Exploring how Anglican clergy approach rural ministry in England: Employing the

Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator

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Abstract

This study complements recent work employing personality theories among clergy by exploring the insights afforded by the Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (GPI), an instrument designed to assess engagement with professional work across six domains styled as emotionality, extraversion, cognition, agreeableness, attainment, and drive. Data provided by 99 Anglican clergy from one rural diocese in the Church of England identified an introverted approach to leadership that manages change cautiously, preferring to remain with tried and tested methods rather than to experiment with novel approaches. Two-fifths of the clergy would find it hard to express their feelings openly, leading to a potentially unhealthy suppression and internalisation of personal negative emotions.

Keywords: clergy, personality, psychology, change management, Church of England

Introduction

Recent research has drawn on four well-established models of personality to attempt to illuminate the distinctive characteristics of the clergy. The Sixteen Personality Factor model proposed by Cattell, Eber, and Tatsuoka (1970) has been employed, for example, by Musson (1998, 2001) and Francis and Musson (1999). The Three Major Dimensions model proposed by Eysenck and Eysenck (1975) has been employed, for example, Towler and Coxon (1979), Francis (1991), and Louden and Francis (1999). The Big Five Factor model proposed by Costa and McCrae (1985) has been employed, for example, by Rogerson and Piedmont (1998), Galea (2010), and Joseph, Luyten, Corvelyn, and de Witte (2011). The model of Psychological Type proposed by Myers and McCaulley (1985) has been employed, for example, by Cabral (1984), Harbaugh (1984) and Holsworth (1984). In addition to this literature employing well-established models of personality, there may be advantages in introducing to the field of clergy studies measures that have been designed more specifically to draw on personality theories in order to assess and to develop leadership potential. One such instrument is the Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (GPI) as developed by Glowinkowski (2010).

The Glowinkowski Predispoition Indicator (GPI) has been designed to enable individuals to reflect on the distinctive ways in which they approach engagement with their professional work. In essence this model builds on and extends the established Big Five Factor model of personality as proposed by Costa and McCrae (1985) and it does so by proposing the psychometric assessment of six domains. These domains are styled as emotionality, extraversion, cognition, agreeableness, attainment, and drive. Within each domain there are between three and five subdomains, each of which can be accessed, assessed and reported on separately.

Emotionality is the domain concerned with the extent to which individuals tend to be at ease with themselves and the world around them, and the degree of volatility which they may experience in this area. This domain of the GPI can be viewed as 'state' as well as 'trait', meaning that over time an individual's profile may be subject to change or fluctuations as a consequence of things which may be happening in his or her personal life or work environments. High scorers are styled *at ease*, and characterised as individuals who are self-contained, calm, disciplined and able to handle stressful situations. Low scorers are styled as *ill-at-ease*, and characterised as individuals who are expressive, less confident, more pessimistic and likely to find dealing with stressful situations more difficult. The five subdomains of emotionality are defined as: anxiety, ranging from relaxed to tense; hostility, ranging from placid to discontented; optimism, ranging from optimistic to pessimistic; self-esteem, ranging from confident to self-conscious; and impulsive, ranging from disciplined to impulsive. The GPI domain of Emotionality is linked with Neuroticism in the Big Five Factor model.

Extraversion is the domain concerned with the primary direction in which an individual's attention and energies are generated and focused. For high scorers styled as *extraverts* the focus is beyond themselves into the external world. For low scorers styled as *introverts* the focus is within themselves into their inner world. The four subdomains of extraversion are defined as: sociable, ranging from reserved to outgoing; assertive, ranging from accepting to asserting; hedonism, ranging from serious-minded to fun-loving; and social poise, ranging from socially uncertain to socially assured. The GPI domain of Extraversion is linked with Extraversion in the Big Five Factor model.

Cognition is the domain concerned with the way in which individuals think about things, how they choose to make decisions and solve problems which they may encounter. High scorers are styled as *radical*, and characterised by a willingness to think in broad terms

and to explore situations from different perspectives. Low scorers are styled as *incremental*, and characterised by a concern for structured and rational analysis of the situations under review. The three subdomains of cognition are defined as: change oriented, ranging from evolutionary to revolutionary; information processing, ranging from practical to conceptual; and decision-making, ranging from rational to intuitive. The GPI domain of Cognition is linked with Openness in the Big Five Factor model.

   Agreeableness is the domain concerned with how individuals think about people and groups, and the type of interactions which they choose to have with them. High scorers are styled as *collectivist*, and characterised by an orientation where individuals think in terms of shared aims and goals. Low scorers are styled as *individualist*, and characterised by a tendency to think about people and situations in terms of their own aims and interests. The four subdomains of agreeableness are defined as: affiliation, ranging from unaffiliative to affiliative; trust, ranging from questioning to trusting; conformity, ranging from dissenting to conforming; and modesty, ranging from assuming to modest. The GPI domain of Agreeableness is linked with Agreeableness in the Big Five Factor model.

   Attainment is the domain concerned with the orientation which individuals adopt when they are thinking about what they prefer to do when they are required to implement tasks and to generate outcomes. High scorers are styled as flexible, and characterised by a more flexible orientation to the demands placed on them, and they tend to be pragmatic. Low scorers are styled as *focused*, and characterised by a need to achieve specific results from a limited number of activities, and they tend to be perfectionist. The three subdomains of *attainment* are defined as: implementation style, ranging from spontaneous to outcome; conscientiousness, ranging from cursory to conscientious; and achievement, ranging from pragmatic to perfectionist. The GPI domain of Attainment is linked with Conscientiousness in the Big Five Factor model.

Drive is the domain concerned with the underlying motivations (or self-drive) of individuals in a work-related setting. It addresses the nature of their motivations when they seek to influence others, when they are achieving their personal goals, and when they are delivering and completing activities or tasks. All of these aspects can be linked with the concepts of the need for socialised and personalised power (as defined by McCelland, 1987) and can have a major impact on relationships within workgroups, on the way in which leaders conduct themselves, and on how they are perceived by those whom they are leading. These behaviours can have an influence on the climate and culture created in the workplace. High scorers tend to be characterised and motivated by a high need for socialised power in relationships with and in influencing others. Low scorers are characterised by a lack of this requirement to need socialised power when influencing others. High scorers tend also to be characterised by a need for personalised power, while low scorers will not be characterised by this requirement. The three subdomains of drive are defined as: influence, ranging from consensual to persuasive; ambition, ranging from contented to ambitious; and energy, ranging from paced to energetic. The GPI domain of Drive is not linked with the Big Five Factor model.

At one level the GPI can be used in ways similar to other recognised measures, like the Big Five Factor model, offering individuals information about their location on each of the six dimensions (emotionality, extraversion, cognition, agreeableness, attainment, and drive). At another level, however, Glowinkowski (2010) has proposed ways in which additional insights can be generated into an individual's profile by exploring the intersection of specific pairs of these six dimensions (or of specific subdomains within these dimensions) to illuminate five applied fields in which the individual's profile influences his or her professional practice. These five applied fields are defined as: Problem solving and

implementation style; Communication and interpersonal style; Feelings and self-control; Learning styles and environment; Creativity and entrepreneurship.

The first of these applied fields concerned with *problem solving and implementation style* creates four quadrants by the intersection of the two dimensions of cognition (which distinguishes between incremental and radical approaches) and attainment (which distinguishes between flexible and focused approaches). In this case the four quadrants are given the following descriptions:

- Visionary (radical and flexible)

- Strategist (radical and focused)

- Planner (incremental and focused)

- Practitioner (incremental and flexible)

The second of these applied fields concerned with *communication and interpersonal style* creates four quadrants by the intersection of the two dimensions of extraversion (which distinguishes between extraversion and introversion approaches) and agreeableness (which distinguishes between individualist and collectivist approaches). In this case the four quadrants are given the following descriptions:

- Independent (introversion and individualist)

- Supporter (introversion and collectivist)

- Encourager (extraversion and collectivist)

- Challenger (extraversion and individualist)

The third of these applied fields concerned with *feelings and self-control* creates four quadrants by the intersection of the four subdomains of emotionality defined as anxiety, hostility, optimism and self-esteem considered together (which distinguishes between at-ease and ill-at-ease) and the fifth subdomain of emotionality defined as impulsive (which

distinguishes between disciplined and impulsive) . In this case the four quadrants are given the following descriptions:

- Expressive (ill-at-ease and impulsive)

- Contained (ill-at-ease and disciplined)

- Composed (at-ease and disciplined)

- Energised (at-ease and impulsive)

The fourth of these applied fields concerned with *learning styles and environment* creates four quadrants by the intersection of the subdomain of cognition defined as information processing (which distinguish between practical and conceptual approaches) and extraversion (which distinguishes between reserved and outgoing approaches). In this case the four quadrants are given the following descriptions:

- Reading-library (conceptual and reserved)

- Discussing-seminar (conceptual and outgoing)

- Doing-workshop (practical and outgoing)

- Testing-laboratory (practical and reserved)

The fifth of these applied fields concerned with *creativity and entrepreneurship* creates four quadrants by the intersection of developing or transforming ideas (these terms are a composite of a number of dimensions and sub-dimensions of the GPI, cognition (evolutionary and revolutionary), agreeableness (conforming and dissenting) and attainment (conscientious and cursory) and externalise or internalise with regard to selling of ideas (these terms are a composite of a number of dimensions and sub-dimensions of the GPI, extraversion (asserting and accepting), emotionality (optimistic and pessimistic with disciplined and impulsive) and drive (paced and energetic)). In this case the four quadrants are given the following descriptions:

- Rigorous pursuit of ground breaking ideas (transforming and externalise)

- A measured approach to communicating change (transforming and internalise)

- Considered trial of improvement to the existing (developing and internalise)

- Enthusiastic promotion of adaptation to a theme (developing and externalise)

Glowinkowski's (2010) approach using these five applied fields has been set to work across a number of professional fields within the commercial and business sector, the educational sector, and the not-for-profit sector. The aim of the present study is to test the application of this approach among Anglican clergy serving in one rural diocese in the Church of England in order to explore the extent to which it can illuminate the distinctive aptitudes, competencies and skills of those engaged within this particular sphere of professional practice.

Method

Procedure

The *Ministry Today* survey was delivered by post to 203 Anglican clergy serving in a rural diocese in the Church of England. Participation was voluntary and participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. The survey comprised eight sections, including several standard and recognised instruments. Of the 203 surveys distributed, after some encouragement, 104 were returned of which 99 were thoroughly completed and useful for the GPI analysis reported in this paper.

Measures

The Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (Glowinkowski, 2010) comprises 180 items designed to assess six dimensions (emotionality, extraversion, cognition, agreeableness, attainment, and drive). Each item is rated on a five-point scale: agree strongly, agree, not certain, disagree, and disagree strongly.

Participants

Of the 99 Anglican clergy whose data were analysed in this study, 24 were clergywomen and 75 were clergymen. The spread of ages for these 99 Anglican clergy (as of 31 December 2012) was 30-39 (3), 40-49 (20), 50-59 (51) and 60-69 (25). The question on marital status indicated that 12 were single, 80 were married, 2 were widowed, 2 were divorced and 3 were divorced and remarried.

Results

Problem solving and implementation style

The quadrants in this field distinguished between the four approaches styled: visionary (radical and flexible), strategist (radical and focused), planner (incremental and focused) and practitioner (incremental and flexible). Among these clergy the two most frequently endorsed approaches were planner (33) and practitioner (33), followed by visionary (27), and strategist (6).

Looking at these results in more detail, there were 33 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Planners.* This group will tend to be most comfortable when they feel that they are making things happen and especially enjoy practical outcomes through the delivery of some clearly defined goals. They will tend to be pragmatic and realistic, but may appear to others as inflexible in their approach to change, as they will prefer to remain with the tried and tested methods rather than experiment with possible novel approaches.

There were 33 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Practitioner.* This group will tend to appear busy seeking to tackle a number of practical tasks simultaneously. Their preference is to look at situations in terms of the here and now, applying logical interpretations of data which characterises the current situation in order to conduct change which will tend to represent incremental and gradual approach to improvements rather than applying some bigger intuitive step changes.

There were 27 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Visionary.* This group are predisposed to look at the situations they encounter in terms of a big picture overview and tend to examine all of the possible opportunities for change. They will tend to generate a number of quite radical ideas, but may not work them through into practical solutions which can be readily implemented.

There were 6 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Strategists.* This group are seen at their best when they are developing solutions to large scale and complex problems and are happy to oversee the implementation stages in broad terms. They are particularly effective when managing change as they combine a structured planning approach to the tasks along with the ability to create major step changes from the current situation.

Communication and interpersonal style

The quadrants in this field distinguished between the four approaches styled: independent (introversion and individualist), supporter (introversion and collectivist), encourager (extraversion and collectivist) and challenger (extraversion and individualist). Among these clergy the largest group was supporter (72), followed by independent (12), encouragers (8), and challengers (7).

Looking at these results in more detail, there were 72 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Supporter.* This group will tend be unassuming, considerate and trusting of others, with a focus on seeking to help the group of which they are a part to achieve its goals. Although they may well appear to be reserved on first meeting, they can be good listeners and will offer advice without necessarily wishing to impose their views on the receiver.

There were 12 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Independent.* These individuals will be viewed by others as rational and reserved and may perhaps appear to be detached from the rest of the group. They will tend to want to keep their ideas to themselves, only expressing them when they believe that the situation really requires them to. They will generally be

comfortable in holding views that differ from the group as a whole, but must be careful not to cause upset if they express those views without having fully considered the impact of those ideas on other people's emotions.

There were 8 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Encouragers.* This group will tend to be seen by others as sociable, outgoing and group orientated, and they will endeavour to create a good atmosphere within a team. However they have a natural tendency to be uncomfortable when required to handle conflict and as a consequence may be inclined to hold back from addressing issues which are seen as potentially difficult and which really do need to be addressed and resolved.

There were 7 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Challengers.* This group will tend to be open, assertive and readily prepared to challenge the views which may be expressed by others within the group. They tend to enjoy social settings, but they may be more focussed on achieving their own agenda rather than those of the wider group to which they belong.

Feelings and Self-Control

The quadrants in this field distinguished between the four approaches styled: expressive (ill-at-ease and impulsive), contained (ill-at-ease and disciplined), composed (at-ease and disciplined) and energised (at-ease and impulsive). Among these clergy the largest group were contained (37), followed by composed (34), expressive (17) and energised (11).

Looking at these results in more detail, there were 37 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Contained.* This group may tend to find it harder than others to express their feelings and emotions openly. There could be times when it may be constructive to suppress their natural emotions because by demonstrating those emotions they may potentially serve to 'make matters worse'. They may be keeping a lid on things because of their predisposition to be disciplined, although acting continually in this manner can generate stress and such stress may have a negative impact on work performance.

There were 34 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Composed.* This group will normally feel positive about themselves and act to maintain a level of self-discipline. There are benefits in interacting with persons who appear to be well adjusted and hard working, although a downside could be that others may question their level of engagement; because of their predisposition to be At-Ease they can appear to show little or no anxiety, even during those periods of acute stress which are clearly having a negative impact on others.

There were 17 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Expressive.* This group may react suddenly and in a manner which could have an adverse impact on others. Potentially members of this group may be hard to manage, but their impulsive predisposition may enable them to cut through bureaucracy and red tape which they perceive to be impeding those changes which they believe are necessary.

There were 11 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Energised.* These individuals will be considered by others as open. However, when conducting negotiations and performance management reviews, this openness can create both upsides and downsides, as others may tend to trust an open individual, but there are situations where confidentiality is an essential requirement. The upbeat positive manner displayed by such individuals can help to lift the mood in tough situations, but it is equally true that maintaining such positive behaviour can be viewed by some individuals as annoying.

Learning Styles

The quadrants in this field distinguished between the four approaches styled: reading-library (conceptual and reserved), discussing-seminar (conceptual and outgoing), doing-workshop (practical and outgoing), and testing-laboratory (practical and reserved). Among these clergy the largest group were testing (50), followed by reading (25), doing (14) and discussing (10).

Looking at these results in more detail, there were 50 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Testing.* This group because of the combination of practical and reflective will be predisposed to reflecting on issues and then testing out on their own what works effectively, their preferred learning environment could be described as a 'laboratory'.

There were 25 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Reading.* Individuals in this group will prefer to learn on their own, primarily working with written material, and will tend to do a lot of reading and personal study in order to learn and understand a topic fully.

There were 14 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Doing.* This group are predisposed towards learning practical information in an active environment and will learn best when they are able to actually carry out the activity which they want to learn. Their preferred learning environment is the external world and 'action learning processes' may be favoured by this group.

There were 10 of the 99 clergy who presented as *Discussing.* The combination of theoretical and active will predispose this group to enjoy learning about subjects from a theoretical perspective but in a way which enables them to discuss the material with others.

Creativity and Entrepreneurship

The quadrants in this field distinguish between the four approaches styled: rigorous pursuit of ground breaking ideas (transforming and externalise), a measured approach to communicating change (transforming and internalise), considered trial of improvement to the existing (developing and internalise), and enthusiastic promotion of adaptations to a theme (developing and externalise). Among these clergy the largest group was classified as considered trial of improvement to the existing (62), followed by rigorous pursuit of ground breaking ideas (17), a measured approach to communicating change (12), and enthusiastic promotion of adaptation to a theme (8).

Looking at these results in more detail, 62 of the 99 clergy presented as *considered trial of improvement to the existing.* This group will want to progress with any changes slowly over an extended period of experimentation and refinement. Applying a measured approach to change and before sharing their ideas with others they will want to have proved these ideas thoroughly for themselves.

There were 17 of the 99 clergy who presented as *rigorous pursuit of ground breaking ideas.* With this group thinking is fast and fluid, with ideas arriving in an almost fully formed, and finalised state. Ideas will be energetically promoted to others, possibly without considering how they will be received and this 'pushiness' may result in ideas being rejected not because of the idea itself but because of the way it has been promoted.

There were 12 of the 99 clergy who presented as *a measured approach to communicating change.* This group will favour large scale changes over more incremental step changes. With such innovation comes risk and a more considered, cautious approach is taken when promoting the idea. As a consequence, although the idea may be fully formed, it is likely to be released bit by bit. This slower process of communication is taken not so much to prove and test the idea but to protect it and avoid it being taken by others.

There were 8 of the 99 clergy who presented as *enthusiastic promotion of adaptation to a theme.* This group is likely to take existing ideas and progress them steadily rather than look for ideas which 'break the mould'. Ideas will be presented enthusiastically and with energy.

Discussion

This research explored how 99 Anglican clergy serving in a rural diocese in the Church of England approached rural ministry, by adopting the theory and assessment procedure proposed by the Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (GPI). The use of the GPI generated new insights into the professional characteristics of clergy within this diocese, and

it also raised a number of questions relevant to the continuing professional development of such clergy. Moreover, the results produced for this cohort of clergy are untypical of the results generated by the GPI among leaders in business settings, including the NHS, and Education Sectors. The numbers of clergy presenting in certain of the quadrants are unusually high and raise questions about the leadership styles and behaviours which are likely to be displayed.

A major outcome which emerges from the quadrants concerning *problem solving and implementation style* is that over two thirds of this group of clergy will tend to want to approach change in a way which allows them to take small steps, because of their predisposition to be incremental, and in addition half of this group may tend to be rather inflexible in their approach to change because of their predisposition to be focused rather than flexible.

There is a substantial minority (27 out of 99) who will seek to generate some creative and radical solutions to the problems they are encountering, although they may not be able to develop these ideas through to practical solutions and projects which can be readily implemented, and would ideally need people around them to help to translate their ideas into practical and workable solutions. There is only a very small group of individuals (6 out of 99) who are predisposed to provide the drive and energy to think 'outside the box' and are predisposed to manage change effectively.

A question which this analysis prompts, is, if the diocese is seeking to manage change and wanting to adopt new approaches in terms of its mission and 'Fresh Expressions' projects, will the current body of clergy provide the energy, direction and support which will enable the clergy and the lay members to work together in effective partnerships to create the climate and culture which will be supportive of and help to generate change of this nature leading to effective growth?

The largest group in the quadrants concerning *communication and interpersonal style* were Supporters (72 out of 99). It could be argued that this predisposition may be beneficial, if their unassuming, considerate and trusting behaviour is translated into a leadership style where they are able fully to engage their congregational members in a partnership which works to achieve the strategies and objectives set for their churches within the diocese as a whole. On the other hand, a more negative view may suggest that this group will be less comfortable addressing important issues and due to their supportive predispositions may not in fact provide the drive and leadership which is required by their congregations. The next highest group are Independents (12 out of 99), who may not have the most constructive impact on their congregations as they may at times cause upset by expressing their views without stopping to consider fully the likely impact those views can have on others. Overall, within the group there is a very high number who presented as Introvert, 84 out of 99, and as a consequence this group may be less orientated towards networking or enthusiastically engaging with others.

The high number of Introverts in this cohort raises a question about the selection and recruitment processes which are being adopted across the diocese. Are a sufficiently broad set of candidates being considered for ordination, and are the processes adopted to select from these candidates sufficiently open, or are there some elements of unintentional bias within the processes? If we accept the view that God has created a diverse range of psychological types, is it then realistic to suggest that God would call a disproportionate number of some types into ministry?

The data provided by the quadrants concerning *feelings and self-control* offers information on aspects of clergy characteristics and behaviours which is complex and which needs to be handled with sensitivity and care. If the group of clergy who presented as Contained (37 out of 99) find it difficult to express their views and emotions openly, they

may be dealing with considerable stress, but be unable to share that with others or indeed to develop strategies for handling such stress. If this situation is not addressed, then this stress may have a negative impact on their work performance and in the longer term result in a breakdown of health, with negative consequences for both these individuals and their families.

The two supplementary quadrants concerning *learning styles* and *creativity and entrepreneurship* provide additional data about the clergy. The learning styles information displays the normal preferences of the clergy when they are engaging in learning processes. An important outcome which can result from discussing learning styles is to encourage learners to consider the benefits of adopting a different learning style outside their natural preference. Studies suggested that adopting a different learning style may result in learning which is potentially both deeper and more extensive. These ideas could be developed by the Continuing Ministerial Development programmes in the diocese, along with the overall question, regarding whether the current programmes are providing a sufficiently wide range of learning opportunities to ensure that individuals gain the maximum benefit from their investment in continuing learning processes.

The creativity and entrepreneurship information tends to confirm and reinforce the results shown by the problem solving and implementation style, as they suggest that a high proportion of the group (62 out of 99) would want to manage change and develop their ideas by a trial and testing approach before wishing to go public with their ideas, and as a consequence changes and innovations will inevitably progress slowly over a period of experimentation and refinement. This may not necessarily suit the needs and requirements of the Diocese.

Conclusion

The Glowinkowski Predisposition Indicator (GPI) has provided fresh insights into the professional characteristics of the clergy and into how they may address their ministry in this rural diocese in the Church of England. It has built on and broadened the understanding provided by previous studies of clergy employing a range of models of personality and thus has provided an additional way in which to explore the characteristics, leadership styles and behaviours exercised by clergy. It offers suggestions regarding the likely impact of those characteristics on their ministry and on their relationships with the congregations and communities whom they are charged with serving.

There are three clear limitations with the present study, namely the highly specific nature of the sample, the response rate, and the size of the sample. The participants were all recruited within just one rural diocese within the Church of England, just half of those invited to participate did so, and the total number of participants was limited to 24 clergywomen and 75 clergymen. The total number of participants is quite small for the kind of quadrant analysis encouraged by the GPI and was insufficient to facilitate meaningful analysis for the two sexes separately. The concentration on just one diocese, one denomination and one country inevitably raises questions about the generalisation of the findings. The results, however, are sufficiently intriguing to advocate the replication of this study within other dioceses of the Church of England, within other dominations in England and within other Provinces of the Anglican Communion. Comparative data of this nature could develop a more secure basis on which to test the potential contribution offered by the GPI for understanding the current strengths and weaknesses of Christian ministry and for developing ministry strategies into the future.

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