

# Assessing The Relationship Between Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Distress Among Seminarians of The Catholic Diocese of Aba, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Although Spiritual Intelligence enjoys recent recognition in research as a human potential to live a meaningful and fulfilled life even amid uncertainties and distress, no known study has been done among young people especially seminarians in Nigeria. Thus, this study uses the correlational research design to explore the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba, Nigeria. The objectives are to determine the seminarians' levels of spiritual intelligence, their levels of psychological distress, and the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among them. Forty-nine (49) major seminarians from the Catholic Diocese of Aba were recruited using the census method. Data collection was done through questionnaires delivered to each participant on google forms. Two standardised instruments – the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS-45) and the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) were used to assess the participants' spiritual intelligence and psychological distress respectively. SPSS (version 26) aided the data analysis. The results showed that the seminarians had an average spiritual intelligence level ( $n = 49$ ,  $M = 72.1\%$ ,  $SD = .42$ ) and an average psychological distress level ( $n = 49$ ,  $M = 55.8\%$ ,  $SD = 6.46$ ). The Pearson correlation showed a weak positive relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the participants. There was no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba ( $r = .066$ ,  $p = .653$ ). The findings provide an increased understanding of the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the population studied. The study suggests the need for more investigation into the value of spiritual intelligence and the necessity of its improvement for seminarians as young people and as future leaders who will need to have the necessary resources to guide others in their wellbeing in a distressed country like Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Spiritual Intelligence, Psychological Distress, Seminarians, Catholic Diocese of Aba, Nigeria.

## I. Background

Several studies have been done on the reality, nature, value and relevance of spiritual intelligence. Zohar and Marshall (2004) distinguished Spiritual Intelligence from Cognitive Intelligence and Emotional Intelligence and recognised spiritual intelligence as the most important or fundamental intelligence. They perceived spiritual intelligence to be part of the spiritual capital, which enriches the deeper aspects of one's life. In other words, Spiritual Intelligence forms part of the repertoire of the essence of one's being and purpose in life. One who has this wealth can live well and truly. This goes to show the reality of Spiritual Intelligence. It is not a fabrication or an illusion, but a reality which resides in man. Similarly, Sabzar et al. (2019) described spiritual intelligence as the intelligence that enables man to ask deep questions about himself; "What am I? Who am I? Why am I here? What am I doing here? Thus, spiritual intelligence is that part of man that gives him direction, purpose and sustenance.

Spiritual intelligence has not received as much attention as other types of intelligence in man, namely: Emotional intelligence and Cognitive intelligence, perhaps, because many have not come to recognise its benefits and impact on the human person. In their research, Negi and Khanna (2017) discovered that spiritual intelligence is very relevant because it greatly influences how a person relates with himself, with others and with supreme consciousness. Given the positive impact of Spiritual Intelligence on negative life experiences, one might wonder what the experience would be in Nigeria, a nation whose people have been described as both highly religious (Nag, 2018) and depressed and exposed to a spectrum of disorganisation in their lives due to the systemic collapse of education, economy, and security (Lux Terra Leadership Foundation, 2022). In other words, it could be a significant research effort to examine the experience of psychological distress among people described as highly religious.

According to Sibi (2022), psychological distress is a menace for the human person as it causes pain and discomfort in the life of an individual. It occurs as a result of prevailing unfavourable internal and external factors that often lead to conflict and disintegration in the human person. Symptoms of psychological distress such as anger, anxiety, exhaustion and depression could lead to other comorbid conditions, including alcohol and other drugs (AOD) addictions, suicidal tendencies, loss of meaning in life,

and violent behaviours if they are not well managed. It can go a long way to bring malfunctioning in a human person and even result in the formation of chronic bodily diseases (McLachlan & Gale, 2018).

Frankl (1985) narrated how quickly the human mind can deteriorate and how strange behaviours can be developed by the noblest of men when exposed to significant mental distress, in the absence of a healthy way to deal with it. In the concentration camps, prisoners many of whom were erstwhile educated, civilised and religious, gradually lost their values and succumbed to the burden of the psychological distress brought about by their dehumanizing ordeals. Thus, even though seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba could be described as a subset of Nigerians with the ability to develop appreciable levels of spiritual intelligence because of their basic training in psychology, philosophy and theology or spirituality, the general psychosocial distress occasioned by a somewhat sustained systemic collapse in Nigeria could negatively impact their wellbeing.

### **Objective**

The study had the following objectives:

1. To determine the level of spiritual intelligence of the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba.
2. To assess the level of psychological distress among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba.
3. To examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba.

### **Research Hypothesis**

The study was guided by the following hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress.

## **II. Methodology**

Correlational type of Quantitative research design was used by the researcher in the study. This was chosen to assess the level of relationship of the variables and draw conclusions which are not necessarily causal (Crawford, 2014). Data were collected from the participants through online survey questionnaires. This was based on the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS-45) and Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10) which were used to assess the levels of spiritual intelligence (independent variable) and psychological distress (dependent variable) respectively.

The study was conducted among seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba, Nigeria. Aba is located in the eastern part of Nigeria with an estimated population of 1,178,750. The Catholic Diocese of Aba has a population of 449,000 (Catholic Diocese of Aba, 2020). Among these are the 92 seminarians of the Diocese who were the target population of the study. The participants are all male students being trained in life skills, philosophy, theology and leadership skills in the seminaries. They are notably between the ages of 18-35.

Census method was used to recruit all the seminarians for the study as a result of the small population. Census method is quite adequate for small population of 200 or less (Israel, 2003). Data collection was done through survey questionnaires transmitted in google forms through secured emails and telephone links (WhatsApp) and was open for 2 weeks. Throughout the process of the study, ethical procedures such informed consent, confidentiality, non-maleficence, academic integrity and respect were duly observed.

## **III. Literature Review**

### **Level of Spiritual Intelligence**

Spiritual Intelligence has been investigated by researchers across the world. In Pakistan, Jahangir et al. (2020), measured the level of spiritual intelligence among adults in Multan while studying the impact of spiritual intelligence and happiness on mental health. The study consisted of 400 adults who are between the ages of 25-55. The level of the spiritual intelligence of the participants was determined by the Spiritual Intelligence Self- Report Inventory (SISRI-24) which consists of critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendental awareness, and conscious state expansion. The study revealed that spiritual intelligence positively correlates with happiness and negatively correlates with depression and anxiety dimensions of the mental health of the participants. In other words, spiritual intelligence can reduce mental health issues such as depression and anxiety and enhance an individual's wellbeing since it addresses their inner state. While the results of this study provide some helpful information on spiritual intelligence and psychological distress, the current study focused on the relationship between both variables among participants in another environment.

Similarly, Syahidah and Farida (2021) studied the impact of academic stress and spiritual intelligence on subjective wellbeing in students during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study was carried out in the East Java Province of Indonesia involved 116 students comprising 78.4% female and 21.6% male students and who were between 16-25 years old. The second hypothesis of the study aimed to determine if spiritual intelligence relates to the subjective wellbeing of the participants. Consequently, using the Spiritual Intelligence Self- Report Inventory (SISRI-24) scale, the study showed that spiritual intelligence partially affected subjective wellbeing ( $t=3.677$ ;  $p<0.005$ ). This suggests that an increase in spiritual intelligence could lead to increase in subjective wellbeing and that a decrease in spiritual intelligence could mean a decrease in the subjective wellbeing. The study, therefore, demonstrated the importance of spiritual intelligence in improving the wellbeing of a person and recommended that students improve their spiritual intelligence.

Syahidah and Farida's findings provide some insights into the necessity of a high level of spiritual intelligence in the life of individuals. However, unlike the researchers whose focus was on the impact of spiritual intelligence in an academic setting, the present study focused on determining the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress.

Studies involving the measure of the level of spiritual intelligence have also been done in Nigeria. Wojutari et al. (2018) measured the level of Spiritual Intelligence as a moderating variable in the relationship between the psychological wellbeing and the psychosocial adjustment of pregnant women in Osun. The Spiritual Intelligence Self Report Inventory (SISRI-24) was used to assess the level of spiritual intelligence of 348 participants. The participants were selected through a convenient sampling technique. The result of the research showed that the high level of the spiritual intelligence of the pregnant women significantly moderates the relationship between their psychological wellbeing and psychosocial adjustment. In other words, the more their spiritual intelligence increased, the more the wellbeing of the participants increased. This study shows that spiritual intelligence could moderate the impact of other variables on an individual.

Similarly, Ugwu et al. (2019) studied spiritual intelligence as a moderating variable. The study examined the roles of job apathy, leader integrity, and spiritual intelligence on work engagement in conventional mass transit businesses in South-eastern Nigeria. It involved 206 employees in leading mass transit companies selected through a stratified random sampling technique. The spiritual intelligence of the participants was assessed with the Integrated Spiritual Intelligence Scale (ISIS-45) with an internal consistency of 0.87 on Cronbach's  $\alpha$ . The study did not clearly state the participants' levels of spiritual intelligence. However, it noted that workers with high spiritual intelligence showed more engagement in their work and exhibited less apathy towards their job.

### **Level of Psychological Distress**

Distress is a reality of human life that can disrupt the psychosocial wellbeing of individuals. Researchers have investigated the effects of psychological distress on wellbeing while measuring its level among individuals in relation to many areas of life. This section considers such studies in the following paragraphs.

In Melbourne-Australia, Hill et al. (2019) studied the experiences of work-related psychosocial stressors, psychological distress and mental diagnoses among mental health researchers. The study employed an exploratory cross-sectional method and data was collected through an online survey. Participants were mental health researchers who were postgraduate students or employees in research institutes and universities, all numbering 207. Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 was used to assess psychological distress which involved a self-report measure of depression, anxiety and stress. This was measured along the parameter of the career stage of the participants. The results showed that 13.4% of the participants indicated severe distress and that the severe distress was most frequent among the postgraduate students ( $n=16$ ), research support staff ( $n=4$ ), early middle career researchers ( $n=3$ ) and senior researchers ( $n=4$ ).

It is commendable, in the sense that Hill et al's study showed that activities of man such as academic endeavours or work can induce psychological distress in individuals, thereby contributing negatively to mental health. While this study was concerned with examining psychological distress in a clinical setting among mental health workers, the current study will assess psychological distress non-clinically among participants from a relatively distressed Nigeria.

Sullivan et al. (2019) carried out a study in Canada with 284 university student- athletes on their levels of psychological distress. The aim of the study was to understand the mental health of student-athletes by assessing the levels of their psychological distress. The participants were selected through a stratified random technique involving male and female, students from all years of study who have played over ten sports. The researchers used the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6) to measure the participants' level of psychological distress, along demographic parameters of gender, starting status, scholarship status, injury status, concussion diagnosis, time of season, and location of residence relative to campus.

The results of the study showed that psychological distress experienced by the student-athletes was high; with females scoring higher (especially in depression and anxiety) than males and injured athletes higher than uninjured ones. The study is

relevant to the current study because it revealed the necessity of studying psychological distress as an important part of the wellbeing of a person in formation/training house. It can be misleading to study the wellbeing of an individual in isolation to his mental distress, because such can be a significant issue in an individual.

In a recent study, Twenge and Joiner (2020) examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of adults in the United States of America. The researchers compared the mental distress of 2032 nationally represented participants in 2020 to that of the 19,330 participants of the National Health Interview Survey in 2018. The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K-6) was used to assess the level of psychological distress of the participants. This was done across several demographic groups along the lines of age, gender, race, region and marital status. The comparison was done in three ways using means and effect size, percentage fitting criteria for serious mental distress scale and percentage fitting criteria for moderate distress.

The results revealed that in 2020, the psychological distress of adults increased substantially more than those in 2018 with  $d=1.48$ . Thus, more than 1 in 4 adults in 2020 fit the identification for serious mental distress, 8 times as much as that of 2018, showing that during the COVID-19 pandemic, psychological distress was significantly prevalent. Across all the components of the K-6 scale (especially on restlessness, sadness, hopelessness and worthlessness), the participants reported feeling at least 3 times more distressed than they were in 2018. This study puts into perspective the fact that a substantial deviation from expected normalcy in the environment brings about psychological distress. In a space of 2 years, the level of mental distress among adults in the U.S increased as a result of a singular health disaster.

One could imagine what would be the case for adults in an environment with multiple disruptions of normalcy as in present-day Nigeria. Thus, the current study focused on the level of psychological distress of seminarians in the Catholic Diocese of Aba in relation to health, economic, security, educational and social disasters in Nigeria.

In a related study, Olaseni et al. (2020) employed a descriptive survey research design to examine the psychological distress experience of Nigerians during the COVID-19 pandemic. Five hundred and two participants were selected through snowballing sampling technique, and they consisted of 53.6% males and 44.8% females between the ages of 18-78. The parameters of age, gender, region, religious affiliation, educational status and marital status were considered in grading the participants. The study did not expressly measure the level of psychological distress, but it employed General Anxiety Disorder Scale (GAD-7), Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-9), Insomnia Severity Index (ISI-7) and Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R) to assess the experience of psychological distress in the participants. These instruments were used to assess generalised anxiety, depression, sleeplessness and subjective stress respectively. Questionnaires based on these scales were sent to the participants online through google forms. The study revealed the prevalence of sleeplessness among 15% of the participants, moderate to severe depression among 23%, severe post-traumatic stress among 25% and clinical posttraumatic stress among 18.1% of the population.

However, there was no significant influence of gender on the experience of the psychological distress. This study further proves the point that psychological distress can result from deviation from the normal activities of man.

#### *The Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Distress*

Researchers have attempted to study spiritual intelligence alongside mental health and more specifically the impact of spiritual intelligence on mental health. However, very few studies have focused on the direct relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress. Nevertheless, many studies have associated spiritual intelligence with the components of psychological distress such as depression, anxiety, aggression and perceived stress.

Azam and Majeed (2022) conducted a quantitative correlational study in Pakistan with the aim of determining the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. The researchers employed a non-probability convenient sampling technique to select the 200 participants who were a mixed population of males and females between the age range of 18-55. The study worked on the hypotheses that psychological distress would likely be present in the general population as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, that spiritual intelligence would inversely relate to the psychological distress of the participants and that gender differences of the participants would influence the impact of spiritual intelligence on psychological distress. The study employed the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS-21) to measure the level of psychological distress in the participants and the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI) to measure spiritual intelligence. Questionnaires were sent to the participants through a google survey form. The results of the study showed that the overall psychological distress levels of the participants were high. Furthermore, the high scores of the subscales of spiritual intelligence did not show any relationship with psychological distress.

Thus, this study did not focus on establishing a significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress. However, it was able to show that spiritual intelligence could be studied in relation to psychological distress albeit no relationship was established between the two variables. The current study replicated similar research with a population outside the milieu of the COVID-19 pandemic and among participants who have a considerable spiritual orientation, namely seminarians.

In a study involving ascetics in India, Bhandari et al. (2021) investigated the relationship between spirituality and distress. 63 Hindu ascetics between the age range of 30- 66 participated in the quantitative correlational study. The spirituality of the participants was quantified in terms of spiritual intelligence and measured using the Spiritual Intelligence Self- Report Inventory (SISRI-24) and the responses were marked on a 5-point Likert scale rating. The SISRI-24 consists Critical Existential Thinking (CET), Personal Meaning Production (PMP), Transcendental awareness (TA) and Conscious State Expansion (CSE). Distress among the participants was assessed with Cornell Medical Index Health Questionnaire (CMIHQ) and this investigated the distress of the participants as physical distress (PD) and psychological distress (PsyD). The CMIHQ consists of 195 questions that addressed health issues including psychological issues such as fatigability, depression, inadequacy, tension, anger and sensitivity. The result showed that there is a less positive correlation between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress ( $r=.078$ ,  $p<.55$ ) in the bivariate correlation analysis.

Furthermore, the result of multiple regression showed that all the components of spiritual intelligence did not positively predict psychological distress except Critical Existential Thinking ( $p=.028$ ). This means that a higher level of spiritual intelligence lowers the level of psychological distress. Spiritual intelligence, therefore, supports the psychological health of an individual. In this study Bhandari et al investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and physical distress among participants with a religious inclination in India, a study which would be worthy to, in part, be replicated in Nigeria, given the experience of distress in the country.

Ilyas and Arshad (2017) in a quantitative study, explored the relationship between spiritual intelligence, work-family conflict and psychological distress among university teachers in Lahore-Pakistan. The study involved 100 participants selected using non- probability purposive sampling. The researchers worked on the hypothesis that a possible relationship exists between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress in university teachers. Thus, the Spiritual Intelligence Self-Report Inventory (SISRI-24), the Work/Family Conflict Scale (WFCS) and the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale-21 (DASS-21) were used to measure the spiritual intelligence, work/family conflict and psychological distress of the participants respectively. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Moment correlation were used in the computation of the data of the study.

The result showed that there is a significant negative relationship between Personal Meaning Production (a component of spiritual intelligence in SISRI-24) with psychological distress ( $r=-.27$ ,  $p<.05$ ), depression ( $r=-.31$ ,  $p<.05$ ) and anxiety ( $r=-.26$ ,  $p<.05$ ). This means the ability of the individual to have a strong meaning in life helps him to overcome the negativity of psychological distress. However, this study omitted to present the effects of psychological distress on spiritual intelligence in its correlational analysis. This is an aspect of the study, among others, that the current research explored.

Focusing on depression as one of the components of psychological distress, Moafi et al. (2018) carried out a cross-sectional descriptive correlational study in Qazvin, Iran. The aim of the study was to discuss a possible coping strategy for women who had post-abortion depression, by studying the relationship between spiritual intelligence and post-abortion depression. The sample for the study involved 185 women who were selected through a convenient sampling technique and arranged into two groups; those who have been previously depressed and those who have never been depressed. The data collection tool was a questionnaire containing demographic and obstetric enquiries, the SISRI-24 for measuring spiritual intelligence and the Edinburg Postnatal Depression Scale (EPDS) for measuring postnatal depression. The researchers analysed the data with descriptive statistics and used the Chi-square test to compare the two groups of women based on their demographics, obstetric details and spiritual intelligence scores. The findings revealed that 54% of the participants had depression and that women with lower education status and who had a previous history of abortion had higher post-depression scores (89.9) than others (77.9).

Furthermore, the study revealed that the mean scores of the components of Spiritual Intelligence were significantly lower among the depressed women (51.82) than the non- depressed women (56.7). This showed that there is a correlation between spiritual intelligence and post-abortion depression. However, the study was not able to establish the significance of the correlation. Additionally, this study focused on only one component of psychological distress, that is, depression. Thus, the current study investigated many facets of psychological distress and a possible two-way relationship it might have with spiritual intelligence, using inferential statistics.

In a similar study that isolated one of the indicators of psychological distress, Karimi and Mohammadi (2017) investigated the relationship between spiritual intelligence and aggression among elite wrestlers in Hamadan province, Iran. The study adopted a descriptive correlation research design. It involved 50 elite male wrestlers who were between the ages of 14-17 and were selected through convenient sampling method from their various wrestling clubs. The SISRI-24 was used to measure the level of spiritual intelligence, while Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (AQ) was used to assess the level of aggression in the participants. Furthermore, the data analysis was done with the Pearson correlation test. The researchers aimed at determining the relationship between the variables. The results revealed that spiritual intelligence correlates with aggression (0.527) and has a significant level of 0.000 in the Regression test. The researchers interpreted this as a significant negative relationship between spiritual intelligence and aggression. While Karimi and Mohammadi studied spiritual intelligence alongside aggression which is a single component of

psychological distress, the current study will accentuate the relationship to include other aspects of psychological distress such as depression, restlessness, anxiety and worthlessness.

In Iran also, Safavi et al. (2019) carried out a descriptive quantitative study on the relationship between spiritual intelligence and stress, in addition to anxiety and depression coping styles in patients with cancer. The 276 patients-participants were selected using the cluster sampling method and they included patients who are in chemotherapy for cancer. SISRI-24 was used to assess spiritual intelligence, while the Depression Anxiety Stress scale (DASS-42) and Ways of Coping Questionnaire (WOCQ) were used to measure psychological stress and coping styles respectively. Pearson correlation and multiple regression tests were used to analyse the data of the study. The results of the study showed that the participants had a moderate level of spiritual intelligence with a mean score of  $70.18 \pm 16.59$  and a high DASS level of  $39.16 \pm 71.11$ .

Furthermore, the findings showed that a significant negative correlation exists between spiritual intelligence and stress ( $P=0.000$ ,  $r=-.286$ ), anxiety ( $P=0.001$ ,  $r=-.200$ ) and depression ( $P=0.000$ ,  $r=-.317$ ). This means that spiritual intelligence lowered the participants' depression, anxiety and stress in their sickness. This study brings in more components of psychological stress, namely depression and anxiety. However, the current study assessed stress from a wider perspective, that is in terms of examining more components of psychological distress. Additionally, unlike this reviewed study, the current study explored the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress with participants who are not currently situated in hospitals as active patients.

The current study is inspired by Amram's (2007) ecumenical theory of spiritual intelligence. In a thematic analysis of 71 interviews of major spiritual traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Non-dual, Earth, Taoism and Yoga, he discovered how spiritual intelligence abilities helped the participants to solve specific problems of life and even gather meaning in the face of misfortunes and pain.

The literature reviewed so far is about the investigation of the levels of spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among students, nurses, rehabilitation experts, pregnant women and transport company employees in their various fields of life. In other words, the levels of spiritual intelligence and psychological distress of the individuals have been studied in the medical, academic and social service areas. Most of the studies were done in the middle eastern part of the world, and a few done in Nigeria. To the researcher's best of knowledge, no known study has been done on the levels of spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among religious individuals who live in socio-politically dysfunctional society like Nigeria. Thus, the current study sought to fill this research gap. In addition, the current study used the correlational methodology to examine the relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress of the participants who are affiliated with religious formation, namely the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba.

#### IV. Findings and Discussions

##### Spiritual Intelligence

The following descriptive statistics present the findings on this first objective of the study, which is to determine the level of spiritual intelligence among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Spiritual Intelligence

	Mean (%)	Median (%)	Mode (%)	Minimum (%)	Maximum (%)	St. Deviation
Consciousness	74.3	75	83.3	50.0	100	.73
Grace	75.4	76.5	75	51.4	94.4	.53
Meaning	71.9	70.8	66.7	50.0	95.8	.55
Transcendence	74.7	72.8	73.3	51.7	93.3	.61
Truth	63.9	65.3	70.8	45.8	84.7	.53
Overall SI Scores	72.1	71.7	68.3	59.7	87.9	.42

The above Table shows that the standard deviation of the overall SI scores of the participants is less than 1 ( $SD = .42$ ;  $SD < 1$ ), indicating that the participants' total SI scores are close to the mean score ( $M = 72.1$ ). Accordingly, most of the participants ( $n = 43$ ; 87.7%) had SI scores of between 60% to 82% (Mode = 68.3), suggesting that a sweeping majority of the seminarians had just an average level of spiritual intelligence. Of the 49 participants, only a handful ( $n = 5$ ; 10.2%) whose total SI scores were between

83% and 87.9% could be considered to have a high level of spiritual intelligence. In other words, the majority of the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba have only an average level of spiritual intelligence.

Curiously, Table 3 also shows that even though the seminarians had average scores in all the domains of spiritual intelligence, with very high maximum scores on Consciousness (100%), Grace (94.5%), Meaning (95.8%) and Transcendence (93.3%), their lowest scores in all the numerical measures were in the domain of Truth. This could be interpreted as, perhaps, a result of the impact the seminary training has on the ability to love, and peacefully surrender to truth, manifest openness and trust in ways that enhance daily functioning and wellbeing (Amram & Dryer, 2008). This can be brought about by the rigidity of the formation process which has the possibility of fostering insincerity and poor personal development (Wooden, 2022). Perhaps, if the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba were exposed to such rigidity, it would impact their growth in the Truth domain.

Notwithstanding the seminarians' low score in the domain of truth, their average level of spiritual intelligence reveals that they are somewhat equipped with spiritual capital to live and thrive as spiritually intelligent leaders of tomorrow, and more still as struggling youths in Nigeria.

**Psychological Distress**

The K10 was used to ascertain the level of psychological distress among the participants.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Psychological Distress (PD)

	Mean (%)	Median (%)	Mode (%)	Min. (%)	Max. (%)	St. Deviation
PD scores	55.3	56	56	24	84	6.46

Table 4 shows the overall percentage mean score of the level of Psychological Distress among the Seminarians as 55.3%. The median and mode of the scores were both 56% with a standard deviation of 6.46. The mean, mode and median of the scores indicate that majority of the participants (n = 43; 87.7%) were within the 40% to 60% benchmark for average psychological distress level. One of the participants even scored 84%, signalling a high level of psychological distress. Of the sample, only very few participants (n = 5, 10.2% of the participants) could be described as having a low psychological distress level.

This result shows that the Seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba could be exposed to factors such as life events, family challenges, or environmental issues that might be negatively impacting them, thus their medium rather than low scores on psychological distress. Although they had differing answers regarding their experiences of fatigue, nervousness, depression, worthlessness, hopelessness, anxiety and sadness, the fact that a greater number of the participants (43 out of 49 seminarians) had an average score (between 40% to 60%) on the psychological distress is a cause for concern, especially because this is a population whose theological formation and spiritual resources should serve as buffer against the impact of psychological distress.

**Relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Distress**

Pearson's correlation was performed to examine the correlation between the participants' level of spiritual intelligence and the level of psychological distress. Table 3 shows the correlational matrix.

Table 3: Correlation of Participants' Spiritual Intelligence (SI) and Psychological Distress (PD)

		Spiritual Intelligence	Psychological Distress
Spiritual intelligence	Pearson Correlation	1	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.653
	N		49
Psychological Distress	Pearson Correlation	.066	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.653	
	N	49	

Table 5 indicates that the correlation between Spiritual Intelligence and psychological distress is positive and markedly weak/negligible with  $r = .066$ ,  $p = .653$  (2-tailed). The correlation is weak because the  $p$  value is very close to 0 which is an indication of zero correlation between variables (Frost, 2023). Furthermore, this weak positive relationship between the variables

of spiritual intelligence and psychological distress is statistically insignificant because the significant value (.653) of the correlation is greater than the ideal significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

Consequently, the positive correlation between the variables means that the higher the score of spiritual intelligence, the higher the score of psychological distress, although this relationship is very negligible. As a result of this finding, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) that there is no significant relationship between spiritual intelligence and psychological distress among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba is accepted and maintained. This finding agrees with the study of Azam and Majeed (2020) in showing that spiritual intelligence may not correlated with psychological distress given favourable conditions that make it probable to be otherwise.

## V. Conclusion

The current study showed that there is no significant relationship between Spiritual Intelligence and Psychological Distress among the Seminarians of Aba Diocese. Previous studies had affirmed that Spiritual Intelligence, as a resource in every human person, can be put to good use and help individuals to navigate the challenges in life that can disrupt human wellbeing and integrity. However, the findings of this study among seminarians did not support such previous findings. This assumption did not clearly materialise in the study done with the seminarians.

The findings showed that the seminarians have an average level of spiritual intelligence. Similarly, the study showed that the seminarians had an average level of psychological distress. This could imply that the seminarians have had a considerable exposure to resources that positively impacted their spiritual intelligence and factors that disposed them to psychological distress. However, the result also shows that among the seminarians of the Catholic Diocese of Aba, spiritual intelligence did not significantly impact on psychological distress as shown otherwise by most of the reviewed studies.

Nevertheless, it does reveal the areas where the seminarians can develop themselves, especially in the domain of Truth and awareness of the impact of psychological distress on them. The study recommends an intentional spiritual intelligence training as to aid the spiritual intelligence development among the seminarians. Further studies can be done on the impact of spiritual intelligence on psychological distress with a phenomenology research design in order to discover more of how spiritual intelligence can alter the menace of psychological distress among young populations.

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