

Integrated Regulation (INTEG): A High Motivating Factor For Priests Working In Northern Nigeria

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Abstract

This study uses a quantitative survey research design with a cross-sectional correlational approach to examine priests of Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province in Northern Nigeria, focusing on the relationship between variables or factors that motivate and support them in performing their ministerial duties. As of the end of 2014, statistics indicate that there were approximately 378 diocesan and religious priests working in the Archdiocese of Kaduna and its suffragan dioceses (Cheney, 2015). As of 2023, this number has grown to 579 (Cheney, 2025). During data collection in 2016, 77 of these priests (both diocesan and religious) responded to the questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale. The correlation analysis results showed no significant relationship between priests' work satisfaction and External Regulation (ER), but a high correlation between priests' work satisfaction and Integrated Regulation (INTEG) and Intrinsic Motivation (IM). Both INTEG and IM also indicated the highest mean scores. In the multiple regression analysis, the relationship with the bishop scored the highest and appears to be at the top of the predictor variables that can motivate priests to work more effectively. Other motivating factors include the possibility of being promoted, cordial relationships with other priests and laypeople, as well as favorable vacation and further study policies.

Keywords: *motivation, work satisfaction, vocation, self-determination theory, relationship*

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I. Introduction

In the wake of recent happenings of priests leaving the ministerial priesthood and seeking laicization, it is pertinent to study the nature of the priests' work and see how best priests can be motivated psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, and otherwise in their ministry to ensure sustainability and eventually reduce the rate at which priests are leaving the priestly ministry or eradicate such exodus completely. Especially as the Catholic priesthood is based on the priestly order of Melchizedek, and once ordained a priest in the Catholic Church, one is expected to function as a priest for life. But many priests today no longer practice, mostly in Europe and America, but also in Africa and Asia. The Annual Statistics of the Church (Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae), compiled by the Holy See each year, indicate that priests are leaving the priesthood (Galeazzi, 2014). According to reports sent to the Vatican from the dioceses between 1964 and 2004, 69,063 priests left the priesthood (Salvini, 2015). However, a greater percentage of priests who have left the priesthood reside in Europe, America, and Oceania (EWTN, 2004; Vatican Radio, 2013; Scaramuzzi, 2015); cases of priests leaving the priesthood are also reported in Africa and Asia. This is an issue for the Catholic Church, coupled with the fact that even among those who are still practicing, some are not satisfied with the ministry (Hoge, 2005) because they lack proper motivation (McDevitt, 2010). As such, this study focused on priests working in Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province in Northern Nigeria, which comprises the Archdiocese of Kaduna and its suffragan dioceses (Kafanchan, Kano, Katsina, Kontagora, Minna, Sokoto, and Zaria), to examine possible factors that motivate them in the priesthood.

This study began with a literature review of related studies, and it was discovered that one of the factors contributing to priests leaving the priesthood in Europe and America was "Survivor's Syndrome." That is, a situation whereby staff or employees who survive redundancy or layoffs in an organisation begin to feel overworked and neglected, which can lead to decreased morale and an infectious sense of anxiety (Brockner, 1992; Nycz-Conner, 2009). McDevitt (2010) argues that the Catholic priesthood experiences low morale, burnout, and a lack of motivation due to downsizing. Many have left the priesthood, a high rate of death due to old age, and fewer young men are going into the ministry in Europe and America. This is believed to be the effect of those who have left the priesthood on those who are still in the ministry, just like the effect of layoffs or dismissals on those who remain in an organisation. The Church in Europe and America faces different challenges than in parts of Africa and Asia, where vocations are growing but must be managed carefully (Jimoh, 2015; McDevitt, 2010).

The African Church should begin to take precautions and devise the best way to motivate priests in their work. Hence, there is a need for a study like this.

The study examined motivation, as a lack of motivation is reportedly a common concern worldwide among priests struggling in their work (McDevitt, 2010). Motivation in a work context has been studied extensively in Organisational and Social Psychology and measured based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by different scholars (Gagne et al., 2015). As such, SDT is used as the theoretical framework for this study. The SDT appears to be more suitable for this type of measurement because it is more comprehensive, unlike Goal Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), which views people's goal representations as the causes of their behavior. Alternatively, the Expectancy Value Theory holds that motivation and choice are determined by the values or incentives that are available. Motivation cannot be reduced to goals and incentives alone. There are other factors, such as worker alienation, employee development, internalization of social values, and productivity, which are all covered by Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and are overlooked by the other theories. Hence, these other theories do not address the content of motivation (Vroom & Deci, 1992). However, none of the studies concerning work motivation were done with priests; possibly because of how their kind of work is perceived – the difficulty in distinguishing between vocation and job (Zickar et al, 2008). Zickar et al (2008) further confirmed this when, in their study, they described the priests as “A population neglected by Industrial–Organisational psychologists in general, and role theory researchers specifically” (p. 2908). Every human person is essentially a socio-cultural being (Flett, 2005), and the priests are human, prone to emotional and psychological numbing (McDevitt, 2010). Hence, there is a need to explore the factors that motivate priests in their work, particularly those serving in the Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province in northern Nigeria.

The method that was used in this study was a survey questionnaire administered to 5 priests working in the archdiocese via the internet, using email. They, in turn, made hard copies and distributed them to other priests across the rural and urban parishes of the Archdiocese of Kaduna and its suffragan dioceses. In total, 103 questionnaires were distributed through snowball sampling, and 77 (N = 77) were collected and analysed using nominal scale, descriptive analysis, correlational analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The results were then presented, and the findings were discussed. Followed by limitations of the study, the need for future research, and conclusions.

II. Theoretical Framework

Self-Determination Theory: One of the popular theories of work motivation is the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which provides content to motivation by focusing on three fundamental psychological needs: competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Gagne & Deci, 2005). It is possible that some of the problems the priests are facing today, as listed above, revolve around these needs, and not much has been done in this area, especially regarding the African priests. Hence, there is a need to study the priests working in Africa and their work situation, to understand what motivates them and how they can be best motivated to sustain their interest in the priestly ministry. Consequently, SDT distinguishes between Intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation (IM) refers to performing an activity for the inherent satisfaction of the activity itself. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to performing an activity with the intention of achieving a specific outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In other words, intrinsic motivation means performing an act for its own sake, because it is inherently enjoyable and satisfying. In contrast, extrinsic motivation refers to the act of carrying out an action for instrumental reasons or purposes (Tremblay et al., 2009).

However, there are different types of extrinsic motivation, which are relatively controlled by external factors or the individual's acquired goals and values, and are said to be on a continuum (Ryan & Connell, 1989). Furthermore, it may indicate the extent to which one has internalized specific goals and values (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Thus, we have external regulation, introjected regulation, identified regulation, and integrated regulation. Then, at the low-end of this continuum is what Tremblay et al (2009) referred to as “Amotivation” – That is, the state at which one either lacks the intention to act or acts passively.

External Regulation (ER): This occurs when the motivation for an action stems from external influences, such as a craving for money or a desire for academic achievement. It acts or works solely to receive a reward (Tremblay et al., 2009). External motivation encourages one to indulge in an activity that one is not genuinely interested in (Anderson, 2015). At this level of motivation, one is simply acting because one wants to gain external rewards. It could be money, praise, grades, or a trophy.

Introjected Regulation (INTRO): With the INTRO comes an internalized, pressuring voice (Anderson, 2015). This can be a result of guilt, worry, or shame. It is more of an act driven by a sense of duty or obligation. Doing an action simply because one has taken it upon oneself, or because of a specific commitment that one made privately or publicly. In this case, it is not as if one is enjoying the activity, but instead, they do it out of fear of not doing it and breaking their commitment. It acts or works because of self-worth (Tremblay et al., 2009).

According to Anderson (2015), this kind of motivation can cause anxiety, lack of confidence, and ill feelings towards the activity. In this situation, external reward is not the driving force per se, but the fear of how others will perceive one if one fails to act. There is a slight connection between ER and INTRO, as in INTRO, the desire to be praised by others can be a motivating factor.

Identified Regulation (IDEN): When one comes to terms with the importance of an action and accepts it as one's own due to the perceived benefits of such action in the achievement of a long-term goal, it is said to be IDEN (Anderson, 2015). It is doing something because one identifies with it and has accepted it as one's own (Tremblay et al., 2009). For instance, one may come to terms with running every morning as an exercise, neither for monetary gain nor pleasure. However, he knows that running every morning will help him achieve his goal of shedding some weight and staying physically fit. So, while ER could be for an immediate reward, IDEN can be for a more remote goal. This can sometimes make it difficult to distinguish it from intrinsic motivation.

Integrated Regulation (INTEG): This is a type of motivation that one comes up with after one has truly examined, internalised, and assimilated the reasons behind one's action (Anderson, 2015). It is a point at which one believes that eternal motivations rhyme with one's values and beliefs. That is, identifying with one's work to the extent that it becomes part of one's sense of self-worth (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Here, the action is neither a result of enjoyment nor fear for not acting, but because it feels suitable. It is more of an informed motivation compared to INTRO.

III. Literature Review

Motivation: The consensus on the definition of the concept of motivation was elusive in the field of psychology for a long time (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). However, after several attempts by different scholars, a general agreement emerged that motivation is an internal state or condition (sometimes described as a need, desire, or want) that helps activate or energize behavior and gives it direction (Hutti, 2011). The problem with the above definition is that it relegates motivation to just an internal state, leaving out several external motivational factors. According to Franken (2006), motivation is the arousal, direction, and persistence of behavior. This arousal, no doubt, can be caused by internal or external factors. So, motivation can be defined as a process that helps activate or initiate, and possibly maintain, an action for a given purpose or a set goal. As such, motivation can be intrinsic or extrinsic. In other words, one can be intrinsically motivated by one's internal state based on acquired values, convictions, and beliefs. Or extrinsically by some external or material gain and comfort.

The Reason Priests Leave the Priesthood: Among the reasons some of the priests gave for abandoning or wanting to leave the priestly ministry, as contained in their requests for dispensation, are emotional instability, crises of faith, conflicts with superiors or difficulties with the magisterium, depression, and severe limitations of character (Salvini, 2015). Moreover, in a sociological study, Hoge (2005) found that priests in the ministry today face challenges with the way authority is exercised, the volume of work they must do, and the unrealistic demands and expectations from lay people. There is no doubt that humans are growth-oriented and proactive. However, they are also vulnerable to being controlled or coerced by interpersonal or intrapsychic forces (Deci & Ryan, 2000), which in turn affect their commitment or work performance.

Several studies have demonstrated the significant influence of work motivation on employee performance (Sutrisno, 2014; Scheers & Botha, 2014) and have also indicated the correlation between work motivation and job satisfaction (Hauser, 2014; Pennington, 1995; Weiss, 2006). Most studies concerning priests' work satisfaction are based on preconceived notions of what constitutes ministerial satisfaction (Cornelio, 2012). For example, McDevitt (2010) opined that business theories of Organizational Citizen Behavior and Survivor Syndrome provide organizational explanations for factors contributing to the lack of motivation among priests. This is only a possibility since there is no standardized measure, statistics, or test to support the claims. Moreover, the studies were conducted primarily in the Western world and may not necessarily resonate with priests working in other parts of the world, in different cultural contexts (Cornelio, 2012). Hence, there is a need for a standard assessment that transcends Western culture, as culture can significantly influence a person's behavior, worldview, and life experiences (Arnett, 2012). Moreover, in third-world countries, there are other socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, poor governance, insecurity, a lack of social amenities, and a poor healthcare system, that the people must contend with, which are not as prevalent in the Western World.

In another study, Galea (2011) examined the psycho-spiritual well-being and vocational challenges of priests in the Gozo Diocese, concluding that despite a balanced ministry life and healthy spirituality, pastoral and vocational satisfaction remain contentious issues. Nevertheless, some of the questions in the questionnaire were tapping into too many variables. For example, one of the questions reads – “Are you humanly, sexually, pastorally, spiritually frustrated?” This is more of a multi-level question, which, according to Wilson and Maclean (2011), is best avoided in a questionnaire. The question taps into four potentially very different attitudes (human, sexual,

pastoral, and spiritual), which would no doubt have affected the research outcome. Moreover, Galea (2011) developed a new instrument for the study, rather than using an existing instrument whose reliability and validity had already been established (Wilson & Maclean, 2011). Such studies as this would require an instrument that has already been tested and certified as valid and reliable for measurement purposes.

In a qualitative study of priests working in rural areas of the Philippines, economic limitations, problems with their bishop and leader, and relational isolation stemming from social and geographical distance were identified as possible challenges that the priests face (Cornelio, 2012). Nevertheless, despite all these challenges, it was discovered that the priests in this part of the world are satisfied with their work on the ground that they are still able to fulfill their calling (vocation) as priests and have been able to positively impact the lives of their folks (Cornelio, 2012). Thus, Cornelio (2012) concluded that "satisfaction in the priesthood is not an individual state of mind that depends on the environment and circumstance, but rather a religious emotion that enables priests to remain faithful to their vocation as Catholic Priests" (p. 1103). This could be what Rossetti and Rhoades (2013) were insinuating when they said, "One can be satisfied with one's job or vocation, that is, be happy as a priest, and have a sense of inner peace and yet still be burned out" (p. 340). In other words, a priest can be very productive or be at his best even without external motivations.

In summary, most of the studies were "via negativa," focusing on factors that detract from priests' motivation. That is, reasons for low morale. Moreover, most of these studies were conducted in Europe and the Americas, with priests residing in these regions as participants. Except for one that was done in Asia (the Philippines). Such studies have not been done in Africa. Accordingly, this study emphasised the "via positiva," examining the positive factors that influence the motivation of priests, while seeking to address the cultural divide by concentrating on priests located in northern Nigeria, West Africa.

IV. Methodology

This study used a quantitative survey research design with a cross-sectional correlational approach. The survey questionnaire was administered to 5 priests working in Kaduna Ecclesiastical Province via the internet, using email. They, in turn, made hard copies and distributed them to other priests across the rural and urban parishes of the involved dioceses. In total, 103 questionnaires were distributed through snowball sampling, and 77 (N = 77) were collected and returned by mail. In the questionnaire, the participants' consent was confirmed using the attached Consent Form. They were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Caution has been exercised here to fulfill this promise.

Sample size: 77 priest participants.

Sample Size Calculation: Given a 95% confidence level, an error of 10%, and an expected frequency of 50% for a population of 378 (Cheney, 2015), a sample size of 77 participants is suitable. 93.5% of the participants are diocesan priests, while 6.5% are religious priests.

Procedures: Following written informed consent, participants completed a survey questionnaire that consisted of three parts: A 17 Likert Scale adapted from Employee Satisfaction Survey Templates (Survey Monkey, 2015), and Best Questionnaire for Employee Motivation (Projects4MBA, 2015), and 18 Likert Scale of Work Extrinsic and Intrinsic Motivation Scale (WEIMS) (Tremblay et al., 2009). All responses were completed on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The last part of the questionnaire consisted of five demographic items: biological age, year of ordination, diocese or religious order of the priest, number of years of working in Africa if a foreign religious priest, and level of education, measured on a nominal scale.

Statistical analysis: A descriptive analysis of the participants' demography was conducted with SPSS, followed by a correlational analysis with Spearman's coefficient of the motivation variables: Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Integrated Regulation (INTEG), Identified Regulation (IDEN), Introjected Regulation (INTRO), and External Regulation (ER), alongside Work Satisfaction. Furthermore, a correlational analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between age and Work Satisfaction, specifically to determine whether older or younger priests were more motivated and satisfied in the priestly ministry. Lastly, a multiple regression analysis was also conducted with Priests' Work Satisfaction as the dependent variable, then Vacation, Further Studies, Promotion/Viable Parish, Good Relationship with the Bishop, Good Relationship with other Priests, and Good Relationship with the Lay Faithful as the independent or predictor variables.

V. Results

According to the descriptive analysis, the mean and standard deviation of the participants' ages are M = 2.88 and SD = 0.986. The age spread was as follows: age 18-25 = 1 participant (1.3%), age 26-33 = 26 participants

(33.8%), age 34-41 = 40 participants (51.9%), age 42-50 = 4 participants (5.2%), age 50-57 = 4 participants (5.2%), 58-65 = 1 participant (1.3%), and age 66-75 = 1 participant (1.3%). Regarding the participants' level of education, 54 held a bachelor's degree, 21 had a master's degree, 1 held a PhD, and 5 did not indicate their level of education. Twenty of the participants have been in the priestly ministry for about 2 years, 19 have been working as priests for between three and five years, 29 for between six and fifteen years, and 4 for between sixteen and twenty-five years, while 3 have been working as priests for between twenty-six and thirty-five years. This showed that all the participants were qualified as stipulated by the research ethics and guidelines. Moreover, 72% of the participants have been priests for 3 years or more, which is a considerable number of years to have acclimated to and gained knowledge of the benefits, demands, challenges, and expectations of the priestly ministry. Most of them were in their late 30s and early 40s, with only two approaching retirement age but still in active service. Except for the five participants who did not indicate their level of education, the lowest educational qualification indicated by participants was a bachelor's degree. A clear sign that the participants were educated people, which translates into an informed sample for the study.

In the analysis to see if there is any relationship between External Regulation (ER) variables and the priests' work satisfaction. There were three ER variables here: (1) doing work for the income it provides, (2) carrying out priestly work to earn money, and lastly (3) doing priestly work because it provides security. The analysis revealed a non-significant negative correlation between priests' work satisfaction and work for the sake of earning money ($r = -0.129$, $n = 76$, $p = 0.265$), as well as work driven by income ($r = -0.206$, $n = 71$, $p = 0.084$). This inverse correlation suggests that higher levels of work satisfaction among priests are associated with a lower emphasis on working primarily for financial reasons, and vice versa. The temptation here is to think that one causes or influences the change in the other, but correlation does not imply causation. As such, there may be an unknown variable that affects both in the same way. With priestly work for the security it provides, there is a correlation that is not significant ($r_s = 0.154$, $n = 76$, $p = 0.184$), but working to earn money has a significant correlation with working for the income it provides ($r_s = 0.598$, $n = 72$, $p = 0.000$), and also with work for provision of security ($r_s = 0.0337$, $n = 77$, $p = 0.003$). Therefore, priests' work satisfaction is not necessarily or significantly associated with earning money or making income, nor with the provision of security, as a motivation for work.

More so, in another correlational analysis to test the Integrated Regulation (INTEG) variables: work or priestly ministry as part of the way I have chosen to live my life, as something that has become a part of my life, and as something that has become a fundamental part of who I am. Spearman's coefficient revealed a significant relationship between work as part of the way I have chosen to live, and work because it has become fundamental part of who I am ($r_s = 0.379$, $n = 73$, $p = 0.001$), and also with work because it is part of my life ($r_s = 0.563$, $n = 76$, $p = 0.000$). Being motivated to work has become a fundamental aspect of my life, and this relationship is significant in terms of my approach to living ($r_s = 0.295$, $n = 72$, $p = 0.000$).

Table 1
Means, Standard Deviations, Skewness, and Correlations for different items

Variable	M	SD	Skew	Rs
To earn money (ER)	1.96	.751	1.212	-0.129
For income (ER)	2.10	.981	1.274	-0.206
Provision of security (ER)	3.08	.957	-.344	0.154
Part of the way I have chosen to live my life (INTEG)	4.14	.622	-1.112	0.094
Has become a fundamental part of my life (INTEG)	4.15	.877	-.938	0.122

Note. All correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), except for the INTEG and INTRO, which have some variables that are also significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

Lastly, a multiple regression analysis was used to test the predictability of the predicting variables (Relationship with the Bishop, Relationship with other Priests, Relationship with the Lay Faithful, Vacation, Further Studies, and Promotion/Viable Parish). The analysis revealed that all the variables are reliable predictors. However, some are stronger predictors than others. They all correlate with priests' work satisfaction, but Promotion/Viable Parish and Further Studies were not significantly correlated. The relationship with the bishop, for example, has a stronger correlation compared to promotion or being sent to a viable parish (See Table 2). However, they are all statistically significant predictors of the dependent variable ($R = 0.516$, $R^2 = 0.267$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.203$). In the ANOVA, all predictor variables were included – promotion/viable parish, vacation, relationship with other priests, further studies, relationship with the bishop, and relationship with the lay faithful ($F = 4.183$, $df = 6 \text{ \& } 69$, $p = 0.001$). On the Beta weight, the relationship with the bishop appears to be a more substantial and more comfortable contributor to priests' work satisfaction ($b = 0.502$, $p = 0.000$). The histogram of the residual was well distributed, and the P-P plot was all hugging the line of the least squares. This means that the observed sample came from a normal distribution, which validated the regression analysis model. In other words, the assumptions were reasonable, and the choice of model was appropriate.

Table 2
The correlation of the multiple regression analysis

Variable	R	p-value
Work satisfaction	1.000	
Relationship with the Bishop	.510	.000
Relationship with the lay faithful	.225	.025
Relationship with other priests	.211	.034
Further Studies	.120	.150
Vacation	.199	.043
Promotion/viable parish	-.067	.284

Note. All correlations are significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

VI. Discussion

As already established, priests are humans prone to emotional and psychological numbing (McDevitt, 2010) and should be supported and motivated in their work. From the above results, priests are motivated in their work not primarily by ecclesiastical hierarchy and structures, but rather by their internalized values and beliefs. However, it is also apparent that good relationships with the bishop, the lay faithful, and other priests are significant positive predictors that would go a long way in motivating the priests. Heathfield (2015) discusses employees' motivation, describing the enthusiasm and drive with which work is accomplished, and notes, "Every employee is motivated about something in his or her life" (p. 1). Examining the trend of the correlational analyses, it is evident that priests are motivated to work because of the various types of motivation outlined in the Self-Determination Theory (SDT). According to the findings, the assertion that priests are satisfied with the work they do, regardless of the volume and demands of their work (Cornelio, 2012; Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013), is supported and evident in the priests' work Satisfaction. In the questionnaire, participants had the opportunity to provide comments, and out of the 10 participants who commented, most of their comments aligned with the findings. One of the participants said, "I am a priest because I am called, and I am fulfilled no matter the challenges" (Nigerian Religious priest for 5 years). So, most priests are satisfied with their vocation. They are satisfied doing their work as priests. However, as previously observed, there is a need to determine whether the high rate of job satisfaction reported by priests is due to intrinsic or extrinsic motivation or other factors. Based on the above results, priests' work satisfaction is not significantly related to working for financial gain or income. Another participant's comment depicts this: "Catholic priesthood is a call to service. Priests do not need to rely so much on what should be given to them, be it remuneration, but rather on how much they can make themselves available to serve the people of God. When emphasis is placed on what we can benefit from being priests materially, it negatively affects the level of our performance and our availability for service" (Nigerian Diocesan priest of 15 years). Practically speaking, this can be it in several senses. Considering the number of years the priests spend in priestly formation and study for the priesthood, coupled with their educational qualifications, it is remarkable what some of them receive as salary or allowance. If it is just for the money, some of them will not accept such low pay or be confined to a poor work location, as is often the case. So, "Priesthood is not seen as a means of attaining livelihood. It is a vocation to serve God and humanity and not solely for personal interest" (Nigerian Diocesan priest of 2 years). It means that other non-monetary factors or values, beyond money and earnings, motivate most priests in their work. These motivational factors for them transcend any material considerations. This is well captured in another comment in which a priest participant said, "It is nice being a servant of the servants of God, bearing in mind my reward is in God" (Nigerian Diocesan priest of 2 years). This still boils down to the idea of personal values and beliefs as motivating factors. Therefore, the priesthood is a vocation – a call to service (Zickar et al., 2008) - and for most priests, it is not the money but the fulfillment that comes with serving.

More so, considering the other types of motivation; working due to a perceived long term goal that one has come to terms with, doing a job because one finds the job interesting and derives spontaneous satisfaction from it, carrying out a task or function as a duty – simply because one has taken such duty upon oneself, and working or getting involve in an action due to one's internalized value and belief, are all related in some way to each other. Additionally, some of these factors also correlate with work satisfaction. For example, a priest can be motivated because he believes that at the end of his work on earth, he will be rewarded eternally in heaven. This would be like a long-term goal. The same goal can be internalized by the priest and form part of his values and beliefs. As such, over time, he will become accustomed to his kind of work and develop a greater awareness of the long-term goal that brings him spontaneous joy and satisfaction whenever he undertakes any action that reassures him of being on track towards his ultimate objective. Thus, one can say that there is some connectivity between the different types of motivation; however, the integrated regulation (INTEG) appears to be the most motivating factor for these priests.

VII. Conclusion

There is no doubt that priests are satisfied with their work, and it appears that the challenges of their work and the working environment are not significant factors (Cornelio, 2012; Rossetti & Rhoades, 2013). This could be a result of the fact that they have integrated their work or vocation into their identity. They have made their vocation part of who they are. So, living for them is being priests. Being a priest and functioning in that role comes naturally to them. As such, they relate to their environment and the people around them with that disposition. More so, they also perceive themselves that way and will always introduce themselves with the prefix “Fr” (Father), a sign of being conscious of the vocation or call that they have said yes to. The fact that internalised values and beliefs (INTEG) were their highest motivating factors showed a high sense of responsibility. The priesthood is then an institution in which one takes responsibility for one’s choices and actions, and making money or income is not their primary focus. Since most priest participants were motivated by internalized values and beliefs, as well as the inherent satisfaction of priestly work itself, it is sufficient to say that they were self-motivated. Nevertheless, there are other factors that can amplify this “self-motivation” and help the priests function more effectively. For example, maintaining good and cordial relationships with both the bishop and other priests, as well as with laypeople, is necessary for psychological and emotional well-being. All three relationships appeared to be important to the priests, but there was a greater emphasis on the relationship with the bishop. A participant stated, “Priests are more effective with full support from the bishop” (Nigerian Diocesan priest, 2 years). This simply boils down to a cordial relationship with the Church’s authority. When a Bishop relates well with his priests and, through dialogue, makes them buy into his policies, visions, and plans for the diocese, they will become proactive and put up high and better performance. Because at that level, they will see the vision as their own and not as the bishop’s. However, when such plans and visions are imposed on them, the tendency is for them to become reactive, which in turn impacts their output. Zickar et al. (2008) indicate that having colleagues, supervisors, and friends who are receptive to work-related concerns, offer constructive advice on workplace issues, and provide friendship and support can mitigate certain adverse effects associated with role stressors. The African Church should take note of this and work seriously on establishing structures that promote relational values.

In addition to being motivated by their values and beliefs, priests may also be motivated by their Bishop through a professional relationship that includes communication, opportunities for rest, and further education. Cornelio (2012) made a similar assertion, stating that a situation in which requests for administrative changes, sabbatical leave, or advanced education are denied can be frustrating. As such, Catholic dioceses should intentionally or consciously create policies that are geared towards motivating their priests. Promotion, vacation, and further studies should be viewed and treated as necessities for priests, rather than as luxuries. Dioceses should have well-defined policies that encourage vacation and further studies. Taking into consideration the fact that some may not have the money. And they should also ensure that none of their priests are lacking the necessary tools for their work. To a very large extent, this will not only increase the priests’ motivation and sustain their interest in the priestly ministry but will also help to prevent the Church’s experience in Europe and America from repeating itself in Africa and Asia.

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