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## Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing among Women Religious in Nigeria

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### ABSTRACT

Women Religious are called to bear effective witness to the gospel in their religious vocation. However, some of them seem unable to manage their emotions and the emotions of others, thereby hindering their ability to effectively live out their religious calling. Consequently, this study examined the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Wellbeing among Women Religious in Nigeria. The study was guided by Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence and Ryff's theory of Psychological Wellbeing using a quantitative approach via a correlational research design. The population was 5,971 and the sample size was 375 selected using simple random sampling. The participants' emotional intelligence was assessed using the Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment tool, while their psychological wellbeing was measured using the Carol Ryff Scale of Psychological Wellbeing. Pearson's correlation test was performed to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing among the participants. The results showed a statistically significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological wellbeing among Women Religious in Nigeria. Recommendations based on the findings were made, including suggestions for future research.

**Keywords:** Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Wellbeing, Women Religious

**Abbreviations:** EI: Emotional Intelligence; PWB: Psychological Wellbeing

### I. INTRODUCTION

There has recently been a significant increase in research into the relationship between EI and PWB. Surprisingly, the two variables do correlate. EI is the ability to perceive, comprehend, express, control, assess, and use emotions in order to interact to and engage with people in a meaningful and productive way. It is critical to form strong relationships, finish tasks, find fulfillment in one's work, and reduce stress and conflict. Furthermore, it has a greater impact on religious leaders' success than traditional intelligence (Agwu et al., 2023). It focuses on emotional control and learning when and how to express emotions (Cherniss, 2000). PWB is concerned with a person's psychological happiness/health, including emotions from achievement. It encourages self-determination, personal growth, gaining control of one's environment, forming rewarding relationships, and having a feeling of purpose in life (Dhanabhakym & Sarath, 2023). PWB allows a person to maintain a feeling of balance in emotion, thinking, and social connections, as well as a desire to actively participate in self-control processes such as emotion regulation (Tang et al., 2019).

EI plays a significant role in the PWB of a person. Individuals exhibiting high levels of EI typically experience low perceived stress, elevated life satisfaction and happiness, strong motivation for achieving life success, high self-esteem, assertiveness, and openness (Vivekananda & Jugnu, 2018, p. 5). Hence, people of higher EI can manage social situations, they have better possibilities of improving their social support which in turn promotes their PWB (Malinauskas & Malinauskiene, 2020). It is interesting to note that several scholars have examined the two concepts of EI and PWB. In a study by Bhojwani (2019), the ability of young people to successfully navigate life's problems was shown to be significantly correlated with their degree of EI and psychological well-being among young adults in India. As a result, young people with greater EI can manage and maintain relationships as well as show empathy and care for others, whereas individuals with lower EI frequently find it difficult to maintain relationships since they have little empathy.

Similarly, Mutuku et al. (2021) explored EI and adjustment to communal life among consecrated female religious in Kenya and discovered that the adjustment to communal living is impacted by EI. Thus, consecrated women must have self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, and relationship management skills in order to properly integrate into society. Ugoani and Ewuzie (2013) conducted a study in Nigeria that examined the imperative of EI for PWB among adolescents. The study found that EI was pivotal in fostering mental health and PWB in individuals. According to the research, emotionally intelligent and happy people have a strong sense of self-worth and abstain from any bad behaviors that go against their wellness. That is, the research indicates a strong correlation between PWB and EI.

The findings of these studies suggest that Women Religious in Nigeria with higher EI levels can care for and maintain relationships, as well as empathize with others. They can live a fulfilling religious life when they embrace their identity, experience personal development, find meaning and purpose in life, foster meaningful relationships with one another, and defend environmental mastery and autonomy. Although, studies on EI and PWB have been conducted no study has examined EI and PWB among Women Religious in Nigeria. The current study seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by examining the relationship between EI and PWB among Women Religious in Nigeria.

The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between EI and PWB among Women Religious in Nigeria. The study was guided by both alternative and null hypotheses. Alternate Hypothesis ( $H_1$ ): There is a statistically significant relationship between EI and PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria. Null Hypothesis ( $H_0$ ): There is no statistically significant relationship between EI and PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Various empirical studies have explored the relationship between EI and PWB. Nag et al. (2023) examined the relationship between EI and PWB among B-school students in Hyderabad Metro, India. The discoveries of the study showed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between EI and PWB among B-school students, thereby proving that EI is a predictor of PWB among the students. The findings stated the need for promoting EI and its specific dimensions such as altruism, courtesy, and civic virtue for the enhancement of PWB and organizational performance.

Similarly, Makuloluwa and Arachchige (2015) explored the relationship between EI and PWB of 120 management undergraduates of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lankan. The findings revealed that undergraduates have high levels of EI and PWB and that there is a positive relationship between EI and PWB. It was also observed that all mean values are higher than the average mean value, undergraduates thus perceive a high degree of self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive relations, personal growth, environmental mastery, and autonomy. To boost the EI of undergraduate management students, the study suggested restructuring counseling programs and upgrading their degree plans.

Smith (2012) explored whether EI training could bring about an increase in PWB and Trait EI for disadvantaged youth in South Africa. The results demonstrated that a strong relationship exists between PWB and Trait EI. Hence, the study suggested the exploration of practical means of promoting PWB for this specific population group, to study and ascertain whether sports participation, spiritual activities, cultural traditions, employment programs, and others could make a positive difference in implementing them to enable the youths within the South African context to benefit from their improved PWB. Furthermore, Olah and Utibe (2022) studied EI and PWB among federal officials in the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja, Nigeria. The findings revealed that EI strongly predicts PWB for public officials in Abuja. As a result, the study concluded that businesses should help their employees manage their emotions sensibly to increase productivity. Additionally, government officials should utilize their EI to motivate themselves.

Similarly, Agu and Nwankwo (2019) examined the relationship between PWB and EI among undergraduates of the Faculty of the Social Science, Faculty of Law, and Faculty of Environmental Science, Agbani Campus, Enugu State University of Science and Technology, Enugu State Nigeria. The results revealed that PWB has a strong and positive correlation with EI. This is an indication that students who have high EI are more likely to be psychologically healthy than those with low EI. Therefore, the study recommended that parents should monitor the behaviors of their children closely from the early stages to enable them cultivate good behaviors and that Institutions of higher learning should make effective use of student counseling with the aim of producing well-balanced future leaders. It also suggested that older people should try to be accessible to young adults to curtail the occurrence of abnormal behaviors that challenge their PWB and to employ empathy rather than condemnation to create a sense of wellbeing in young adults.

From the reviewed literature, none of the studies examined the EI and PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria. This identified gap provides relevance to the current study which aims at filling these gaps by examining the relationship between EI and PWB among the Women Religious in Nigeria.

## III. METHODOLOGY

This study employed quantitative methodology via a correlational design. The target population of the study involved 5,971 Women Religious in Nigeria and the sample was 375 selected through a simple random sampling technique. The tools for the collection of data were the 24-item Quick Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment tool and the 18-item Psychological Wellbeing Scale. The Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized to test the hypothesis and data were analyzed using inferential statistics with a p-value ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) and confidence level of 0.95, or 95% (Bhandari, 2023).

## IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Demographic Characteristics Of Participants*

**Table 1**

*Participants' Age*

Age	Frequency	%
20 - 30	23	7.6

31 - 40	49	16.1
41 - 50	111	36.5
51 - 60	93	30.6
61 and above	28	9.2
Total	304	100.0

Table 1 depicts a diverse age distribution among respondents, with no specific age group targeted. Despite the majority falling within the 41-50 and 51-60 age brackets, various other age groups were represented, demonstrating the respondents' proficiency in answering the questionnaires. The inclusion of Women Religious from different Nigerian provinces and religious institutes enhances the study's potential for generalization.

**Table 2**

*Participants' Level of Education*

Level of Education	Frequency	%
S.S.C.E.	35	11.5
B.Sc.	125	41.1
M.A/M.Sc.	68	22.4
Ph.D.	24	7.9
Other	52	17.1
Total	304	100.0

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of respondents' educational levels. The study assumes that higher educational attainment may contribute to EI development, which in turn could affect the PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria. Therefore, participants' educational backgrounds are considered crucial in the research.

**Table 3**

*Participants' Years as Religious*

Years as Religious	Frequency	%
0 - 10	84	27.6
11 - 20	80	26.3
21 - 30	89	29.3
31 - 40	39	12.8
41 - 50	11	3.6
51 - 60	1	.3
Total	304	100.0

Table 3 demonstrates a wide range of years spent as religious among respondents, ranging from 0 to 60 years. This indicates representation across multiple professional age groups, suggesting a diverse sample of Women Religious in Nigeria with varying levels of professional experience. Consequently, the study has the potential for broad generalization.

**Table 4**

*Participants' Apostolate*

Apostolate	Frequency	%
School/ Teaching	118	38.8

Hospital/ Health	46	15.1
Caregiver/Hospitality/Pastoral	36	11.8
Formation Ministry	32	10.5
Secretariat/Office/Account	33	10.9
Administration	8	2.6
Other	31	10.2
Total	304	100.0

Table 4 illustrates that the respondents come from various apostolates, indicating a diverse sample of Women Religious in Nigeria from different backgrounds. This diversity enhances the study by eliminating bias toward any specific type of apostolate.

**Table 5**

*Correlation of EI and Dimensions of PWB: Self-acceptance, Positive relations with others, Personal Growth, Purpose in life, Environmental mastery, and Autonomy.*

Variable	Self-acceptance	Positive relations with others	Personal growth	Purpose in life	Environmental Mastery	Autonomy
Pearson Correlation	.232**	.252**	.276**	-.014	.250**	.233**
<b>EI</b> Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.803	.000	.000
N	304	304	304	304	304	304

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The findings in Table 5 indicate that except for the purpose in life subscale, which displays a negative correlation with EI with a p-value of .803, all other domains of PWB – including self-acceptance, positive relations with others, personal growth, environmental mastery, and autonomy – exhibited a statistically significant positive correlation with EI among Women Religious in Nigeria, with a p-value of 0.000, which is lower than the significance level of 0.01.

#### *Relationship Between EI and PWB*

To determine the relationship between EI and PWB among Women Religious in Nigeria, the Pearson correlation coefficient was utilized to test the alternate and null hypotheses regarding the variables.  $H_0$ : There is no statistically significant relationship between EI and PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria.

**Table 6**

*Correlation of EI and PWB*

Variable	PWB
Pearson Correlation	.348**
<b>EI</b> Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
N	304

\*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The relationship between EI and PWB is displayed in Table 6 with a p-value of (0.000). The 2-tailed p-value of the test, which indicates the degree of evidence supporting a null hypothesis, is represented by the Sig. (2-tailed) value. When the p-value is less than the significance level ( $\alpha=0.01$ ), the alternative hypothesis is accepted, and the null hypothesis is rejected. In contrast, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected if the p-value exceeds the significance level (Zach, 2022).

The results showed a substantial positive correlation between the EI and PWB with a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.01. Thus, the alternative hypothesis, which states that there is a significant relationship between the participants' EI and PWB, is accepted, and the null hypothesis is hereby rejected. This finding offered a response to the objective of the study by indicating that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between EI and PWB of Women Religious in Nigeria. Having a strong positive relationship means that the higher the score in EI, the higher

the possibility of PWB. On the other hand, the lower the score in EI, the lower the possibility of PWB. So, the higher the level of EI of Women Religious in Nigeria, the higher their PWB will be, and vice versa.

The outcome of this study is supported by the research findings in the reviewed literature by Makuloluwa and Arachchige (2015); Nag et al. (2023); Smith (2012); Olah and Utibe (2022) and Agu and Nwankwo (2019); which revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between EI and PWB. According to the results, EI is critical to the improvement of PWB and mental health of Women Religious in Nigeria. High EI helps Women Religious in Nigeria form positive relationships, have a strong sense of self-worth, and abstain from harmful behaviors that compromise PWB. The findings also demonstrated that increased EI improves PWB and organizational effectiveness. The implication is that Women Religious in Nigeria who possess stronger self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management have better psychological functioning and higher levels of life satisfaction in their religious vocation.

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## V. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between EI and PWB among Women Religious in Nigeria. The findings revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between their EI and PWB. The results are in line with earlier reviews by Makuloluwa and Arachchige (2015); Nag et al. (2023); Smith (2012); Olah and Utibe (2022) and Agu and Nwankwo (2019); which revealed a significant positive relationship between EI and Psychological Well-being. Thus, higher levels of EI enable Women Religious in Nigeria to foster positive relationships, cultivate a strong sense of self-worth, and avoid behaviors that could negatively impact their well-being. Moreover, heightened EI levels are associated with improved PWB and organizational effectiveness. Consequently, Women Religious in Nigeria with greater emotional self-awareness, independence, assertiveness, and interpersonal skills are likely to experience improved psychological well-being and heightened life satisfaction.

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## VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The self-reporting methods employed in the data collection process may occasionally be influenced by social desirability or biases. Also, the questionnaire was distributed by email and WhatsApp using a Google Form because of the distance from the study area. As a result of this, those without access to digital devices and Internet services were left out of the study.

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## VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this research, Women Religious in Nigeria are encouraged to continue to refine their emotional intelligence competencies, for improved psychological functioning and higher levels of life satisfaction in their religious vocation.

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## VIII. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following suggestions for additional research are given based on the limitations and scope of the current study:

- i. Examining the impact of EI on the apostolates of Women Religious in Nigeria.
- ii. Exploring the EI of Women Religious in Nigeria through a longitudinal study and a qualitative investigation (using assessment instruments with more items in each dimension).

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