.

4.9 Analysis of Interview Data

This section deals with the data obtained from face to face interview. The data is presented according to the questions.

4.9.1 How Would you Describe your Experience of Spiritual Direction

Students were asked of their experience of spiritual direction, its usefulness, impact and challenges. Analysis of data is summarized below.

Those interviewed had the following to say concerning their experience of SD/SA. Some said it was a very big challenge at the beginning because it was something new to them. However, as they progressed in religious life and the essentials of SD/SA were explained, it helped them to embrace it. Others reported that the openness of the director, having someone with whom they could share their feelings of joys and sorrows, enabled them to grow positively through the feedbacks received and that it was very positive. For a few who had experience of SD, though under a different name, before joining religious life, it was a kind of continuation for them. Some said that their experience has been an exciting one because it has helped them to discover their strengths and weaknesses.

When asked how beneficial and helpful they found spiritual direction they reported that; it has helped some in discovering themselves more and the ability to manage their emotions especially anger in a more constructive way. It has also helped some to relate well with people of different cultural backgrounds as it widens their worldview. Some expressed that it has helped them develop healthy relationship with the opposite sex as well as looking at things more objectively.

Concerning the challenges of spiritual direction, some of the respondents complained about the issue of lack of confidentiality among some spiritual directors who tend to share what has been discussed in spiritual direction or spiritual accompaniment with a third party. This they see as lack of professionalism. Others complained of directors taking spiritual direction as a place of judgment and condemnation while few complained of lack of empathy on the part of some directors. Weekly

spiritual direction was a major challenge expressed by many respondents who saw the process as been forced on those in formation. Fear of been misunderstood or mistrusted compounded the struggle with openness in some respondents.

4.9.2 What did you Find Most Challenging in Spiritual Direction?

The challenges highlighted by the formators are corroborated by the students' response to the challenges they face in spiritual direction.

Participant 2 asserted that;

> My challenge is to be open…. You know I am in formation. I fear I will be misunderstood and my spiritual director is not going to help. I feel threatened and I think let me keep quiet. However, when I go home I find that something is disturbing me. These are the challenges I am facing (4 March, 2019).

Another challenge that came out strongly among respondents was the fear of being victimized.

Participant 3 reported that:

> If I share something with my formator, that I need help with, I expect to be given honest feedback and advised on the right approach about it. This is better, than to keep quiet and tomorrow I hear it being used in another way again me, this is not okay. (8 March 2019)

4.9.3 Students Response to the Improvement of the Experience of Spiritual Direction

Responding to the question as to how the experience of spiritual direction can be improved to enhance its positive influence, majority of the respondents indicated the importance of confidentiality and competence on the part of the spiritual director and openness on the part of the directee.

This is what participant 7 expressed: "In my opinion, I would suggest that there should be competent spiritual directors who are also integrated spiritually, socially, and psychologically (1 March 2019)".

In addition, participant 3 Said:

The spiritual director should be open and empathic to the challenges student bring to accompaniment and not be judgmental. They should be ready even to refer the directee if they realize that they are not helping the student they are journeying with, without prejudice or punishment (4 March 2019).

The study revealed that students need to be taught the importance of spiritual direction and the process should be evaluated to determine the level of progress made by the students. Some formators were of the opinion that spiritual directors should come from other congregations in order to avoid dual relationship. Openness should be encouraged among students during spiritual direction while trust and confidentiality should be upheld with a sense of mutual respect. **SD** should be seen as a spiritual exercise where God is at the center. These findings are corroborated by Whaley (2017) that the relationship between the spiritual director and directee is very important.

The issues of confidentiality and dual relationship are critical areas, and if properly handled, can make a huge positive difference or otherwise in creating an environment where student can thrive in their spiritual and psychosocial wellbeing. Psychosocial wellbeing involves the dynamic interaction of the cognitive, social, emotional and spiritual dimensions of the students life which is the focus of formation as pointed out by Cencini (2011).

4.9.4 What Influence has Spiritual Direction had on your Psychosocial Wellbeing?

Questions were asked on the intervention of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing. The focusing on the psychological, social, spiritual impact and coping strategies for psychosocial wellbeing. The analyses are summarized below.

Majority of the respondents agreed that spiritual direction has been of great help in different aspects of their life. They said it has helped in their social life by improving the way they relate with people. Psychologically, it has helped them to be in touch with their emotions thereby discovering and accepting their strengths and weaknesses. Spiritual direction has also helped many

to deepen their relationship with God. According to some of the respondents, their directors helped them to change their image and perception of God to be more realistic.

When asked how they are coping with the challenges of SD, respondents gave the following: For some, taken the challenges in a positive way helped them to cope with them. Others said they recognized that they are not always right that made them to accept the need to change. Accepting the challenge as part of formation and growth helped some respondents to cope. Others cope by share the challenges with their director in a friendly manner.

4.9.5 What in your Opinion would Improve the Experience of Spiritual Direction?

Respondents were asked to give their opinion on how the experience of spiritual direction/spiritual accompaniment can be improved.

Many of the respondents emphasized the importance of confidentiality in spiritual direction. Confidentiality was mentioned as one of the competences of a well-trained spiritual director. Analysis of the qualitative data revealed that confidentiality enhances trust and openness between client and spiritual director, and helps to improve the experience of spiritual direction. Rearden (1998) who thought that even suspicions about confidentiality would do irreparable harm to spiritual direction, and thereby makes it useless for formation, corroborates this view. Few respondents suggested that spiritual directors should be role models and prayerful so that they can be emulated. Furthermore, some respondents were of the opinion that spiritual direction should be voluntary so that individuals could go for it out of their freewill and not under compulsion.

Many of the respondents suggested that individuals should be allowed to choose their directors and that there should be room for change without much difficulty. Others suggested that spiritual accompaniment should not be weekly to help avoid pretense. It was also suggested that

spiritual accompaniment should not be too formal and that a good friendly relationship between the director and the directee is very important. Few of the respondents were of the opinion that spiritual direction sessions should be a place of help and not for judgment and that, directors should be humble enough to accept that they do not know it all. Very few of the respondents suggested that spiritual directors should be chosen from other congregations. Flexibility was emphasized as a means of improving the experience of spiritual direction.

4.10 Summary of Discussion

The outcomes of the data analyzed focusing on the research objectives show that the formators have had two to three years of training as spiritual directors and that majority of the students attended weekly spiritual direction sessions. The findings indicated that students' considered SD as an important component of their formation, life and particularly PWB. They acknowledged that influence of SD impacted them socially, psychologically, and spiritually. Challenges encountered were related to dual relationship, confidentiality and competence of spiritual directors. However, the experience of students and spiritual director in direction revealed a positive influence of SD on students' psychosocial wellbeing despites the challenges identified in this study.

The finding on objective one – the influence of SD on PWD - has generally shown that students, despite some challenges they faced in SD are aware of the benefits they stand to gain and this has helped them to continue to go for spiritual direction. The findings indicated that there was a developmental process in the understanding and appreciation of SD among students as they progressed in formation. However, the findings from the formators seem to indicate that although

students were going for spiritual direction, their understanding and appreciation of SD needed to be improved.

The findings of objective two - the challenges of SD - according to the students centered around dual relationship, fear of being misunderstood, lack of confidentiality and competence of some directors. It indicated that there was a need for spiritual directors to seek ongoing formation and supervision. Spiritual directors, on the other hand, perceived the challenges from the perspective that students need to be educated and motivated to embrace their own personal and spiritual grow.

The findings of objective three – coping strategies - Both students and formators agreed that there is need to source for spiritual directors outside the formation team to avoid dual relationship and the fear of being misunderstood. There was a recognition from both students and formators for spiritual directors to be competent in their practice. Finally, there was a recognition of the need to allow students the freedom to choose how often to go for spiritual direction based on their need.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STUDY

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary and findings of the study on influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in Marist International Centre, the conclusion, recommendations, limitations, reflexivity and further study.

5.1 Summary of the Study

This study explored the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in Marist International Centre Nairobi, Kenya. Chapter one presented the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions. The study revealed that participant were very much conversant with the research subject and have considerable experience and awareness of the influence of spiritual direction on their formation which enabled them to participate actively in answering the questionnaire and the face to face interview. From the researcher's interaction with and expressed views of the participants, there is a relationship between the experience of spiritual direction and outcomes in psychosocial wellbeing in Marist International Centre.

The focus that motivated and informed this study is the fact that spiritual direction has been highly valued in the church as important component of spiritual formation and human growth in the lives of pastoral agents like priest and religious. It is precisely because of this that it has become part of the formation process within the Catholic Church for priests and religious. However, there seems to be a lack of awareness and understanding of the valuable contribution it have in not just the spiritual growth of those who make effective use of it but also the psychosocial benefit it can have on the lives of pastoral agents, for there is no spiritual growth that is devoid of psychosocial

growth. Hence, the study was guided by the objective of finding out the influence of spiritual direction on psychosocial wellbeing. If spiritual direction is such a valuable component of spiritual and human growth what are the challenges that hinders its effective use? How can those in formation cope with these challenges in order to maximize the influences and benefits of spiritual direction for their own psychosocial wellbeing? These objectives and the research questions, the conceptual framework and theoretical framework guided this study. The theoretical framework was based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs motivation theory.

In chapter, two literature reviews were done based on the objectives and research questions. The literature review revealed that there is a lot of knowledge gap on the topic, which made the research relevant especially within the African context of formation. The literature review was done from a wide range of sources such as current empirical journal articles, e-books, books, reviews from international, regional and local context. Chapter three dealt with the research methodology. The study adopted a mixed methods descriptive design to collect and analyze data from 65 participants using survey questionnaire and face to face interviews to obtain answers for the research questions. Finally, chapter four presented the findings of the study which were presented and are here summarized below.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Findings from the study revealed that spiritual direction has a very positive influence on psychosocial wellbeing. The study showed that spiritual direction increased self-awareness and self-knowledge, which in turn led to a better understanding of others and therefore improved relationships among amongst participants. The improved relationship was not just limited to self and others but it primarily enhanced their relationship with God and their image of God. It has also helped many of the respondents to know how to manage their personal issues in a positive way.

Others indicated that spiritual direction has assisted them to develop sense of humor, positive self-image and acceptance. It has also helped some to develop good relationship with nature, learn how to manage their anger and to accept people the way they are.

Investigating the challenges students face in spiritual direction, the finds revealed that students in Marist International Centre face such challenges as: difficulty with openness, lack of trust, and fear of the spiritual director. Students are not comfortable being accompanied by their formators who live with them due to fear of being misunderstood or the information shared in sessions being used against them. This challenge is corroborated by Whaley (2017). Lack of passion to confront their weaknesses was also a challenge, because change and growth is not an easy process and often involves painful adjustment students become reluctant and resistant. The perception that they are forced to do it; since spiritual accompaniment is a mandatory aspect of the formation process in Marist International Centre which students have no say over, made students sometimes feel pressured to go for it.

The frequency of spiritual direction was a challenge. The findings of the study revealed that 88.5% of the students go for spiritual accompaniment weekly. After a number of sessions students reported they felt they had nothing substantial to share but had to still go for direction to fulfill the requirement. There were few students who had contrary experiences; the spiritual director was so busy that they missed many sessions. Not knowing the importance of it; some student are yet to grow in the understanding and appreciation of the value of spiritual direction. These often come up with excuses in the bid to avoid spiritual direction. Lack of skills and knowledge on the part of the spiritual director (accompanier); this was a challenge that was highlighted by both formators and students. This often comes out in the way spiritual director handle issues in sessions making students feel judged, misunderstood and forced to share.

The findings of the study revealed that; many said they accepted the challenges as part of formation. Some of the respondents indicated that openness during spiritual accompaniment helped them to cope with the challenges. It was also noted by few of the respondents that they share their challenges with the director. Other respondents said that accepting that there is a need to grow on their part and coming to terms that the spiritual directors are humans with their shortcomings helped them to cope with the challenges. Few of them indicated that they ask for clarification when things are not clear. Some also said their trust in the director as a helper and guide helped them cope with the challenges. Moreover, adequate preparation before going to meet the director and seeing spiritual direction as a beneficial process. Few persons indicated that they take challenges to God through prayer.

The study revealed that, for a better experience, students should develop a positive attitude and perception towards spiritual direction. Students should be given freedom to do it according to their needs and not forced on the formation program. Students should be educated on the importance spiritual direction and the process needs to be evaluated to determine the level of progress made by the students. Some formators were of the opinion that spiritual directors should be from other congregations or sourced outside the formation team. In addition, openness should be encouraged among students during spiritual direction while Trust and confidentiality upheld with a sense of mutual respect. Students need to see spiritual direction as a spiritual exercise where God is at the center.

5.3 Conclusions from the Study

This study explored the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in Marist International Centre, the challenges that students encountered in the process of spiritual direction, the coping mechanisms and how to improve the experience of spiritual

direction. The research objectives and questions were investigated using a descriptive design mixed methods. The literature reviews revealed an existing gap and the relevance of the study. The survey questionnaire and semi-structured interview led to an adequate analysis, interpretation, and meaningful discoveries.

The findings revealed that there was indeed a relationship between the experience of spiritual direction and psychosocial wellbeing. The study further revealed that 82.7% of the student agreed that spiritual direction influenced their psychosocial wellbeing positively. The study also revealed that in as much as spiritual direction had a positive a positive influence on psychosocial wellbeing student encountered challenges in spiritual direction that could make the experience difficult and unpleasant, thus hindering its positive influence. The study concluded by suggest intervention that could improve the experience and enhance the influence on psychosocial well.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The fact that sample size was not very large means that one has to be cautious in generalizing the findings of this study. However, the sample size was adequate in providing the qualitative data needed for the research. It allowed participants the opportunity to share in depth their experiences. The semi-structured questions and interview were very helpful in making available the necessary information from the respondents but was very tedious to collate and manage in a usable manner. Another limitation was the familiarity of the researcher with the participants and the formation context of the participant meant that some were cautious and calculated in the information they shared.

5.5 Recommendations From the Study

The study findings have revealed although spiritual direction has a very positive influence on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in Marist International Centre; it is not without challenges that if not taken care of could hindering its positive impact of on psychosocial wellbeing. In this light, the following recommendations are made:

1. The superiors of MIC and formators should increase their efforts to create more awareness and give adequate orientation to students in formation and other beneficiaries of spiritual direction so that they may come to a better understanding and appreciation of the value and importance of spiritual direction. This should be done preferably before they start the process or while it is going on.

2. Formators need to create more awareness to enhance the influence of spiritual direction for the psychosocial wellbeing of students, there needs to be ongoing formation and supervision for spiritual directors. Formators need to make sure that creating a conducive atmosphere where trust, openness and confidentiality is assured should be seen as a condition without which effective and meaning spiritual direction cannot take place.

3. Formators who intending to offer spiritual direction services would do well to pay attention to the issues of dual relationship between spiritual director and directee, which can render the spiritual encounter in effective. Those appointed as spiritual directors in formation houses should preferably be professionally trained or have some formation and experience on the subject in order to be able to render quality and effective services to their directees.

4. In religious formation, houses and institutions like Marist International Centre clear distinction should be made between formation accompaniment and spiritual direction and

clear boundaries established on which personnel is handling what – formator or spiritual director.

5. The superior and formators should make provision for those in formation to have the freedom and option of sourcing spiritual directors from others outside the formation team or other congregations.

6. Formation houses and formators offering spiritual direction services could use the findings of this study to create awareness on the benefits and importance of spiritual direction in human and spiritual development.

5.6 Reflexivity

Reflexivity has to do with the transparent integration of the researcher's subjectivity in the process of a qualitative research (Selvam, 2017). It is the researcher's willingness to acknowledge the biases that influence the study. Hence, it is important for the interest of credibility that the researcher is open about the background, values, beliefs and attitudes that are influencing the research (May & Pope, 2000). Biases in this context includes the researcher's preference towards a particular viewpoint and the factors motivating the choice for the research area and the underlying assumptions.

This research topic was motivated by experiences and observation of the researcher on the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in formation and pastoral agents in general. Having experienced spiritual direction as a student in formation and as a priest the researcher was aware of the possible benefit that could be derived from the experience. To deal with these biases and assumption, the researcher remained open, and adopted and investigative learning attitude that was essential for objective data collection, analysis and interpretation. This

assisted the research to ensure best ethical practices in order to uphold the principles of trustworthiness and applicability of the research findings.

The whole process of the study has strengthened and widen the researcher' appreciation for the skill of bracketing one's biases and assumption to allow the facts to speak for themselves. As someone being prepared for the role of forming others, the researcher is aware that this is a very useful skill in the field of psychospiritual therapy and counselling.

5.7 Suggestions for Further Research

In the light of the findings of this study, the following areas are suggested for further research:

1. A similar research could be carried out with a wider scope, involving several formation houses to corroborate the findings of the present study.
2. An intervention research could be carried out to address the challenges faced in spiritual direction in formation houses.
3. A similar study could be done among priests and religious to find out the influence of spiritual direction on their psychosocial wellbeing.

REFERENCE

Ai, A. L., Peterson, C., Bolling, S. F., & Koenig, H. (2002). Private prayer and optimism in middle-aged and older patients awaiting cardiac surgery. *The Gerontologist*, *42*(1), 70-81.

Ano, G. G., & Vasconcelles, E. B. (2005). Religious coping and psychological adjustment to stress: A meta-analysis. *Journal of clinical psychology, 61*(4)461-480.

Bakke, J. A. (2000). *Holy invitations: Exploring Spiritual direction.* Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Barnard, L. K. (2012). Relationship of Clergy burnout to Self-compassion and other Personality Dimensions. *Pastoral Psychology*, 149-163.

Barry, A. W. (2004). *Spiritual direction and the encounter with God: a theological enquiry.* New York: Paulist Press.

Barrette, R. G. (2002). Spiritual direction in the Roman Catholic tradition. *Journal of Psychology and Theology*, *30*(4), 290-302.

Barton, R. (2010). Spiritual direction with pastoral and corporate leaders. *Presence:An International journal of Spiritual Direction*.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Breitbart, W. (2002). Spirituality and meaning in supportive care: spirituality-and meaning-centred group psychotherapy interventions in advanced cancer. *Supportive care in cancer*, *10*(4), 272-280.

Cecero, J. B. (2006). Religiosity and healthy dependency as predictors of spiritual wellbeing . *The international journal for the psychology of religion, 16:3*, 225-238.

Cencini, A. (1994). *Consecrated Life. Formative itinerary along the way of Emmaus.* Milan: St Paul .

Cencini, A. (2011). *Spiritual and emotional maturity .* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa .

Connolly, W. (2010). *Practice of Spiritual Direction*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Copan, V. (2016). *Changing your mind:the bible, the brain and spiritual growth .* Oregon: CASCADE Books .

Corey, G. (2017). *tTheory and practice of counselling and psychotherapy 10th edition .* Boston: Cengage Learning .

Day, J. M. (2001). From structuralism to eternity? Re-Imagining the psychology of religious development after the cognitive-development paradigm. *International journal for the psychology of religion Vol 11(3)* , 173-183.

Demacopoulos, E. (2007). *Five models of spiritual direction in the early church: An introduction to spiritual direction.* Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press.

Dyckman, M. D. (1981). *Inviting the Mystic Supporting the Prophet: An introduction to spiritual Direction.* New York : Paulist Press.

Edwards, S. (2016). An integral, positive psychology paradigm for global coherence, research, and health promotion. *Journal of humanities and social sciences 8*(2), 89-96.

Fiorito, B. R. (2007). Spirituality and psychosocial wellbeing: a mediator-moderator study . *Review of religious research* , 1-28.

Fowler, J. (2004). Faith development at 30: Naming the challenges of faith in a new millenium . *Journal of religious education association Vol 99(4)*, 405-421.

Gambrel, P. A. (2003). Maslow's hierarchy of needs: Dose it apply in a collectivist culture . *Journal of applied management and entrepreneurship 8(2)* , 143-161.

Gathman, A. N. (1997). Fowler's stages of faith development in honors science-and-religion seminar. *Zygon: Journal of religion and science* , 407-414.

Hammermeister, J., & Peterson, M. (2001). Does spirituality make a difference? Psychosocial and health-related characteristics of spiritual well-being. *American Journal of Health Education*, *32*(5), 293-297.

Harrison, M. O., Koenig, H. G., Hays, J. C., Eme-Akwari, A. G., & Pargament, K. I. (2001). The epidemiology of religious coping: A review of recent literature. *International Review of Psychiatry, 13*, 86–93.

Hoffman, E. (1988). *The right to be human: A biography of Abraham Maslow. .* Jeremy P. Tarcher, Inc.

Jacobs, R., & van Niekerk, A. (2017). The role of spirituality as a coping mechanism for South African traffic officers. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 73*(3), https://dx.doi.org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4344

Jane van Rensburg, A. B. R., Myburgh, C. P. H., Szabo, C. P., & Poggenpoel, M. (2013). The role of spirituality in specialist psychiatry: a review of the medical literature. *African journal of psychiatry 16,* 247-255

Jesse, D. E., & Reed, P. G. (2004). Effects of spirituality and psychosocial well-being on health risk behaviors in Appalachian pregnant women. *Journal of Obstetric, Gynecologic, & Neonatal Nursing*, *33*(6), 739-747.

Juma, J.O., Van der Merwe, K. & Du Toit, D. (2017). The experiences of African Roman Catholic Church seminarians. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies 73*(3), 4151. doi. org/10.4102/hts.v73i3.4151

Kang, Y. S., Choi, S. Y., & Ryu, E. (2009). The effectiveness of a stress coping program based on mindfulness meditation on the stress, anxiety, and depression experienced by nursing students in Korea. *Nurse education today*, *29*(5), 538-543.

Kirkpatrick, L. K. (1993). *Loneliness and perceptions of social support from God. Paper presented at the 101st annual convention of the American psycholocal association.* Toronto: American Psychological Association .

Kirsten, T., van der Walt, H., & Viljoen, C. (2009). Health, well-being and wellness: An anthropological eco-systemic approach. *Health SA Gesondheid, 14*(1), 7. doi.org/10.4102/hsag.v14i1.407

Koenig, H., Koenig, H. G., King, D., & Carson, V. B. (2012). *Handbook of religion and health*. Oup Usa.

Kombo, D. T. (2006). *Proposal and Thesis writing: An Introduction.* Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.

Lamontagne, R. E. (2002, January 12). Inner Sharing: Spiritual direction and pastoral care . Portland , Oregon.

Lindberg, D. A. (2005). Integrative review of research related to meditation, spirituality, and the elderly. *Geriatric Nursing*, *26*(6), 372-377.

Maton, K. I., Wells, E. A. (1995). Religion as a community resource for well-being: Prevention, healing, and empowerment pathways. *Journal of Social Issues 51*, 177-193

Mawere, M. ,. (2016). Maslow's theory of human motivation and its deep roots in idividualism: Interrogating Maslo'sapplication in Africa. In M. &. Mawere, *Theory, knowledg, development and politics: What role for academy in the sustainability of Africa?* . Langaa.

Mawere, M., Mubaya, T., Reisen, M., & Stam, G. (2016, May). Maslow's theory of human motivation and deep roots in individualism: interrogating maslow's applicability in Africa,.

May, G. (1982). *Care of mind care of spirit: Psychiatric dimension of spirituality* . San Francisco : Harper and Row.

McLeod, S. (2018). Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

Meanley, S. P. (2016). Psychological well-being among religious and spiritual-identified young gay and biisexual men. *Sexuality research & social policy: journal of NSRC: SR & SP*, 35-45.

Merton, T. (1989). *Contemplative prayer.* New York: Image Books .

Michael, C. (2004). *An introduction to spiritual direction: A psychological approach for directors and directees.* New York : Paulist.

Monareng, L.V. (2013). An exploration of how spiritual nursing care is applied in clinical nursing practice. *Health SA Gesondheid, 18(1).* doi.org/10.4102/ hsag.v18i1.635

Mugenda, O. M., & Mugenda, A. G. (2009). *Research methods: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. Nairobi: Acts Press

Nouwen, H. J. (1975). *Reaching Outing.* New York : Image Books , Doubleday.

Orodho, A. J. (2002). *Research Methods.* Nairobi: Kenyatta University, Institute of Open Learning.

Pargament, K. I., Smith, B. W., Koenig, H. G., & Perez, L. (1998). Patterns of positive and negative religious coping with major life stressors. *Journal for the scientific study of religion*, 710-724.

Paine, D. S. (2018). Religious and spiritual salience, well-being, psychosocioal functioning among psychotherapy clients: Moderate effects for humility . *Journal of religion and health*, 2389-2415 .

Parker, S. (2011). Spirituality in counselling: A faith development perspective . *Journal of counselling & development Vol 89* , 112-119.

Pendleton, S. M., Cavalli, K. S., Pargament, K. I., & Nasr, S. Z (2002). Religious/spiritual coping in childhood cystic fibrosis: A qualitative study. *Paediatrics, 109*(1), e8-e8.

Pronechen, J. (2012). How spiritual direction can help you grow closer to God. *National Catholic Register* , 9 issue .

Rakocy, S. (n.d). Responding to differences: challenges for contemporary spiritual directors. *Reflective practice: Formation and supervision in ministry, 29.*

Rapheal, J. V. (2013). Spiritual correlates of psychological wellbeing . *Indian strems research journal Vol 3, No.7* , 1-7.

Rearden, M. (1998). On confidentiality in spiritual direction. *The furrow Vol 49, No 11*, 642-644.

Ryff, D., & Keyes, M. C. (1995). The structure of psychosocial wellbeing revisited. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *vol 69 No 4,* 719-727.

Shahsavarani A M, Zoghifard E, Mishamandani E M, Mahmoodabadi M, Mohammadi A, Sattari K. (2016). The efficacy of psycho training on improvement of organizational behavior and mental health. *J. Fundam. Appl. Sci., 2016, 8(3S),* 1271-1299.

Shapiro, L. S. (2009). Integration of mindfulness and psychology . *Journal of Clinical Psychology*.

Sindjalim, E. E. (2000). Spiritual direction in West Africa: two traditions in dialogue. https://place.asburyseminary.edu/trendissertations/2712

Smyth, R. (2004). Exploring the usefulness of a conceptual framework as a research tool: A researcher's Reflections. *Issues in Educational Research, 14(2),*, 167-180.

Song, M. H. (2009). Relationship between psychosocial-spiritual well-being and end-of-life preferences and values in African Aerican dialysis patients. *Journal of pain and symptoms management* , 372-380.

Sperry, L. (2003). Integrating spiritual direction functions in the practice of psychotherapy. *Journal of psychology and theology, 31* (1), 3-13.

Tarakeshwar, N., Pearce, M. J., & Sikkema, K. J. (2005). Development and implementation of a spiritual coping group intervention for adults living with HIV/AIDS: A pilot study. *Mental Health, Religion & Culture, 8*(3), 179-190.

Thorndike, R. L., & Hagen, E. (1969). Measurement and Evaluation in Psychology and Education. (3d ed.) New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.

Tisdell, E. J. (1999). The spiritual dimension of adult development . *New directions for adult and continuing education 1999. 84*, 87-95.

Trevino, K. M., Pargament, K. I., Cotton, S., Leonard, A. C., Hahn, J., Caprini-Faigin, C. A., & Tsevat, J. (2010). Religious coping and physiological, psychological, social, and spiritual outcomes in patients with HIV/AIDS: Cross-sectional and longitudinal findings. *AIDS and Behaviour*, *14*(2), 379-389.

Uberoi, R. (2016). "Dancing your sorry away!": spirituality, community and wellbeing in christ apostolic church, Dublin. *Legon journal of humanities 27(2)*, 122-142.

Vattamattam, M. (2012, June 26). Challenges of formation for priestly and consecrated life today.

Vives, L. (1994). *Formation guide: Institute of the marist brothers.* Rome: General house.

Wachholtz, A. B., Pearce, M. J., & Koenig, H. (2007). Exploring the relationship between spirituality, coping, and pain. *Journal of behavioral medicine*, *30*(4), 311-318.

Whaley, S. (2017). Overcoming the Unique Spiritual Formation Challenges Experienced by Large- Church Staff. Doctor of Ministry. 212. http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/dmin/212

Wiles, R. C. (2008). The Management of Confidentiality and Anonymity in Social Research. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology,11*(5), 417-428.

Yong, J., Kim, J., Park, J., Seo, I., & Swinton, J. (2011). Effects of a spirituality training program on the spiritual and psychosocial well-being of hospital middle manager nurses in Korea. *The Journal of Continuing Education in Nursing*, *42*(6), 280-288.

Zinger, L. (2006). Psychosocial health: powerpoint lecture onlines.

Appendix 1 Data Collection Authorization

**Psycho-Spiritual Institute**

20/2/2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

REF: **AUTHORITY TO COLLECT DATA**

The bearer of this letter by the name: **JOSEPH KARBO** Admission No: **PSI/JK/40/17 is** an MA
student in **Psycho-Spiritual Therapy & Counselling** at Psycho-Spiritual Institute, Marist
International University College.

Having completed the course work, he is ready to conduct a research through collection of
data. We are therefore requesting you or your Institution to assist him to collect the necessary
data to enable him complete his research.

Thank you in advance, for your support.

Yours,
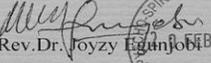
Rev.Dr. Joyzy Egunjobi

PSI ACTING DIRECTOR

Appendix 2 A Letter of Permission

MARIST INTERNATIONAL CENTRE (MIC)

MARIST LANE, OFF LANGATA ROAD

PO BOX 24450-00502 KAREN,

NAIROBI, KENYA

February 27, 2019

LETTER OF PERMISSION

Dear participants,

REF: REQUEST FOR COLLECTION OF DATA BY FR. JOSEPH KARBO NO PSI/JK/40/17

Fr. Joseph Karbo is a postgraduate student of the Psycho-Spiritual Institute at Marist International University College, a Constituent College of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

He is conducting a research on **"The influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students in Marist International Centre Nairobi, Kenya"** in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Arts in psychospiritual therapy and counselling.

Please kindly support him by granting him the information necessary for his research. Be assured that your information will be treated with utmost anonymity and confidentiality.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Br. Dr. Albert Nzabonaliba

Superior MIC

Appendix 3 Research Authorization

**NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION**

Telephone:+254-20-2213471,
2241349,3310571,2219420
Fax:+254-20-318245,318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website : www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref: No. **NACOSTI/P/19/31255/29151**

Date: **6th May, 2019**

Joseph Ruben Karbo
Marist International University College
P.O. Box 24450-00502
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on *"Influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial wellbeing of students of formation at Marist International Centre"* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Nairobi County** for the period ending **3rd May, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nairobi County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.
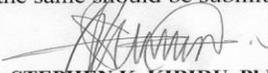
DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nairobi County.

The County Director of Education
Nairobi County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO9001:2008 Certified

Appendix 4 Letter of Introduction

Psycho-Spiritual Institute,
Marist International University College,
A constituent College of the Catholic
University of East Africa,
P.O. Box 24450-00502,
Karen, Nairobi.

Dear Participant,

RE: REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

I am a student of the above named institute studying for a Master's Degree program in Psycho-Spiritual Therapy. I am currently carrying out a research on the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial well-being of students of formation at MIC; in partial fulfilment of the degree requirement. I would be grateful if you could kindly assist me by accepting to take part in a focus group discuss and/or answer a questionnaire. The responses you give will be for academic purposes only and will treated with utmost anonymity and confidentiality.

Thank you in anticipation of your participation.

Yours sincerely,

Signed …………………………

Fr Joseph Karbo (PSI/JK/40/17)

Appendix 5 Participant Consent Form (A)

Title of research:

Exploring the influence of spiritual direction on the psychosocial well-being of the students in formation at Marist International University College Nairobi, Kenya.

This study is being conducted by a Masters student in psycho-spiritual therapy at Marist International University College.
The department has approved it (contact: director@psi-online.org).
The study involves no known risk to the participants and contains no deception. It takes approximately 1 hour to take part in the present phase of the research.
Each participant is expected to take part in answering a questionnaire and/or a focus group discussion where it is envisaged that they will share their experience of spiritual direction and how it relates to their psychosocial well-being.
All responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. No participant's personal information will be revealed.
Participation in this research is voluntary and there will be no monetary compensation. A refusal to take part will not lead to penalization in any way and all participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Name of researcher: Joseph Karbo PSI/JK/40/17
Position of researcher: MA student (Psycho-Spiritual Therapy)
Contact of College: P.O. Box 24450-00502 Langata Road, 00509 Nairobi, Kenya.
Signed by researcher: ………………………………….. Date: ……………………………..

Consent Form (B)

I confirm that the researcher has explained fully the nature of the project and the range of activities that I will be asked to undertake. I confirm that I have had adequate opportunity to ask questions about this project.
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw at any time during the interview, without having to give a reason.
Therefore, I agree to take part in this project.

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date: ……………………………………..

Appendix 6 Questionnaire on Spiritual Direction and Psychosocial Well-Being

The following statements refer to some aspects of the influence of spiritual direction/accompaniment on psychosocial well-being. Please answer all the questions sincerely. Do not disclose your identity anywhere. Read the questions carefully and tick where appropriate.

SECTION A

Demographic Information

1) Age: 20-25 ☐   26-30 ☐   31-35 ☐   36-40 ☐   41-45 ☐

2) Academic class: 1st Yr ☐   2nd Yr ☐   3rd Yr ☐   4th Yr ☐

SECTION B

Frequency of Spiritual Direction (SD) or Spiritual Accompaniment (SA)

3) How often do you go for SD / SA?

Weekly ☐   Once in 2 week ☐   Monthly ☐   Termly ☐   Others ………….

SECTION C 1: experience of spiritual direction

Use the following scoring scale:

1 = strongly disagree   2 = disagree   3 = neutral   4 = agree   5 = strongly agree

4	I like going for spiritual direction/accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
5	I find spiritual direction/accompaniment helpful in my personal growth	1	2	3	4	5
6	I find spiritual direction/accompaniment interesting and exciting	1	2	3	4	5
7	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has increased my sense of purpose and meaning in life	1	2	3	4	5
8	A well trained spiritual director is a huge boost to spiritual direction and accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
	SECTION C 2: influence of spiritual direction					

9	I would recommend spiritual direction/accompaniment for students in formation	1	2	3	4	5
10	I am motivated by the integrity of the spiritual director	1	2	3	4	5
11	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has made me feel better than those who do not go for it.	1	2	3	4	5
12	Spiritual direction/accompaniment is important for my formation	1	2	3	4	5
13	My sense of appreciation and gratitude in life has improved because of spiritual direction/accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
14	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me grow in love of God	1	2	3	4	5
15	Spiritual direction/accompaniment is good but not necessary for well-being	1	2	3	4	5
16	Spiritual direction/accompaniment is good but adds no value to my life	1	2	3	4	5
Section C 3: Psychological well-being						
17	Spiritual direction/accompaniment makes me feel uncomfortable	1	2	3	4	5
18	I fear personal process/journey in spiritual direction/accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
19	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me change my life positively	1	2	3	4	5
20	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has contributed to my spiritual growth	1	2	3	4	5
21	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped improved my prayer life	1	2	3	4	5
22	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has improved my image of God	1	2	3	4	5
23	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has helped me to relate better with people	1	2	3	4	5

24	I have grown in self-awareness and acceptance due to the help of spiritual direction/accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
25	Spiritual direction/accompaniment has improved my sense of joy and happiness	1	2	3	4	5
	Section C 4: challenges of spiritual direction					
26	I find spiritual direction/accompaniment boring	1	2	3	4	5
27	The life style of the spiritual director puts me off	1	2	3	4	5
28	I prefer other spiritual directors other than my formators	1	2	3	4	5
29	I don't see any value in spiritual direction/accompaniment	1	2	3	4	5
30	Spiritual direction/accompaniment is for those with spiritual problems	1	2	3	4	5
31	I am suspicious of spiritual direction/accompaniment in formation	1	2	3	4	5
32	I go for spiritual direction/accompaniment because it is a requirement in formation	1	2	3	4	5
	SECTION C 5: coping strategies					
33	Spiritual direction helps me cope with stress	1	2	3	4	5
34	Spiritual direction/accompaniment does not help me cope with stress in my formation	1	2	3	4	5
35	Spiritual direction helps me cope with psychosocial challenges	1	2	3	4	5
36	Spiritual direction helps me calm my fears	1	2	3	4	5

SECTION D: open-ended questions

37. What impact does spiritual direction have on your formation process?
38. What influence has spiritual direction/spiritual accompaniment had in your life?
39. How do you cope with the challenges of spiritual direction/spiritual accompaniment?
40. In your opinions what can help improve the experience of SD/SA?

Appendix 7 Questions for Interview

Experience of spiritual direction (SD) or spiritual accompaniment (SA)

1) How would you describe your experience of going for SD / SA?
2) What did you find unhelpful about SD/SA?
3) What impact has spiritual direction made in your formation process?
4) How have you benefited from spiritual direction?
5) How would you compare SD with a formator and a non-formator?
6) What did you find most challenging in SD/SA?
7) How do you cope with the challenges of spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction interventions for psychosocial well-being

8) What influence has spiritual direction had on your psychosocial wellbeing?
9a) How has SD/SA affected your life psychologically?
9b) How has SD/SA affected your life socially?
9c) How has SD/SA affected your Life spiritually?
10) Would the absence of spiritual direction make any difference in your psychosocial well-being? Give reasons.
11) How has SD/SA helped you enhance your psychosocial well-being?
12) What in your opinion could help improve the experience of SD/SA?

Appendix 8 Questionnaire for Formators

1) What kind of training have you received for spiritual direction?
2) How do you see yourself influencing psychosocial wellbeing as a spiritual director?
3) How have students benefited from spiritual direction?
4) How would you describe your experience with students as a spiritual director?
5) What in your opinion could improve the experience of spiritual direction for students?
6) What challenges do students encounter in spiritual direction?
7) In your experience, what impact does spiritual direction have on the psychosocial wellbeing of students?

Appendix 9 Picture of Marist International Center