**CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Recognizing anxiety and/or depression and its severity in adults through coaching and counseling may allow productivity in a person's daily living, home, work, and educational environments. These concerns will be examined through this research. In this chapter the problem statement and its background, the significance of this research, the hypothesis to be tested, the instruments being used, and the assumptions will be shared.

**Problem Statement**

The problem is a reduction in life satisfaction for African Americans in Charlotte NC, experiencing anxiety and depression in faith-based institutions during and post the COVID 19 pandemic.

**Background of the Problem**

The coronavirus or COVID-19 as it is commonly known was first discovered in Wuhan, China at the end of 2019. This virus was spreading quickly and attacking the respiratory system of individuals causing them to be hospitalized for complications such as acute respiratory disorders, heart problems and bacterial infections which lead to many deaths. Due to these circumstances the World Health Organization (WHO) declared this as a pandemic thus causing the government to implement Large Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) and ultimately a lockdown for the world in 2020. With the death rates increasing daily the world community begins to panic. (Afifah et al., 2024)

This pandemic was affecting individuals physically and psychologically. Psychologically some people were experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), fear, anxiety, insomnia and confusion. Anxiety resulting from the fear of contracting something that is considered deadly and unknown as to how it can be transmitted which can also be seen as xenophobia in extreme cases. (Afifah et al., 2024). According to Vasquez Reyes, “our different social identities and the social groups we belong to determine our inclusion within society and, by extension, or vulnerability to epidemics.” (Vasquez Reyes, 2020)

During the COVID-19 pandemic the population was affected approximately from 2019 - 2022 the impact of the virus had implications on many levels which are still present today. During this time many people experienced a decrease in life satisfaction and an increase in anxiety and depression that may have gone undiagnosed and/or unaware. A specific concern is within the African American faith-based community to which they may have relied on their faith through counseling or other methods to survive. (De Sousa, 2021)

The problem is the extent to which African Americans in faith-based institutions or churches experienced a reduction in life satisfaction and an increase in anxiety and depression as a result of the pandemic. Also, of importance for consideration is that faith or one’s belief system was seen as a mechanism to coping with anxiety and quality of life. These studies are developed to recognize the disparities among other ethnic groups and African Americans that experience risk facts such as anxiety and depression resulting from COVID-19. (Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2023)

With the introduction of COVID-19 we have seen high morbidity rates which has caused an increase of fear and a rise in anxiety among the people here in the USA, Canada and India. In the United States alone, COVID-19 was killing people in every state resulting in over 213,876 deaths. Over 7.7 million people had tested positive for the disease by October 2020. (Vasquez Reyes, 2020). We are still struggling to overcome the pandemic even after a year or more of its exposure. We have experienced several waves of the virus with variants that are more infectious and spreading throughout the world affecting almost every country. This pandemic has impacted the psycho-social, health, and healthcare infrastructure globally which has caused a disruption economically world-wide. There has been a rapid increase in psychological complications, also. (Sousa, 2021)

When you think of a person experiencing anxiety resulting from the pandemic the symptoms may be characterized physically as an increase in blood pressure, thoughts of worry, or feelings of tension. These individuals may have intrusive concerns or thoughts that reoccur often. (Encyclopedia of Psychology-Anxiety, 2020). The pandemic has put considerable mental pressure on the world population which has been disastrous. The outcome of COVID-19 has negatively impacted people’s mental wellbeing and their quality of life which derived from the fear of getting sick or dying and other pressures like stress. (Pashazadeh Kan et al., 2021)

According to Pashazadeh, “due to experiencing social distancing and quarantine they also reported significant levels of anxiety, irritation, uncertainty, insomnia, and tension”. (Vardanjani et al., 2021) When there is a considerable reduction in a person’s quality of life that can be attributed to social deficiencies or functional impairments the symptoms of anxiety can arise. (Pashazdeh Kan et al., 2021)

**Setting of Research**

The setting of my research will take place within the church environment and possibly, via online access to a questionnaire. I will survey men and women, 21 years of age and older. I am seeking to survey the congregation at two churches, The Park Church, and The Connecting Place at Greater Salem. The goal is to survey as many people as possible to determine those who have or are suffering from anxiety, depression, or panic attacks. My goal is to survey at least 100 or more individuals for the study.

**Thesis Statement**

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between anxiety, depression and life satisfaction or quality of life among African American adults in faith-based churches in the Charlotte, NC area.

**Research Hypothesis**

It is unknown whether satisfaction with life is influence by anxiety and depression.

**Research Questions**

RQ1: What is the relationship between anxiety and life satisfaction among African American church members in the Charlotte, NC area?

RQ2: What differences exist between depression and life satisfaction among African American church members in the Charlotte, NC area?

RQ1: To what extent did faith-based African Americans experience a decrease in life satisfaction? And an increase in anxiety and depression?

RQ2: To what extent did faith-based African Americans experience an increase in anxiety?

RQ3: To what extent did faith-based African Americans experience an increase in depression?

RQ4: To what extent were faith-based strategies used as coping mechanisms during the COVID crisis?

RQ5: What if any additional strategies were used as coping mechanisms?

**Scope of Research**

My research population will come from the congregation of one or two churches, The Connecting Place at Greater Salem Church, and The Park Church.

**Research Assumptions**

It is assumed that individuals suffering from anxiety and/or depression will be more productive in various spheres of their lives if they receive coaching/counseling.

**Significance of Research**

The recognition of a person’s satisfaction with life influenced by anxiety and depression may improve their quality of life in areas of work, home, education, and daily living, through coaching and/or counseling.