

## Religiosity, Personality Traits and Christian Clergies' Sexual Behaviours

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### Abstract

*The associations between Religiosity, personality traits and sexual behaviours have been widely studied in the general population and among university students; however, less is known about this relationship among Christian spiritual leaders (Pastors). This study explores the predicting influence of religiosity, facets of personality and sexual behaviour of Christian clergy in south western Nigeria. One hundred and sixty-three (163) participants (112 males, 51 female), mean age 34.7± 0.1 were purposively selected and responded to Big-five Inventory (BFI), a Religious Orientation Test (ROT) and Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS). Religiosity significantly predicts sexual behaviour, personality traits jointly predicted sexual behaviour, religiosity and personality traits significantly jointly predicted sexual behaviour, and denomination and sex had no significant influence on sexual behaviours of the Christian clergies. Findings demonstrate that religiosity and personality constructs influence several dimensions of sexuality in unique ways.*

**Keywords:** Religiosity, personality traits, sexual behaviour, Christian clergy.

### Introduction

Over the past decades, religious trends and sexual behaviour have generated a great deal of research interest and policy among general population. Despite the fact that it is morally or ethically sound to assume that religiosity should make a difference in the daily sexual lifestyle of individual's especially Christian leaders, expectations seem to be in sharp contrast to these realities. Allegations of "spiritual abuse" have been made both in practice and in the literature. The development of this term and its implications requires some scrutiny and response as sexual abuse seems not a good model for understanding spiritual abuse (Lebacqz & Driskill, 2000).

Protestant and Pentecostal denominations have been tempted to call sexual abuse a "Catholic church problem" however, in recent times, verdicts, judgments, or settlements exceeding hundreds of millions of US dollars have been levied against Protestant churches for sexual abuse (Dougherty, 2017). Equally, anele (2014) decries that men and women of God have abandoned the spiritual essence of their faith and are now focusing on self-indulgent materialism

and misconducts. According to Akaeze, Adeosun, Odumesi & Daniel (2014) one of such crimes that ranks high in the list of atrocities linked to men of God is sex or sex-related matters and several actions that violates tenets of Christian religion such as murder and rape, which Akinawo (1994 & 2017) describes as an extreme case of psychopathological sexual behaviour and heinous assault of vulnerable congregants.

The London Daily Trust testified of a United Kingdom based fifty-five-year-old Pentecostal pastor jailed for sexual assault and causing a child to engage in sexual activity (Abubakar, 2017). Also, Newsone (2016) reported a story of another clergyman that insists female congregants remove their bras and underwear before coming to church, so that *Christ* can freely enter their bodies with 'his spirit'. While there is a report of a pastor who delivers women by sucking the spirit of rejection from the female congregants' breasts (The Week, 2015). Similarly, a Brazilian evangelical pastor had his church members to suck his penis for '*holy milk*': claiming that "the Lord had consecrated him with divine milk of the "*Holy Spirit*" and he

had to release it in order to “evangelize” (Wonkette, 2015). Furthermore, in South Africa, Ghextra (2016) reported of a pastor who asked his congregants to take-off their clothes in church and self-stimulate until they orgasm on the floor. In Nigeria, Akaeze, et.al (2014) conveyed the story is told in an Abuja (Nigeria) high court of a 16 years old girl who accused a pastor of raping her. This and many more untold similar stories make it imperative for one to wonder if majority of modern-day Christian clergies recognize the institutional nature of the ministerial calling.

### **Religiosity and sexual behaviour**

Relation between religion and sexuality is not clear (Farmer, Trapnell & Meston, 2009). Two prominent theories which explain this relationship are the secularization hypothesis (Berger, 1967; Sommerville, 1998) and the market theory of religion (Stark & Bainbridge 1985). The secularization hypothesis suggests that the modern reliance on reason has occasioned a lack of faith in religion and has diminished the impact of religion on daily life at an individual, social, and institutional level (Berger, 1967; Sommerville, 1998). The secularization hypothesis predicted the death of religious involvement in modern secular life.

The market theory of religion on the other hand assumes that the demand for religion has not diminished with secularization, but rather it has adapted to a highly secular society by generating new religious movements (cults) and leading revivals of traditional religions (sects). The result is a market of competing religious groups that drives a cultural renewal of religion and maintains the influence of religion on daily life. These competing market religious groups are thought to reflect a continuum of religious demand, including religiosity that is ultra-liberal, liberal, moderate, conservative, strict, and ultra-strict (Finke & Stark, 2001).

Most Study on religion and sexual behaviour defined religiosity in terms of religious affiliation (Farmer, et.al. 2009). Measurement of what constitutes religious affiliation is challenging due to variations in ideologies within religious affiliations and diversities of affiliations spanning what Robbins & Dick, (1990) termed the liberal- conservative continuum.

The term sexuality refers to the behaviour engaged in to obtain sexual pleasure as well as all of the feeling and beliefs that are interwoven with sexual behaviour (Lahey, 2010). The African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre ARSRC (2003) defined sexuality as encompassing sex, gender, identities, role, sexual orientation, eroticism, sexual pleasure, intimacy, and reproduction, all of which make “sexuality” a central aspect of our being human throughout life. It also stresses that sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitude, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. The definitions clearly depict sexuality as a way of life of an individual, group of individuals, or society. Sexuality is expressed in variety of ways, but finds particular expression in intimate human relationship. However, while this aspect of human personality finds particular expression in the aspect of physical intimacy, it cannot be separated from its emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social dimensions.

Hence, a religious understanding of sexuality seeks to take account of the fullness of all these dimensions, yet recognizes the issues of spirituality and religion as a buffer on one’s self-perception, worldview, interpretations of experience, and behaviour (Cornish, Wade, Tucker, & Post, 2014). There is an undeniable and intricate interface between religion and the society. Ultimately, religion and society affect each other in ways that sometimes are either subtle or inexplicable. It is obvious that religious values impact and shape the society. Similarly, societal norms and value systems affect the way the society responds to the practice of religion (Akpa, 2013).

For instance, research suggests that differing aspects of religiosity have divergent effects on sexual attitudes, risk perception and sexual behaviour (Hollander, 2003). And it is possible that sexual experiences influence religiosity. Thornton and Camburn (1989) indicated that those individuals who engage in premarital sex become less religiously involved. There is also the possibility that those individuals who engage in short term acts of sexual behaviour or those who commit acts of infidelity also decrease religious involvement.

Laumann, Gagnon, Michael & Michaels (1994) established that individuals who reported

their religious affiliation as “none” had more sexual partners than those who reported a religious affiliation. Cochran and Beeghley (1991) testified that increasingly stronger religiosity effects on attitudes toward premarital sex as denominational commitment increased. Likewise, Mahoney (1980) found out that frequency of certain sexual behaviours and the extensiveness of those sexual experiences decreased as religious intensity increased.

Evidence across fifty-two cultures support that religiosity was positively correlated with self-described sexual restraint among men and women (Rowatt, & Schmitt, 2003). An empirical study demonstrates that strength of religious conviction and participation in religious activities are more important than religious denomination in predicting whether or not an individual engage in illicit sex (Flannery, Ellingson, Votaw Schaefer, 2003).

From these literatures, it is safe to state that religiosity significantly predicts sexual behaviour in general population but there is a gap of such knowledge among cleric participants.

### **Personality & sexual behaviour**

Personality refers to enduring internal as well as external qualities of an individual. It is described as using a combination of traits dimensions. According to Eysenck (1976), psychologists have long been interested in how personality traits relate to problematic sexual attitudes and behaviours. Personality characteristics have received special attention due to their association with sexual risky behaviours, STIs, and unwanted pregnancies (Berg, Rotkirch, Väisänen, & Jokela, 2013), especially among the general population and the University students. The Big Five Model (Costa & McCrae, 1992a) is the theoretical approach used most to explain sexual risk behaviours (Hoyle, Fejfar, & Miller, 2000). This model comprises of five first-order factors: extraversion (energetic vs. reserved), neuroticism (nervous vs. confident), agreeableness (friendly vs. hostile), responsibility (well organized vs. impulsive), and openness to experience (imaginative vs. concrete).

Personality traits such as sexual sensation seeking and impulsivity can affect decision-making and increase sexual risk-taking

(Charnigo, Noar, Garnett, Crosby, Palmgreen, & Zimmerman, 2013; Hoyle et al., 2000).

Investigations on the links between the Big Five and risky sexuality across the globe (Schmitt, 2010) with particular emphasis on personalities, infidelity and sexual promiscuity have been done. Although Cooper, Agocha, & Sheldon (2000) proposed that risk behaviour is driven by neuroticism and extraversion, they however affirmed that the relationship between personality and risky behaviour was extremely complex. From reviewed previous studies, the need to investigate the predicting influence of religiosity and personality types of spiritual leaders on sexual behaviour becomes imperative. Based on the foregoing the aim of this study is to ascertain the degree to which religiosity and personality traits significantly predicts sexual behaviour, and observe influence of religious denomination and gender on sexual behaviour of clergies in Ogun state, south-western Nigeria.

We therefore hypothesized that

1. Degree of religiosity will significantly predict sexual behaviour of Nigerian Christian clergies.
2. Personality traits will jointly significantly predict sexual behaviour of Christian clergies.
3. Degree of religiosity and personality traits will significantly jointly predict sexual behaviour of Christian ministers of God.
4. There will be significant religious denominational difference on the sexual behaviour of the participants.
5. Gender will significantly influence sexual behaviour of the participants.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

A cross-sectional survey design was employed in the study. Samples were drawn from clergies of four Christian denominations in Ogun state south-western Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select a total of 153 participants made up of 65 clergies from Protestants churches, Pentecostal churches 45 and White Garment churches 43 clergies.

### **Measures**

Three research instruments were used in data collection. Big-five Inventory (BFI) by John, Donahue, & Kentle, (1991), Sexual Attitude

Scale (SAS) by Hudson and Murphy, (1990) and Religious Orientation Test (ROT), by Idehen (2001). Big –Five Inventory (BFI) includes 44 questions with short phrases that were graded on a five-degree scale from completely disagree=1 to completely agree=5. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the five factors of neuroticism, extraversion, conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness were 0.78, 0.61, 0.68, 0.74 and 0.75 respectively. Using Nigerian samples, BFI was re standardized by Omoluabi (2002) and validated by Umeh (2004). The BFI has been used amongst various Nigerian populations and has been found to have similar psychometric properties compared to western population (Omoluwabi 2002; Umeh 2004; Okhakhume 2015; Ugalahi 2017). According to Oladimeji (2018) Umeh (2004) in a validation study, reported similar BFI mean and standard deviation scores between American and Nigerian population

Sexual Attitude Scale (SAS) (Hudson & Murphy, 1990) is a twenty-five (25) items questionnaire which assesses conservative/liberal attitudes using Likert-type scale.

The cronbach's coefficient of the scale as reported by the authors is 0.84. A pilot study shows a chronbach alpha of .83 indicating that SAS has acceptable psychometric properties on Nigerian samples. Religious Orientation Test (ROT), by Idehen (2001). It is a six (6) items scale used to assess superficial religious orientation and deep religious orientation. ROT is applicable to diverse religious faiths.

The items are framed in the interrogative format and respondents are asked to indicate their answers on a 5-point likert-type scale range of 5 = not at all religious to 1 = very religious. Items scores are then summed to get a respondent's religiosity score. Idehen (2001) used the ROT on a sample of 160 participants and found an internal consistency cronbach alpha of 0.80, with a test retest reliability correlation of 0.75.

### **Data analysis**

Collected data was analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 23. Descriptive statistic (frequency count and percentages) were used to organize, summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, linear regression analysis was

employed to tests hypotheses one to three, One Way Analysis Of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypothesis four, while independent sample t-test was used to test hypotheses five.

## **Results**

### **Demographic characteristics of participants**

The levels, frequency and percentage distribution of these variables are shown in the Table 1 below.

Table 1 is a summary of the social-demographic characteristics of the distribution. It can be observed from the table that 112(72.9%) of the total respondents are males, while 51(27.1%) are females. Distribution by age categories of respondents revealed 13(5.2%) less than 21years, 32(19.4%) within the age group of 21-30years, 44(28.4%) are within the age group of 31-40years, 44(28.4%) are within the age group of 41-50years and 30(17.9%) are within the age group of 51 years and above. Distribution by marital status revealed that 97(65.2%) of the respondents were married while 54(33.3%) of the total respondents were single and 12(1.5%) were separated.

Table 1 also showed that the distribution of respondents by their denomination, with 68(42.5%) of total respondents reported to be protestant, 48(29.4%) reported to be Pentecostal and 47(28.1%) attend white Garment church (Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim church, Church of the Lord (Aladura)).

### **Hypothesis one**

#### **The degree of religiosity will significantly predict risky sexual attitude of pastors**

A linear regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis. Respondent composites scores on their degree of religiosity which is the predictors variable, while risky sexual attitude is the outcome variable. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2a and 2b.

The analysis result in Tables 2a and 2b revealed that degree of religiosity significantly predicts risky sexual attitude. Further analysis showed an  $R^2$  of 0.024, implying that 2.4% variance in risky sexual attitude of clergy is explained by their degree of religiosity. The findings show that among pastors, the degree of

religiosity has significant influence on risky sexual attitude.

The hypothesis which states that there will be significant influence of degree of religiosity on risky sexual attitude of pastors is accepted.

### Hypothesis two

#### Personality traits will significantly predict risky sexual attitude of pastors

A multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis with level of significant at 0.05%. The analysis result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3 suggest that there is significant joint prediction of personality characteristic on risky sexual attitude.

The *analysis showed* that the independent variables personality characteristics explained 10.4% variation in sexual behaviour. The results further revealed that extraversion ( $\beta = .195$ ,  $t = 4.372$ ,  $p = .004$ ), and Conscientiousness  $\beta = .129$ ,  $t = 3.576$ ,  $p = .022$  independently significantly predicted risky sexual behavior among the clerics, while agreeableness, neuroticism and openness had no significant independent influence on risky sexual behavior of the participants.

### Hypothesis three

#### Degree of religiosity and personality traits will significantly and jointly predict risky sexual attitude of pastors

A multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypothesis with level of significant at 0.05%. The analysis result is presented in table 4.

### Hypothesis four

#### Denomination will significantly influence pastor's sexual behaviour

The test of this hypothesis employed a One-Way ANOVA with the level of significance set at 0.05%. The analysis procedure involves comparing the scores of denominations on their sexual attitude. The religious denominations were classified in three groups namely Protestants, Pentecostals and White Garment churches. The analysis result is thus presented and summarized in Table 5.

The summary of Table 5 showed that there is no significant influence of denomination on pastors on risky sexual attitude [ $f(2, 150) = 1.360$ ,  $p = .105$ ]. Based on this the hypothesis is rejected.

### Hypothesis five

#### Gender will significantly influence the Pastors' sexual behaviour

To test this hypothesis, a student t-test was used at 0.05% level of significant. The mean score of male respondents and female respondents were compared using independent sample t-test. The analysis result is presented in Table 6 below.

The analysis summary in Table 6, showed a statistically significant difference between the mean score of male and female respondents on risky sexual attitude [ $t(131) = 1.243$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ]. Male respondents were observed to have higher mean  $\pm$  SD scores ( $83.01 \pm 12.14$ ) implying that male clergy manifest higher risky sexual attitude than female respondents.

**Table 1.** Summary of socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables	Levels	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex	Male	112	72.9%
	Female	51	27.1%
	Total	163	100.0%
Age group	Less than 21 years	13	5.9%
	21-30 years	32	19.4%
	31-40 years	44	28.4%
	41-50 years	44	28.4%
	51 and above	30	17.9%
	Total	163	100.0%
Marital Status	Married	97	65.2%
	Single	54	33.3%
	Separated	12	1.5%
	Total	163	100.0%

Denomination	Protestant	68	42.5%
	Pentecostal	48	29.4%
	White Garment (Celestial Church of Christ, Cherubim and Seraphim Church Movement and Church of the Lord (Aladura))	47	28.1%
	<b>Total</b>	163	100.0%

Source. Authors' Field Survey (2019)

**Table 2a.** Linear regression analysis of risky sexual attitude by degree of religiosity

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Regression	840.691	1	840.691	4.061	.046
Residual	33535.505	162	207.009	-	-
Total	34376.195	163	-	-	-

**Table. 2b** Linear regression coefficient

Model	B	SE. B	Beta	T	P-value
(Constant)	63.004	9.361	-	6.731	.000
Religiosity	.759	.376	.156	2.015	.046

[F (1, 162) =4.061, p<0.05, R<sup>2</sup>=0.024]

**Table 3.** Multiple regression analysis of risky sexual attitude by personality traits

Predictors	B	$\beta$	T	p	R	N=163		p
						R <sup>2</sup>	F	
(Constant)	47.28	-	4.075	.000	-	-	-	-
Extraversion	-.125	.195	4.372	.004	-	-	-	-
Agreeableness	.461	-.310	1.480	.141	0.322	0.104	3.649	.004
Conscientiousness	.338	.129	3.576	.022	-	-	-	-
Neuroticism	.324	.081	1.419	.158	-	-	-	-
Openness	.184	.035	.742	.459	-	-	-	-

Source. Authors' Field Survey (2019)

**Table 4.** Multiple regression analysis of risky sexual attitude by degree of religiosity and personality traits

Predictors	B	$\beta$	T	p	R	N=163		p
						R <sup>2</sup>	F	
(Constant)	30.607		1.988	.049	-	-	-	-
Religiosity	.645	.333	3.637	.024	-	-	-	-
Extraversion	-.121	.134	3.362	.010	-	-	-	-
Agreeableness	.353	.049	1.115	.267	0.344	0.119	3.519	.003
Conscientiousness	.357	.208	3.148	.014	-	-	-	-
Neuroticism	.398	-.158	1.719	.088	-	-	-	-
Openness	.234	.063	.938	.350	-	-	-	-

Source. Authors' Field Survey (2019)

**Table 5.** One Way ANOVA showing predicting influence of denominations/sects on risky sexual behaviour

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value
Between Groups	544.025	2	272.012	1.360	.105
Within Groups	29994.917	160	199.966		
Total	30538.941	162	-		

Source. Authors' Field Survey (2019)

**Table 6.** Independent sample-t-test showing the difference in risky sexual attitude of respondents

Variables		<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P-value</i>
<b>Gender</b>	Male	112	83.01	12.14	159	1.243	< 0.05
	Female	51	79.56	18.85			

Source: Authors' Field Survey (2019)

## Discussions

The findings show that among pastors, the degree of religiosity has significant influence on risky sexual attitude. This suggests that level of religiosity influences sexual behaviour of the clerics. Idehen (2001) categorised levels of religiosity into deep/intrinsic religiosity and superficial/extrinsic religiosity. Farmer et.al (2009) reported that nonreligious participants in their study had greater frequency of intercourse behaviours compared to Jewish, Monotheist Christian, and Fundamentalist participants. It was also reported that Spirituality, fundamentalism, and intrinsic religiosity were negatively related with the majority of sexual behaviours, including masturbation, petting, oral sex, intercourse, unrestricted socio-sexuality, and sexual history behaviours (Farmer et.al 2009). This finding suggests that pastors with superficial/extrinsic religiosity may likely engage in abusive sexual lifestyle.

Intrinsic religiosity in men and women is linked with fewer desired sexual partners, less willingness to engage in casual sex, and decreased likelihood of having engaged in a sexual relationship (Rowatt & Schmitt, 2003), and it is negatively correlated with frequency of sexual intercourse (Zaleski & Schiaffino, 2000). Spirituality is a subtype of religiosity that centres on an internalized subjective experience of belief in a divine or superordinate being that is distinct from beliefs held by specific religions (Hyman & Handal, 2006; Marler & Hadaway, 2002). There is need to understudy this subtype of religiosity as it may explain patterns of sexual behaviour. This suggestion is based on beliefs held by some church members on spiritual sexual experience. For instance, in a study among university students Murray-Swank,

Pargament, & Mahoney, (2005) reported that belief in spiritual sexual experiences in heterosexual college students was linked with increased sexual intercourse and a higher frequency and variety of sexual activities.

Result of this study showed that extraversion and conscientiousness independently predicted risky sexual behavior among the clerics. This finding supports Shuper, Narges and Rehm (2014) Schmitt (2008) and Hoyle Fejfar and Miller (2000). Several studies across the globe for instance Marina, (2013) in Croatia, Mc Ghee, Ehrler and Buck halt (2012) among public school in Georgia (USA), Jeneice (2013) on a sample in Indiana USA, Schmitt (2010) using 16,362 participants from 52 nations, Ondrej and Geckova (2010) in Slovak, and Alvergne, Markus and Charlotte (2010) on Kenyan samples consistently showed strong link between extraversion, low conscientiousness and risky sexual behavior.

Sexual risky behaviour has been associated with high levels of extraversion, low levels of agreeableness and low conscientiousness among college students (Ingledeew & Ferguson, 2007; Turchik, Garske, Probst, & Irvin, 2010) and adults (Schmitt, 2004; Mc Ghee, Ehrler & Buck halt, 2012; Denis, 2011; Schmitt, 2008). In a meta-analysis Hoyle et.al (2000) reported that that high extraversion and low conscientiousness have significant relation with sexual risking. In an earlier study Buss and Shackleford (1997) indicated that low consciousness is significantly linked with marriage unfaithfulness and extramarital affairs. Several measures of short-term mating were equally found to positively correlate with extraversion (Rui, Monica, & Rui. 2015; Eysenck, 1976). It is imperative to note that among the Big Five personality dimensions,

impulsive sensation-seeking is most closely associated with low agreeableness and low conscientiousness. Numerous studies have linked sensation-seeking to risky sexual behaviour (Ripa, Hansen, Mortensen, Sanders, & Reinisch, 2001). For instance, Linton and Wiener (2001) found that high sensation-seekers tend to have more 'mating success' (i.e. more partners and children) than those low in sensation-seeking. Furthermore, in agreement with previous studies (Schmitt 2008; Shakerian & Ali Mohammed, 2013; Ertac & Gurdal 2012) this study found no relationship between risky sexual behaviour and agreeableness, openness to experience and neuroticism personality traits.

There are three other traits rooted in low agreeableness and low conscientiousness that have shown repeated associations with risky sexual behaviour. These traits include: Machiavellianism (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). Machiavellian (deceitful or opportunist) personalities (especially men) tend to possess permissive sexual attitudes and engage in promiscuous sex practices (McHoskey, 2001); Psychoticism (Eysenck, 1976) which has been linked to permissive sexual attitudes and behaviours (Eysenck & Eysenck, 1971) and antisociality or psychopathy. In other words, antisociality or psychopathy (also comprised of low agreeableness and low conscientiousness; (Paulhus & Williams, 2002) is often implicated in sexual risk-taking (Aromaeki, Lindman, & Eriksson, 2002) while lack of adherence to religious orientation results to low religiosity. By implication, spiritual leaders (pastors) with low religiosity and low agreeableness or high sensation seeking scale are more likely to be promiscuous, opportunist, psychotic and psychopathy hence, the need for psycho-socio-spiritual interventions cannot be overemphasize.

In agreement with Flannery, Ellingson, Votaw and Schaefer (2003), the finding of this study revealed that there is no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of cleric based on religious denomination /affiliation. Past research has indicated that religious affiliations may be linked with unique patterns of sexual behaviour for instance, studies revealed that Catholics have fewer sexual partners than do Protestants (Lefkowitz, Gillen, Shearer, & Boone, 2004) yet have similar levels of sexual activity compared to conservative Protestants and fundamentalist Protestants

(Bearman & Bruckner, 1999; Beck, Cole, & Hammond, 1991). Jewish and Christian have similar sexual experiences (Lottes & Kuriloff, 1994; Pluhar, Frongillo, Stycos, & Dempser-McClain, 1998). Non-religious individuals reported more sexual experience (Pluhar et al., 1998) and greater frequency of masturbation than conservative Protestants, Catholics, and Jewish individuals (Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, & Michaels, 1994; Leiblum, Wiegel, & Brickle, 2003). By and large similar to Farmer et.al (2009) this study revealed that sexual behaviour differences in individuals from different religious affiliations reinforced the secularization hypothesis which suggests that reliance on reason, as is common in the modern times (as against revelations) has caused a lack of faith in religion and has weakened the impact of religion on daily life at an individual, social, and institutional level (Berger, 1967; Sommerville, 1998).

Gender had significant difference in impact on sexual attitude of respondents in this study with male reporting higher mean score than female clerics. Studies show that men showed negligible difference in religiosity and behaviour while women consistently reported negative correlation sexual behaviour and religious fundamentalism (Notzer, Levran, Mashiach, & Soffer, 1984; Farmer et.al, 2009). This finding supports findings which affirmed that women have higher religiosity compared to men (Stark, 2002) since as discussed earlier in this study, lesser religious participants engaged more in different sexual behaviours. This also suggests that religiosity has stronger impact on women which according to Farmer et al (2009) and Hofstede, (1997) can be explained by factors such as negative social attitudes toward premarital and extramarital female sexual activity and the communal character of religion, which may naturally complement cross-cultural stereotypes of the universal feminine values such as caring for others, modesty, emphasizing social equality, valuing social relationships, having sympathy for the less privileged, and using intuition. Notably, many issues other than religion may directly and indirectly account for the link between female sexual behaviour and religiosity. Evolutionary theory assumes that what motivates sexual behaviour differs profoundly for men and women (Buss, 1995) may also explain the increased impact of



religiosity on female sexual behaviour. For instance, female mate selection, context, resources and religious prohibitions against premarital and extramarital sex authenticate and complement this sexual selectivity of women. By and large this finding is consistent with women's traditional endorsement of more religious influence on sexual behaviours than men (Miller & Stark, 2002).

## Conclusions and recommendations

It is therefore imperative to note that religion and society are believed to be two aspects of human experience that are interdependent and reciprocally connected. Though, religion seems to be a personal concern, the desire to communicate and share the experience results into community of believers with common beliefs and ways of life. This idea reflects the religious nature of the society as well as the social nature of religion. Religion in its attempt to bring the society into conformity with its teachings and ideals transforms the latter thus, serving a purpose. As one of the social phenomena, it is evidence that a change, as in attitude, towards religion also affects other aspects of the society.

Characteristically, societies are recognized by the values they espouse, the motivations they encourage individually and collectively; the types of incentive they inspire and sanction as well as the basis for establishing and securing beliefs, attitude, and behaviour. Religiosity accounts for a unique variation in two processes critical for the continuation of our species: survival and sexual reproduction. However, religiosity seems to affect sexual behaviour through a sexual ideology or belief system based upon anticipated negative consequences. Findings from the study demonstrate that religiosity and personality constructs significantly jointly predict several dimensions of sexuality in unique ways.

Thus, we therefore recommend first that a theological training that involves an interactive and integrated learning so that pastors would be better informed, more honest and faithful to their religious tenets as well as the societal values and one's professional ethics.

Secondly, a realistic career counselling that matches spiritual leaders' ability with their callings. Hence, the need for social scientists and chaplains cannot be overemphasised as they

are best qualify for psycho-sociocultural education for both the clerics and the congregants.

Lastly, further research in this area of study is imperative considering various dynamics.

## Declaration

Authors declare that all works are original and this manuscript has not been published in any other journals. There was no financial support of any organization for this work.

## Ethical considerations

This study carried out investigations that involved human elements; hence the research was conducted based on Helsinki Declaration. Also, the research intention and proposed procedures for carrying the research was subjected to scrutiny by the Internal Research Ethic Committee (IREC) of Redeemer's University, Ede, Osun State Nigeria, and approval was given by the research committees of the institutions of study before the research was embarked upon. Also, respondents were approached individually and explanation of the purpose of the study was all made known to them thereby securing participants informed consent was gotten before the instruments were administered.

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