

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Leadership Styles among Catholic Priests in Umuahia Diocese, Nigeria

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Abstract: Catholic Priests as Church leaders provide care for God's people. To be an effective leader, the priest requires not only the traditional intelligence but also emotional intelligence. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among Catholic Priests in Umuahia Diocese, Nigeria. The study was grounded on the Emotional Intelligence theory of Daniel Goleman and employed a quantitative approach, using the correlational research design. The target population was 119 priests residing and working in Umuahia Diocese, while the sample size of 92 priests was obtained using the simple random technique. Two standardized self-report questionnaires, the Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) were adapted and used as instruments of measure for the quantitative data. The Pearson's correlation test was used to analyze the quantitative data with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21. The findings of the study showed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style, democratic leadership style, and servant leadership style. There was no relationship found between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style, and autocratic leadership style. However, a significant negative relationship exists between emotional intelligence and the laissez-faire leadership style. The study therefore concludes that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with certain leadership styles, and that improving emotional intelligence will enhance leadership effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Leadership styles, Catholic Priests

I. BACKGROUND

The search for a more Missionary-oriented church has led to many instances of research on leadership styles among priests and their connection to emotional intelligence from a global perspective. This suggests that Emotional Intelligence has a greater impact on the success of priests as leaders than traditional intelligence. Priests who are not self-aware, self-regulated and lack empathy and relationship management skills often do not possess effective leadership skills to guide their faithful. To wield the art of influence over people, it requires that the person possess the power of motivation, empathy and great social skills (Andrey, 2019).

The fundamental function of a priest is to lead the faithful as a shepherd leads his sheep. However, this is not always the case as some priests rather prey on the faithful by neglecting, having angry outbursts or engaging in unsolicited relationships even in the public. These behaviors and many more destabilize the effectiveness of the leadership roles of priests. Higgins (2021) rightly observed that Church publications about priestly ministry do not designate the priesthood as a position of leadership, because given the ambiguity of the term the Church uses it with caution when describing priests. However, the intrinsic leadership of priests in their vocation cannot be overlooked.

The Catholic priest is called to be a leader. This office as a leader springs from the ministerial priesthood's personal union with Christ, the Head, and is an empowerment to act in the person of Christ, the Head (Presbyterorum Ordinis 2), which presents itself in a care for the Church, the Body of Christ. The priest shares in the bishop's ministry and serves as a leader for the God's family, leading them "in Christ, by the Spirit, to God the Father" (Presbyterorum Ordinis 6). Leadership is more vital than ever in the life of today's priests because we are living in a rapidly changing world, where the Church is no longer the stable, central focus of many people's lives. Leadership is an important aspect of pastoral care, whether it be for priests, the people entrusted to them, or their religious institutions (Okeahialam, 2019). Nevertheless, there is still an ongoing debate regarding the contribution of Emotional Intelligence to the understanding of leadership among catholic priests.

Objective

The objective of the study is to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and the different leadership styles among Catholic priests in Umuahia Diocese. The inferential analysis was investigated using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Research Hypothesis

Pearson's correlation analysis will be used to investigate whether there is a significant relationship between

the Priests' emotional intelligence and their leadership styles. Thus, the study will be guided by the following hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and the different leadership styles.

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a quantitative approach with a correlational research design. According to Creswell (2017) the correlational research design is utilized by investigators to define and assess the degree of the link between two or more variables or sets of scores. In this study, the quantitative data was collected which involved the use of questionnaires. A correlational method is considered suitable for the study to determine the degree to which a relationship exists between the emotional intelligence and leadership styles among priests in Umuahia Diocese.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Past studies have established a link between emotional intelligence and leadership styles in many cultures and nations (Singh et al., 2021). Oswald (2016) also observed that, "Within congregational ministries, emotional intelligence is essential for pastoral leadership effectiveness. Without it, great sermons may be preached, effective pastoral care offered, and scripture interpreted soundly, but when a pastor does not have a relationship of trust with congregants, little transformation occurs" (p.102). In this regard, priests with high levels of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relationship management are able to lead effectively.

In a quantitative study done in Iran, Rastgar et al. (2018) investigated the outcomes of research undertaken to assess the correlation between different management styles and emotional intelligence among Shiraz District 2 high school administrators. Given the nature of the investigation, the technique of investigation was descriptive-correlational. The study's population comprised of 33 educational department supervisors and 454 education ministry instructors in Shiraz's District 2. In the study, measuring methods comprised the Emotional Empowerment Questionnaire and the Multiple Leadership Questionnaire, with reliability coefficients of $r_a = 0.9$ and $r_a = 0.94$, respectively. The results showed that: 1). Emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style have a correlation coefficient of 0.347, which is significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. As a result, emotional intelligence and transformative leadership style are closely linked. 2). Emotional intelligence and interactive leadership style have a correlation coefficient of 0.269, which is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, no statistically significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and participative leadership style. 3). Emotional intelligence and non-interventional leadership style have a correlation coefficient of 0.044, which is not statistically significant at the $p < 0.05$ level. As a result, no statistically significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and non-interventionist leadership style.

In Iran also, Raesli et al (2016) employed a correlational strategy with two data collection tools: the Emotional Competence Inventory (ECI) questionnaire and the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ). The study used a stratified random sampling approach to sample 33 educational supervisors and 800 high school teachers in Tehran's District 2 and 454 teachers in proportion to the population. ECI and MLQ have reliability values of 0.90 and 0.94, respectively. The research findings revealed a significant relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and transformational leadership style of $=0.347$. According to the study, the most powerful leaders all have strong emotional intelligence, and effective leaders are those that use the correct time for the benefit of their own industry and shareholders. These research were not conducted in Nigeria, and the participants were school administrators/managers rather than Catholic priests. As a result, the current study filled a gap in the literature.

Hejase, Hamdar, Nouredin, and Nsouli (2017) found a positive and statistically significant association between managers' EI components and employees' motivation in a quantitative study conducted in Lebanon. The study looked at five different employee motivation indices and compared them to the five dimensions of Emotional Intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social awareness, and social skills. The method used was quantitative parametric. The survey questionnaire was completed by 250 Lebanese employees from various organizations and industries, with encouraging findings. Managers should take Emotional Intelligence seriously and undertake training on the subject, according to the study, in order to better motivate their subordinates. Despite the fact that the research adds to our understanding of emotional intelligence by highlighting its components, it does not address the relationship between emotional and leadership styles. By establishing the association between emotional intelligence and priest leadership styles in Umuahia, Nigeria, this study will fill a gap in the literature.

In North America, Beckles (2018) also did a quantitative study on the contribution of emotional intelligence (EI) to leadership style and effectiveness. To investigate how much emotional intelligence contributes to leadership style and leader performance, a quantitative correlation multiple regression analysis was performed. According to the findings, emotional intelligence substantially predicts effective leadership, and interpersonal skills (assertion) appear to be the driving force behind this association. The findings were used to develop leadership training programs that encourage and support the influence of emotional intelligence on IT professionals' leadership style in the context of effectiveness and the value of these skills in managing change, reducing risks, and increasing organizational success through effective relationships and productive relationships. This study too, made an important contribution in the area of research. However, this present study in Nigeria covered the gap in literature.

A study done by Potter et al (2018) determined the most common leadership style used by construction project managers and looked into potential links between leadership style and emotional intelligence in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. To achieve the research aims, an online questionnaire with a combination of open and closed questions was used. According to the findings, transformational leadership is prominent among the project managers studied in this study. There was a significant positive link between project managers' emotional intelligence and their chance of adopting a transformational leadership style. Recommendations for strengthening leadership capacities in the construction sector included adequate procedures for finding, hiring, and training project managers, as well as recruitment agency and mentorship possibilities. Like other previously highlighted studies, the findings are no doubt resourceful but focused on only one leadership style of project managers. This present study therefore, added to the existence literature by focusing on different leadership styles of priests.

In Africa, the findings of a few known studies on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership are not on the contrary either. A sample size of 973 individuals was used to study the link between emotional intelligence and leadership among senior leaders in a South African financial services business (Du Toit, Viviers, Mayers, & Visser, 2017). Because the leaders were involved in the strategic organizational endeavor and completed measurement instruments as part of the process, convenience sampling was used. The leadership data came from an organization-specific multi-rater that accessed self-ratings, peer and subordinate evaluations, as well as manager ratings in terms of leadership behaviors linked to organizational worldviews of leadership effectiveness. The leadership data came from an organization-specific multi-rater that looked at self-ratings, peer and subordinate assessments, and manager ratings of leadership behaviors in relation to organizational worldviews of leadership performance. The findings showed a relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership but with poor predictive strength.

In Kenya, a study done by Chepng'eno and Ngui(2017) was to evaluate the relationship between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and managerial leadership styles in selected Kenyan financial organizations. It was hypothesized that emotional intelligence (EI), defined as the capacity to notice, analyze, and control emotions, predicts transformational leadership (TL) style. The Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) was used to assess the leaders' EI, while the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire was used to assess perceived leadership styles (MLQ-5x). Six banks provided a sample of 60 leaders and 240 raters. The data was analyzed using Spearman's Correlation, and the results revealed a positive relationship between leaders' EI ratings and TL style. A more in-depth examination revealed a favorable link between EI and the contingent reward for active Management-by-exception (MBE) components of

transactional leadership. On the other hand, negative relationship between EI and passive MBE as well as laissez-faire leadership style were discovered, leading to the conclusion that EI predicts leadership styles. While still substantial, the research was not done in Nigeria and did not include priests. This study covered this literature gap by focusing on Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese, Nigeria.

Another study in Kenya done by Ntarangwe (2021), examined the relationship between the emotional intelligence and career adaptability of the academic staff of some selected universities in Nairobi County. The study used the mixed method of explanatory sequential design and was based on the two theories of Goleman and Savickas. The sample of 201 out of the total population of 403 academic staffs from 3 universities participated in the study. The study's main findings revealed a weak significant positive relationship between the four components of emotional intelligence and career adaptability constructs. Furthermore, overall emotional intelligence was found to have a moderately positive relationship with career adaptability. As a result, the research's main suggestion was to improve workers' job adaptability through emotional intelligence trainings, guidance and counselling, and team building. While the study is current and useful in the area of emotional intelligence, it did not address the leadership styles. Again, the study was conducted in an academic environment. However, the present study filled the research gap by looking at the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among priests in a pastoral setting.

Locally, the study by Adeyemo et al (2015) in Nigeria looked at the effects of organizational environment, leadership style, and emotional intelligence on work life quality. The participants were 250 bank employees picked from several commercial banks in Ibadan. The study posed three research questions and hypotheses. The subjects were given four reliable and validated instruments. At the 0.05 level of significance, data were analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation, multiple regression analysis, and analysis of variance. The results reveal that when the three independent factors were combined, they were successful in predicting work life quality. The three variables significantly contributed to the participants' quality of work life, with leadership styles being the most powerful predictor in the study. The results also show a significant difference in quality of work life among participants with Democratic, Autocratic, and Laissez faire leadership, with contributions of democratic style being the most potent. Based on the findings, it is proposed that management consider the relevance and responsibilities of emotional intelligence and leadership styles in improving employee work life quality. Since the study was not done in Umuahia, this present study in Umuahia hopefully covered this knowledge gap.

It can be seen that majority of the reviewed literatures have their areas of interest different from that of the present study. One of the key differences is their focus on the

relationship between emotional intelligence and other variables rather than leadership styles. Thus, this serves as a knowledge gap which the present study sought to fill.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Style

To find the relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style, null hypothesis of the variable was stated thus H_{01} : Emotional Intelligence has no relationship with transformational leadership style.

Table 1: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Transformational Leadership Style

Variable		Transformational Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	.266*
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.015
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 shows that the correlation between emotional intelligence and the dependent variable, transformational leadership style has the p value (0.015). It is worthy to note the decision rule in hypothesis testing that if the p -value is less than the significance level ($\alpha= 0.05$), we reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. Whereas, if the p -value is greater than the significance level ($\alpha= 0.05$), we fail to reject the null hypothesis.

The null hypothesis, H_{01} , predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with transformational leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese. However, the p -value of 0.015 which is less than the significant level of 0.05 shows that emotional intelligence has a weak positive relationship with transformational leadership style. Having a weak positive relationship means that, the higher the score in emotional intelligence, the higher the possibility of adopting the transformational leadership style. On the other hand, the lower the score in emotional intelligence, the lower the possibility of adopting the transformational leadership style. Based on this therefore, the null hypothesis that says emotional intelligence has no relationship with transformational leadership style is thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis taken. Thus, there is relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational style adopted by the priests. Emotional intelligence (including predictors of self-awareness, transparency, and balanced processing) has a significant relationship with authentic leadership and pastoral effectiveness, according to research findings by Puls, Ludden, and Freemyer (2014).

Emotional Intelligence and Democratic Leadership Style

Pearson correlation coefficient technique in quantitative data analysis was used to establish the relationship between emotional intelligence and democratic leadership style and the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Democratic Leadership Style

Variable		Democratic Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	.225*
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.041
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The null hypothesis, H_{02} , predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with democratic leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese. However, table 16 shows that the correlation between emotional intelligence and the dependent variable, democratic leadership style with the p value of $0.041 < \alpha 0.05$.

The p value 0.041 which is less than the significance level 0.05, suggests that emotional intelligence has a moderate significant positive relationship with democratic leadership style. This means that, the higher the score in emotional intelligence, the higher the possibility of using the democratic leadership style. On the other hand, the lower the score in emotional intelligence, the lower the possibility of using the democratic leadership style. Since the statistical results give a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and democratic leadership style, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected and the alternative accepted. This means that the increase in the mean score of priests' emotional intelligence under the components of self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness and relationship management has the capacity to influence their democratic leadership style. However, it should be noted that correlation does not necessarily mean causation and therefore should not be seen as cause and effect.

The democratic leader involves people in decision making. The final decision ranges from consensus to the leader having the final say. People tend to be more concerned about the process of how the decisions are made and in that, everyone has a voice (Indira, 2018). In the reviewed literature, Rastgar et al. (2018) finds no statistically significant link between emotional intelligence and interactive leadership style. However, a study by Miller (2015) which explored the relationship between EI and leadership practices among women leaders in business and educational organizations stressed that positive social interactions speak to one's intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligence which are crucial in workplace conflict management.

Emotional Intelligence and Transactional Leadership Style

To find the relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style, null hypothesis of the variable was stated thus H_{03} : Emotional Intelligence has no relationship with transactional leadership style.

Table 3: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Transactional Leadership Style

Variable		Transactional Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	.161
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.146
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 3, the correlation between the independent variable, Emotional Intelligence and the dependent variable, Transactional Leadership Style has p -value of $0.146 > \alpha=0.05$.

The null hypothesis, H_{03} , of the variable predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with transactional leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese. In the results shown in table 20, the p -value 0.146 which is greater than $\alpha=0.05$ suggests there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style. Since there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional leadership style, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. This corroborates the reviewed study done by Chepng'eno and Ngui (2017) on the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership styles among leaders in selected banking institutions in Kenya where the correlation results between the overall EI scores and transactional leadership indicated no relationship between the variables ($r_s = 0.118, p = 0.202$). This shows that emotional intelligence is not compatible with the transactional leadership style. The transactional leadership style has a system of rewards and punishments which may not keep leaders motivated in the long term.

Also, in line with the outcome of this research, a study by Chatterjee & Kulakli (2015) found no relationship between EI and transactional leadership and thus concluded that the importance of EI in leadership is possibly grossly exaggerated. The researchers, then suggested that the conclusion be taken cautiously as some limitations of Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) with low reliabilities do not allow for such conclusions and instead further research is called for.

Emotional Intelligence and Autocratic Leadership Style

Inferential analysis was used to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and autocratic leadership style. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to test the null hypothesis of the variable as stated, H_{04} :

Emotional Intelligence has no relationship with autocratic leadership style.

Table 4: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Autocratic Leadership Style

Variable		Autocratic Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	.101
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.363
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 4, the correlation between the independent variable, Emotional Intelligence and the dependent variable, autocratic leadership style with p value of $0.363 > \alpha=0.05$. The null hypothesis, H_{04} , of the variable predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with autocratic leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese.

In the results shown in Table 4, the p value of 0.363 is greater than the significance level of 0.05 which suggests that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and autocratic leadership style. Since there is no relationship between emotional intelligence and autocratic leadership style, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. It therefore means that the emotional intelligence of priests does not affect their choice of autocratic leadership style. Autocratic leaders take authority and go headfirst in solving problems. Leader takes decisions without consultation. This style causes the greatest level of discontent from followers in relation to other styles (Indira, 2018).

Emotional Intelligence and Laissez Faire Leadership Style

Inferential analysis was used to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and laissez-faire. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to test the null hypothesis of the variable as stated, H_{05} : Emotional Intelligence has no relationship with and laissez-faire leadership style.

Table 5: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Laissez Faire Leadership Style

Variable		Laissez Faire Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	-.259*
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 5, the correlation between the independent variable, Emotional Intelligence and the dependent variable, and laissez-faire leadership style has the p value of $0.18 < \alpha=0.05$.

The null hypothesis, H_{05} , of the variable predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with

and laissez-faire leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese. In the results shown in Table 5, the $p=0.18$ which is less than the significance level, suggests there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and laissez-faire leadership style. Since there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and laissez-faire leadership style, although negative, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership Style

Inferential analysis was used to find the relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership style. The Pearson correlation coefficient was employed to test the null hypothesis of the variable as stated, H_{06} : Emotional Intelligence has no relationship with servant leadership style.

Table 6: Correlation of Emotional Intelligence and Servant Leadership Style

Variable		Servant Leadership Style
	Pearson Correlation	.264*
Emotional Intelligence	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016
	N	83

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

From Table 6, the correlation between the independent variable, Emotional Intelligence and the dependent variable, servant leadership style has the p value = 0.016. The null hypothesis, H_{03} , of the variable predicted that emotional intelligence has no significant relationship with servant leadership style among Catholic priests in Umuahia diocese.

In the results shown, the p value of 0.016 which is greater than the significance level suggests there is a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership style. Since there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and servant leadership style, the null hypothesis therefore is rejected and the alternative hypothesis accepted. The findings correspond to the reviewed literature by Miao et al (2021) where they found a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and the servant leadership style ($p=.57$). They maintained that the relationship between EI and servant leadership is stronger in studies having a lower percentage of well-educated subjects.

V. CONCLUSION

The study investigated how the four domains of emotional intelligence relate to each of the leadership styles. The study was carried out using quantitative method of research. The data affirmed that emotional intelligence has a significant relationship with leadership styles, and that improving emotional intelligence will enhance leadership effectiveness. Since emotional intelligence can be improved, priests can enhance their leadership style by improving their emotional intelligence. In the objective, the Pearson's correlation of the quantitative data showed a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and transformational leadership style ($p=0.015$), democratic

($p=0.041$), and servant leadership style ($p=0.016$). There is no relationship between emotional intelligence and transactional ($p=0.146$), and autocratic leadership style ($p=0.363$). However, a weak negative relationship exists between emotional intelligence and the laissez faire leadership style ($p=0.018$). Priests' awareness of their emotions, their ability to motivate themselves, recognize the needs of others and managed relationships contributed to the effectiveness in their leadership.

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