

## Socioeconomic Trajectories and Compassionate Leadership: How Social Mobility Shapes Psychological Pathways in Nigerian Organisations

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### Abstract

Although compassionate leadership is increasingly recognised as being a critical factor for organisational well-being, the psychological mechanisms by which leaders' socioeconomic trajectories shape this capacity remain poorly understood. Drawing on Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1985; Piketty, 2014, 2022) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), this quantitative study examines social mobility as a potential moderator of the relationships between emotional intelligence (IV), psychological resilience (IV), and compassionate leadership (DV). Survey data from 388 Nigerian organisational leaders across 5 major ethnic groups was analysed using hierarchical multiple regression with simple slopes analysis. Emotional management ability (STEM-B:  $\beta = .29$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and psychological resilience (BRS:  $\beta = .12$ ,  $p = .017$ ) both positively predict compassionate leadership behaviour. Furthermore, social mobility (SMI) significantly moderates the resilience/compassionate leadership relationship (PR X SMI:  $\beta = -.13$ ,  $p = .007$ ), while psychological resilience emerges as a strong predictor of compassionate leadership among static or downwardly mobile leaders ( $\beta = .35$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Resilience is however, non-significant among highly upwardly mobile leaders ( $\beta = -.04$ ,  $p = .704$ ), for whom attributions of personal merit and cross-class identity navigation may alter the primary psychological resources required for empathetic engagement. Emotional management ability exhibits a complementary pattern, i.e., it strengthens monotonically with upward mobility. These findings thus offer empirical insight into how leaders' socioeconomic backgrounds interact with the psychological underpinnings of compassionate leadership in Nigerian organisations, with broader implications for rapidly urbanising African economies.

**Keywords:** compassionate leadership, emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, social mobility, attribution theory, social identity theory, Nigeria