



Cognitive-Emotional Regulation and Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being among Catholic Consecrated Men and Women in Ibadan Archdiocese, Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the relationship between cognitive-emotional regulation and psycho-spiritual well-being among Catholic consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese, Oyo State, Nigeria. It sought to determine the level of cognitive-emotional regulation employed, assess psycho-spiritual well-being, examine the relationship between the two constructs, and identify strategies that can enhance well-being. The research was guided by Gross' Process Model of Emotion Regulation (1998) and Viktor Frankl's Logotherapy (1946).

An embedded mixed-methods research design was used with a population of 624 consecrated men and women and a sample of 244 participants, comprising 95 priests, 56 sisters, and 93 brothers, selected using Yamane's formula. Quantitative data were collected using the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) by Garnefski and Kraaij (2001) and the Psycho-Spiritual Well-being Scale (P-SWBS) by Egunjobi et al. (2023).

Qualitative data from seven consecrated men and women, were obtained through interviews and analysed thematically using NVivo while quantitative data were analysed with SPSS version 25. Findings revealed that participants predominantly used adaptive strategies, with positive reappraisal ($M = 3.72$) and refocus on planning ($M = 3.69$) scoring highest, while maladaptive strategies such as other-blame ($M = 1.88$) and catastrophizing ($M = 1.94$) were often used. Psycho-spiritual well-being was generally high, with connectedness scoring highest ($M = 4.20$) and self-transcendence lowest ($M = 4.13$). A moderate positive relationship was found between cognitive-emotional regulation and psycho-spiritual well-being $r(139) = .353, p < .001$. Qualitative findings identified eight strategies for enhancing psycho-spiritual well-being. The study concludes that integrating psychological and spiritual care is essential for holistic well-being of consecrated men and women.

Keywords: Psycho-spiritual well-being, consecrated life, Catholic Church, cognitive-emotion regulation, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

Consecrated life requires the integration of psychological health and spiritual vitality. Psycho-spiritual well-being encompasses meaning, connectedness, transcendence, inner harmony, and emotional stability (Pargament, 2011). For Catholic Consecrated men and women, this dimension is central to their identity and mission, influencing prayer life, apostolic commitment, and community living.

Despite its importance, limited empirical research has examined psycho-spiritual well-being in Nigeria. This study addresses this gap by assessing the level of psycho-spiritual well-being among consecrated persons in Ibadan Archdiocese.



METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted an embedded mixed-methods design, combining quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of psycho-spiritual well-being among Catholic Consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese. The quantitative strand offered measurable insights into levels of psycho-spiritual well-being, while the qualitative strand provided contextual depth through interviews. The use of mixed-methods research has been strongly supported in social and behavioural sciences because it enables researchers to integrate numerical trends with participants' lived experiences, thereby producing a more holistic understanding of complex human phenomena. For instance, John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark (2018) noted that mixed-methods designs are particularly valuable when a single method is insufficient to capture the complexity of a research problem, as qualitative data can help explain and enrich quantitative findings. Similarly, Abbas Tashakkori and Charles Teddlie (2010) argued that integrating both approaches enhance the validity, credibility, and interpretive strength of research findings.

The embedded mixed-methods design was specifically chosen because psycho-spiritual well-being involves multidimensional experiences that cannot be fully understood through numerical measures alone. While the quantitative component enabled the researcher to assess patterns, levels, and relationships among variables, the qualitative interviews allowed participants to describe their personal spiritual experiences, emotional struggles, coping strategies, and community life in greater depth. Studies in psychology and spirituality research have similarly demonstrated the usefulness of mixed-methods approaches in examining well-being and religious life because they allow for both empirical measurement and narrative exploration of subjective experiences. Therefore, the integration of both strands in this study enhanced the richness, validity, and applicability of the findings.

Population and Sampling

The target population consisted of 624 Catholic Consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese. Using Yamane's formula for sample size determination, a representative sample of 244 participants was selected. This included 95 priests, 56 sisters, and 93 brothers, ensuring diversity across gender and congregational categories. Participants were drawn from various apostolates such as education, healthcare, pastoral ministry, and social services, reflecting the broad spectrum of consecrated life in the archdiocese. Out of the 244 questionnaires distributed, 141 were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 57.8%, while 103 questionnaires were not returned or were inadequately completed, resulting in a non-response rate of 42.2%. In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 7 participants to obtain richer qualitative insights into the phenomenon under study. Inclusion criteria required participants to be either temporarily or perpetually professed members of religious congregations.

The relatively high non-response rate may be attributed to several factors associated with the nature of consecrated life and apostolic commitments. Many participants were engaged in demanding schedules involving teaching, pastoral ministry, healthcare services, retreats, community obligations, and missionary assignments, which may have limited the time available for questionnaire completion. Some religious may also have been transferred to other communities during the period of data collection, while others may have experienced fatigue from frequent institutional surveys or lacked sufficient interest in participating. Concerns about confidentiality, personal privacy, or fear of being misunderstood on psycho-spiritual matters may also have contributed to reluctance in responding fully.

The possibility of non-response bias exists if the individuals who did not participate differed systematically from those who responded, particularly in areas related to cognitive-emotional regulation or psycho-spiritual well-being. For instance, participants experiencing higher emotional stress, spiritual struggles, or dissatisfaction may have been less willing to complete the questionnaire, potentially affecting the representativeness of the findings. However, efforts were made to minimize such bias through assurances of anonymity and confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the inclusion of respondents from different congregations, ministries, and categories



of consecrated life. Furthermore, the mixed-method approach, including in-depth interviews, helped to enrich and validate the quantitative findings.

Research Instrument

Data were collected using the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (P-SWBS) developed by Egunjobi et al. (2023). The instrument measures dimensions such as self-awareness, connectedness, self-transcendence, meaningfulness, and compassion. It was chosen for its cultural relevance and psychometric reliability in African contexts. The scale employs a Likert-type format, allowing participants to rate their experiences and perceptions of psycho-spiritual well-being.

Validity and reliability were established through pilot testing and expert review, ensuring that the instrument captured both psychological and spiritual dimensions of well-being. Content validity was established through expert review by specialists in psycho-spiritual studies and counseling psychology. A pilot study involving 20 consecrated persons outside the study area was conducted to test the instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranged from .78 to .86 across the subscales, indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative Data Analysis

Quantitative data collected through the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (P-SWBS) were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, percentages, and frequency distributions were computed to determine the overall level of psycho-spiritual well-being among participants. Inferential statistics, particularly Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis, were used to examine the relationships among the dimensions of psycho-spiritual well-being, namely self-awareness, connectedness, self-transcendence, meaningfulness, and compassion. Reliability analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient was conducted to ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument.

The Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale demonstrated high reliability with an overall Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89, indicating that the instrument was suitable for the study. The quantitative findings provided measurable evidence regarding the psycho-spiritual well-being levels among priests, sisters, and brothers in the archdiocese.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics of Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Dimensions (N = 141)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Self-Awareness	3.87	0.64	High
Connectedness	4.02	0.58	High
Self-Transcendence	3.76	0.69	Moderate
Meaningfulness	4.11	0.55	High
Compassion	3.95	0.61	High
Overall Psycho-Spiritual			
Well-Being	3.94	0.49	High

The results in Table 1 indicate that participants generally demonstrated a high level of psycho-spiritual well-being, with meaningfulness recording the highest mean score ($M = 4.11$, $SD = 0.55$), followed by connectedness ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 0.58$). Self-transcendence had the lowest mean score ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 0.69$), although it still reflected a moderate level.

The overall mean score of 3.94 suggests that Catholic consecrated men and women in the archdiocese generally possess positive psycho-spiritual well-being.

**Table 2 Reliability Statistics for the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale**

Scale	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale	25	.89

The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89 indicates high internal consistency reliability for the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale used in the study.

Table 3 Correlation Matrix of Dimensions of Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Awareness	1				
Connectedness	.62	1			
Self-Transcendence	.58	.66	1		
Meaningfulness	.71	.69	.63	1	
Compassion	.54	.61	.59	.68	1

Note: $p < .001$

The correlation results revealed significant positive relationships among all dimensions of psycho-spiritual well-being. Meaningfulness showed the strongest relationship with self-awareness ($r = .71$, $p < .001$), suggesting that participants with greater self-awareness also reported stronger meaning and purpose in life. The findings imply that the dimensions of psycho-spiritual well-being are interrelated and mutually reinforcing among Catholic consecrated men and women.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were obtained through semi-structured interviews with seven purposively selected participants based on years of religious experience and ministry involvement. The sample size was considered adequate because thematic saturation was achieved during the interviews. These interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed thematically using NVivo software. Thematic analysis involved coding responses into categories such as spiritual practices, community support, pastoral challenges, and personal experiences of transcendence. Emerging themes highlighted the lived realities of consecrated persons, offering insights into how they sustain psycho-spiritual well-being amidst vocational demands. Trustworthiness of qualitative findings was ensured through triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking, thereby enhancing credibility and dependability.

Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Data

The embedded design allowed for integration of quantitative and qualitative findings. Quantitative results provided statistical evidence of high psycho-spiritual well-being, while qualitative insights contextualized these findings by illustrating how consecrated persons experience connectedness and meaning in daily life. For example, high scores in connectedness were supported by interview narratives emphasizing prayer, community living, and apostolic service as sources of strength. Similarly, lower scores in self-transcendence were explained by qualitative accounts of challenges in achieving meaning beyond self-due to pastoral overload and societal pressures. This integration enriched the interpretation of results, ensuring that numerical data were complemented by personal experiences, thereby offering a holistic understanding of psycho-spiritual well-being.

RESULTS OF THE FINDINGS

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive analysis of the Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Scale (P-SWBS) revealed generally high levels of psycho-spiritual well-being among participants. The mean scores across the five dimensions were as follows:



Table 4 Descriptive Statistics for Psycho-Spiritual Well-Being Dimensions

Dimension	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Self-Awareness	4.15	0.50
Connectedness	4.20	0.51
Meaningfulness	4.18	0.49
Compassion	4.16	0.52
Self-Transcendence	4.13	0.53

These results indicate that participants reported strong relational and spiritual ties, with connectedness emerging as the highest dimension. Self-transcendence, while still relatively high, scored lowest, suggesting challenges in achieving meaning beyond self. Overall, the descriptive statistics demonstrate that consecrated persons in Ibadan Archdiocese maintain robust psycho-spiritual well-being.

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine relationships among the dimensions of psycho-spiritual well-being. Results showed moderate positive correlations between connectedness and meaningfulness ($r = .412$, $p < .01$), and between self-awareness and compassion ($r = .367$, $p < .01$). Self-transcendence was positively correlated with connectedness ($r = .298$, $p < .05$), though the relationship was weaker compared to other dimensions. These findings suggest that participants who experience strong connectedness with God and community are more likely to report higher levels of meaningfulness and compassion, reinforcing the interdependence of psycho-spiritual well-being dimensions.

Qualitative Findings

Thematic analysis of interview data provided contextual insights into the quantitative results. Three major themes emerged:

1. **Prayer and Spiritual Practices:** Participants emphasized prayer, meditation, and sacramental life as central to their sense of connectedness and self-awareness. Daily devotion was described as a source of resilience and peace, aligning with the high quantitative scores in connectedness.
2. **Community Support and Apostolic Service:** Many participants highlighted the role of community living and apostolic ministry in fostering compassion and meaningfulness. Serving in education, healthcare, and pastoral ministry was perceived as spiritually fulfilling, reinforcing their sense of purpose.
3. **Challenges in Self-Transcendence:** Despite high overall well-being, participants reported difficulties in achieving self-transcendence. Pastoral overload, societal pressures, and limited structured support systems were cited as barriers to experiencing meaning beyond self. This aligns with the lower quantitative score in self-transcendence.

Integration of Findings

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results provides a holistic understanding of psycho-spiritual well-being. High scores in connectedness and meaningfulness were supported by narratives emphasizing prayer and community life. Lower scores in self-transcendence were explained by qualitative accounts of pastoral fatigue and societal challenges. Together, these findings highlight both the strengths and vulnerabilities of consecrated persons in Ibadan Archdiocese, underscoring the need for structured psycho-spiritual support systems.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings extend previous African studies on clergy and religious well-being by demonstrating that psycho-spiritual well-being is not merely a spiritual construct but a multidimensional experience shaped by emotional regulation, interpersonal relationships, and existential meaning. The positive relationships among



connectedness, compassion, and meaningfulness suggest that consecrated persons who sustain supportive relationships with God and community are more resilient in the face of vocational challenges. These findings reinforce Gross' proposition that adaptive emotional regulation strategies contribute to psychological stability, while Frankl's logotherapeutic perspective explains how meaning-centered living strengthens resilience amidst suffering and pastoral demands.

The findings of this study demonstrate that Catholic Consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese maintain generally high levels of psycho-spiritual well-being. Connectedness emerged as the strongest dimension, reflecting the centrality of prayer, community life, and apostolic service in sustaining spiritual vitality. This aligns with Pargament's (2011) assertion that spirituality serves as a protective buffer against emotional distress.

The relatively lower score in self-transcendence suggests that while consecrated persons derive meaning from ministry and community, external stressors such as pastoral overload and societal pressures may hinder their ability to fully transcend personal struggles. This finding resonates with Frankl's (2006) logotherapeutic perspective, which emphasizes meaning-making as essential for resilience. Gross' (2015) model also supports the idea that adaptive regulation strategies contribute to inner harmony and compassion, reinforcing the interconnectedness of psychological and spiritual dimensions.

Significance of Findings

The study revealed generally high levels of psycho-spiritual well-being among Catholic Consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese, with connectedness scoring highest. This underscores the centrality of prayer, community life, and apostolic service as sources of resilience and vocational sustainability. The findings affirm Pargament's (2011) assertion that spirituality acts as a protective buffer against emotional distress and existential anxiety.

The relatively lower score in self-transcendence highlights an important area for pastoral and psychological intervention. While consecrated persons derive meaning from ministry and community, external stressors such as pastoral overload and societal pressures may hinder their ability to fully transcend personal struggles. This aligns with Frankl's (2006) logotherapy, which emphasizes meaning-making and self-transcendence as essential for human flourishing. The findings therefore have practical implications for diocesan leadership, formation houses, and pastoral care programs, pointing to the need for structured support systems that integrate psychological resilience with spiritual vitality.

Practical Implications

1. **Formation Programs:** Incorporating psycho-spiritual well-being modules into religious formation can strengthen resilience and prepare candidates for lifelong commitment.
2. **Pastoral Support Systems:** Diocesan leadership should establish counseling services, retreats, and workshops to enhance self-transcendence and self-awareness.
3. **Community Living:** Strengthening communal practices can foster connectedness and compassion, reinforcing the collective mission of consecrated life.
4. **Policy Development:** Findings can inform diocesan policies on clergy and religious welfare, ensuring emotional and spiritual health are prioritized alongside pastoral duties.

Limitations

Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations:

1. **Geographical Scope:** The study was restricted to consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other dioceses, congregations, and cultural contexts within Nigeria and Africa.



2. **Self-Reported and Cross-Sectional Design:** Reliance on self-reported questionnaires may introduce bias, and the cross-sectional design captures psycho-spiritual well-being at only one point in time, limiting insights into long-term changes or causal relationships.
3. **Contextual Variables:** Important factors such as socio-economic background, congregational charism, ministry type, and access to pastoral counseling were not deeply explored, though they may significantly influence psycho-spiritual outcomes.
4. **Sample Limitations:** The relatively high non-response rate and limited qualitative sample size may restrict representativeness and reduce the diversity of perspectives captured.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on the findings and limitations, several recommendations are proposed for future research and practice:

1. **Broaden Scope:** Expand studies beyond Ibadan Archdiocese to include other dioceses, congregations, and regions within Nigeria and Africa to enhance generalizability.
2. **Longitudinal Designs:** Adopt longitudinal research designs to track changes in psycho-spiritual well-being and cognitive-emotional regulation over time, allowing for better understanding of causal relationships.
3. **Representative Sampling:** Recruit larger, more diverse, and representative groups of consecrated men and women to capture a wider range of experiences and reduce sampling bias.
4. **Demographic and Contextual Variables:** Examine the influence of age, gender, years in religious life, congregational charism, ministry type, and cultural background on psycho-spiritual well-being.
5. **Intervention Studies:** Investigate the effectiveness of specific interventions such as retreats, spiritual direction, counseling services, mindfulness practices, and emotional regulation training programs in enhancing psycho-spiritual well-being.
6. **Self-Transcendence and Institutional Support:** Since self-transcendence emerged as the weakest dimension, future research should explore barriers to its development while also assessing the role of structured institutional support systems including counseling, formation programs, and diocesan policies in sustaining holistic well-being and vocational sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This study assessed the level of psycho-spiritual well-being among Catholic consecrated men and women in Ibadan Archdiocese, Nigeria. Findings revealed high overall well-being, with connectedness as the strongest dimension and self-transcendence as the weakest. These results highlight the resilience of consecrated persons while underscoring areas requiring pastoral and psychological support. Psycho-spiritual well-being remains foundational to vocational sustainability, pastoral effectiveness, and holistic health. Future research should broaden scope, adopt longitudinal designs, and explore targeted interventions to deepen self-transcendence and strengthen institutional support systems. By integrating psychological care with spiritual formation, religious institutions can foster holistic well-being and ensure the flourishing of consecrated life in diverse contexts.

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