



Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry as Predictor of Sexual Attitudes of Nigerian Christian Clergy

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Authors PEN and OEA designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors BCA and AA managed the analyses of the study. Authors PEN and BCA managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to examine Emotional Exhaustion (EE) of the minister as predictor of the Christian clergy sexual attitudes in an era of “#ChurchToo” crusade and sexual crisis facing the church globally yet, there are not sufficient empirical data on the Christian clergy regarding dynamics that are responsible for permissive sexual attitudes and behaviours. Five hundred and sixty-two (562) Christian clergy (410 male, 152 female), mean age 34.7± 0.1 were purposively selected from Protestant, Pentecostal and White garment churches in south-western Nigeria who responded to Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) and Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analyses. The observed prevalence of high burnout was 14.0%. Emotional exhaustion in ministry significantly predicted Birth control (sexual

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responsibility) Birth control (sexual responsibility) (Sexual responsibility) attitude, communion attitude, instrumentality attitude and permissiveness attitude. There were statistically significant sex differences in the mean (\pm SD) scores of Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude, Communion attitude and permissiveness attitude. Male and female clergy had similar mean (\pm SD) score on instrumentality. Findings demonstrate that emotional exhaustion in ministry is strongly linked with several dimensions of sexual attitudes in unique ways, and that gender deference in sexual attitude exists among the clerics.

Keywords: Emotional exhaustion; sexual attitudes; christian clergy; Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is an increase in the pattern and prevalence of permissive sexual attitudes and behaviours among the Christian clergy in the last centuries. In contrast with reports in major domestic and international dailies, empirical literature on the sexual activities of the Christian clergy in Nigeria seemed scarce despite its psycho-socio-cultural implications, such as the highly traumatic experience that disproportionately affects victims of sexual assaults from the clergy, social ills it poses [1,2] and an act of omission to the Christian Church's mission and great commission. The pattern and prevalence of Christian Clergy sexual practices is, therefore, a significant problem globally and particularly in Nigeria.

Sexual permissiveness refers to an individual's favourable or unfavorable dispositions or attitude towards involvement in sex outside wedlock. A favourable sexual permissiveness predicts a high possibility of premarital and extramarital sexual involvements. Favourable disposition to sexual permissiveness is an indication of less religious involvement [3] and as religious leaders, clerics are assumed by the society to be unfavorably disposed to it. Evidence across fifty-two cultures support that religiosity was positively correlated with self-described sexual restraint among men and women [4]. Individuals with no religious affiliation reported more sexual partners than those who reported a religious affiliation [5,6]. In a related finding, Cochran and Beeghley [7] testified that increasingly stronger religiosity effects on attitudes toward premarital sex as denominational commitment increased. Likewise, Mahoney [8] finds out that frequency of certain sexual behaviours and the extensiveness of those sexual experiences decreased as religious intensity increased. Also, non-religious individuals reported more sexual experience [9] and greater frequency of masturbation than conservative Protestants, Catholics, and Jewish individuals [5,6].

Research studies revealed no significant difference in the sexual behaviour of cleric based on religious denominations. For instance studies revealed that Jewish and Christian have similar sexual experiences [9,10], Catholics reported fewer sexual partners than do Protestants [11] yet have similar levels of sexual activity compared to conservative Protestants and fundamentalist Protestants [12,13]. According to DeLamater, [14] throughout modern history sexual practices of clerics as well as congregation were controlled by the power of religion. However in the contemporary period the link between religion and sexuality is not clear [15]. Literatures show that contemporary Orthodox, Pentecostal, Evangelical, and White garments clerics are not immune to permissive sexual conduct [1,2,16,17]. For instance the London Daily Trust [16] reported of a Pentecostal pastor who was imprisoned for sexual assault and causing a minor to engage in sexual activity. In Nigeria, religiosity and sexual exploitation are on the rise [16,17]. The pattern and prevalence of sexual misconduct of the Christian clergy is an indication of a change in the sexual attitudes of the Christian church leaders [17]. Suffice to note that these changing sexual beliefs, feelings and behaviours of the Christian clergy may not only be a manifestation of flawed Christian moral behaviours but the result of other predisposing dynamics. In Nigeria as well as across the globe religiosity and sexual exploitation members by clerics are on the rise [16,17].

African Regional Sexuality Resource Centre ARSRC [18] 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. ARSRC [18] stresses that sexuality is experienced and expressed in thoughts, fantasies, desires, beliefs, attitudes, values, behaviours, practices, roles and relationships. Hence, sexual attitudes are the beliefs one holds about sexuality and sexual behaviours [19,20].

Notwithstanding certain factors that may positively influence sexuality, Nwaka & Eregare [21] reiterate that sexual intimacy is a sacred gift, designed and instituted by God as an integral part of marriage, reserved for marriage only (Genesis 2:24; Proverbs 5:5-20) and to be shared exclusively between husband and wife (that is, monogamous and heterosexual relationship), and is intended to have children, promote ever-increasing closeness, happiness, security, and provides for perpetuation of human race. Therefore, in terms of psychophysiological reasons for investigating clergy sexual activities, the imperative of emotional exhaustion cannot be taken for granted. Burnout is a type of prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors on the job [22]. Emerging research shows that the chronic psychosocial stress that characterizes burnout not only impairs people's personal and social functioning, it also can overwhelm their cognitive skills and neuroendocrine systems and eventually leads to distinctive changes in the anatomy and functioning of the brain [23,24]. The study has consistently indicated that work-related psychological health as reflected in professional burnout or emotional exhaustion is a matter of theoretical and practical concern across the caring professions, among which the clergy vocation is no exception [25,26].

In this present study the four factors used to measure sexual behaviour were adopted from Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS) by Hendrick, Hendrick, and Reich, [20]. They are Birth control (sexual responsibility), Communion (Sexual idealism), Sexual instrumentality and Sexual permissiveness. Birth control (sexual responsibility) refers to self-protection, caution and the obligation one has to prevent oneself against the STDs and unwanted pregnancy in a non-committed sexual relationship; significant prediction suggests positive disposition toward Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude. Communion (sexual idealism) signify spiritualizing sex, seeing sexual activities as merging of souls or the closest form of human interaction. Significant prediction attests to favourable desire toward sexual idealism attitude. Sexual instrumentality implies focusing on sexual pleasure, self-gratification, sex-petting/grooming, indiscriminating touching/hugging, manipulative sexual disposition and cybersex. Significant prediction indicates positive propensity toward sexual instrumentality attitude. Sexual permissiveness is associated with casual sex outside of a committed relationship, sex with

multiple partners, premarital-extramarital sex, co-habiting and varied sexual orientations. Significant prediction shows tendency toward promiscuity, casual sexual life or an attitude towards this life.

Emotional Exhaustion (EE) is a major component of burnout [27] and is defined as being emotionally over-extended, fatigued and psychologically drained of emotional energy [28]. Emotional exhaustion in ministry is a chronic state of physical, emotional and spiritual depletion that results from excessive ministerial duties, personal demands, crisis and/or continuous stress. It describes a feeling of being emotionally and physically overextended and exhausted in ministry. For instance, Maslach, Jackson, and Leiter [29] define burnout or emotional exhaustion as a state of exhaustion in which one becomes cynical about the ethical values of one's occupation and doubtful of one's capacity to perform and function optimally. Burnout or emotional exhaustion is recognized as a legitimate medical disorder by much of mainstream medicine and has even been given its ICD-10 code (Z73.0 – Burn-out state of vital exhaustion). Cynical individuals believe that selfishness motivates human actions; as such, cynical person displays in activities contempt for accepted standards of honesty or morality [28, 29]. In this sense, Christian leaders experiencing burnout (with its hallmark cynicism) are more likely to disparage religious control, social ethics guiding morality, poorly defined boundaries and perhaps sexual involved.

Emotional exhaustion which Akinawo [30] termed sweet poison and occupational psychopathology are one of the greatest threats to workplace safety specifically to clergy and the church community. Yet, there is a mirage of studies on clergy burnout as measured by emotional exhaustion in ministry (subjective ratings of psychological health) and its detrimental effect on the Christian clergy reproductive health, the church organizational systems (church institutions), ministerial ethics, and the great commission of the gospel. Burnout has been an issue of particular concern for people-oriented occupations in which (a) the relationship between providers and recipients is central to the work, and (b) the provision of education, service, or treatment can be a highly emotional experience [31]. These people-oriented occupations (teachers, nurses, social workers, physicians, clergy and police) are considered "high-touch" in nature because these

careers involve lots of face-to-face contacts [28] and appear to be at greater risk of becoming burned-out because they attend to the needs of others [32,33]. Based on the literature, and personal testimonies, emotional exhaustion in ministry is a reality among clergies [25,34].

One explanation of EE could be drawn from Beck's cognitive theory of depression which explains that negative feelings and cynicism or thoughts distortion play central roles in how people feel about themselves, other individuals and objects which ultimately influences the beliefs, feelings and behaviours they engage [35,36,37]. Such negative thoughts and cognitive distortions (also found in emotionally exhausted individuals) can deter rational decision-making and allow emotions to influence attitude and behaviour [35,36]. Thus, symptoms of emotional exhaustion may not support healthy decision making and subsequent healthy attitudes and behaviours, including making safe sexual decision and sexual behaviours [37].

With high rate of psychopathology among people of various works of life [38], it is therefore, a misconception to assume that EE is merely an emotional response to long hours of a challenging job. Research findings show that burnout is not just a state of mind, but a condition that leaves its mark on the brain as well as the body of individuals [24,39]. Burnout (EE) is strongly related to a person's cognitive distortion, and a change in person's brain anatomy [39]. By implication, research studies show that emotionally exhausted clergies have high tendencies of poor sexual responsibility in the context of protective sexual activities to avoid unwanted pregnancy in a non-committed sexual relationship or ensure precaution against STDs, sexual idealism, instrumentality, and permissiveness [40,41,42].

The significant role of the pastor around the world represents a unique vocation with a unique set of required emotional demands and job skills. In a related study Carroll [43] reported that pastors worked an average of between 47 and 56 hours per week, varying according to denominational tradition and other factors. Measuring the workload of pastors is problematic in the sense that pastoring is seen as a lifestyle, and it is sometimes difficult to see where one's job role ends and personal life begins. Equally problematic is determining what constitutes the demographics and characteristics typical of those serving as pastors, as well as measuring the context in which pastors work,

viz-a-viz congregation size, gender, age, and second-career pastoring. These vital socio-demographics could impact clergy emotional exhaustion in ministry. The responsibilities of teaching, preaching, counselling, administrating and leadership which characterizes pastoral functions are enormous and emotionally, physically, and spiritually depleting [43]. Responses to EE that is linked to permissive sexual activities include addiction, depression, and even cognitive dysfunction [24,25]. Additionally, clerics' sexual attitudes may be affected by other factors such as sex, denominational differences which include the social structure, traditions, religious beliefs, moral attitudes and psychophysiological factors [21]. Based on the foregoing, Christian clergies that experience EE are less likely to perceive sexuality with the framework of social / moral ethics and will be equally less mindful of their attitudes and are likely to be more favourably disposed to permissive sexual behaviour.

Against the backdrop that the link between EE and sexual attitude is established in literature [24,39], It becomes instructive to state that in both developed and developing countries there are numerous reproductive health concerns related to wide-ranging sexual orientations, permissive sexual risky attitudes, and behaviours among the general population which are very exasperating when heard of among the Christian clergies. Sexual attitudes Christian clergies may reveal significant determinant of faith-based initiatives in reproductive health. Thus, the necessity to understand the dynamics responsible for the changing sexual beliefs, feelings and dispositions among the Christian clergy in south-western Nigeria cannot be overstated. The focus of this study therefore is to ascertain the patterns of EE and sexual attitudes of Christian clerics, observe the extent to which emotional exhaustion in ministry predicts factors of sexual attitude (Birth control /sexual responsibility, communion, instrumentality and permissiveness) as well as determine the influence of sex on the identified factors of sexual attitude among the participants.

1.1 Research Questions

1. What are the patterns of EE and sexual attitudes (Birth control (sexual responsibility), communion, instrumentality and permissiveness) among the participants?
2. To what extent will emotional exhaustion in ministry predict factors of sexual attitude (birth control (sexual responsibility),

communion, instrumentality and permissiveness) among the Christian clergy in south-western Nigeria?

3. Are there sex differences in the factors of sexual attitude among the participants?

1.2 Hypotheses

1. Emotional exhaustion in ministry will significantly predict Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude of the Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria.
1. Emotional exhaustion in ministry will significantly predict sexual communion of the Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria.
2. Emotional exhaustion in ministry will significantly predict sexual instrumentality of the Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria.
3. Emotional exhaustion in ministry will significantly predict sexual permissiveness of the Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria.
4. There will be a significant sex difference in the sexual attitudes of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Research Design

The study was an ex-post-facto which utilized the cross-sectional survey method to gather data. The independent variable was emotional exhaustion in ministry, while the dependent variable was the sexual attitude.

2.2 Research Setting

The setting of this study was selected churches and Christian camp meetings located in Lagos, Ogun Oyo and Osun states, southwestern Nigeria.

2.3 Participants

The participants were Christian clergies purposively drawn from three denominations represented in the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). These are Orthodox churches, Pentecostal churches and Aladura "White Garment" Churches, located in south-western Nigeria.

The *Aladura* (White garment) churches are independent African Churches or African

Instituted Churches that emphasises prayer and healing. *Aladura* is a Yoruba word for "praying people". These churches reflect the indigenization of Christianity through the use of African symbols, traditional healing modalities and worship styles. They are referred to as White Garment Churches because the clergies and members adorn themselves in all white free-flowing uniform gowns.

Although these denominations have differing doctrines and modes of worship, common activities among all including praying, fasting, singing and dancing, preaching, evangelising, fellowshiping (etc) in the name of Jesus.

2.4 Sampling Technique

A multi-stage sampling technique was employed in the selection of the Clerics. South-western Nigeria was randomly selected while questionnaires were administered to 300 purposively drawn participants in each of the selected denominations.

2.5 Research Instruments

Two research instruments were used in data collection. First is Scale of Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry (SEEM) by Francis et al. [44]. It comprised of eleven (11) items assessed on a five-point likert scale of 'agree strongly (5), agree (4), not certain (3), disagree (2), and disagree strongly (1)'. Scale properties have been reported elsewhere in a study of over 6000 clergies drawn from a range of denominations in Australia, New Zealand and England [45], in which the scale showed high internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha of = .84). In a pilot study on Nigerian clergy, a Cronbach's alpha of .72 was observed.

Brief Sexual Attitudes Scale (BSAS) by Hendrick, Hendrick, & Reich, [20]. It has a total of 23 items divided into four factors: Permissiveness towards an open relationship, Birth control (sexual responsibility), Communion (sexual attitude of appreciating the importance of melting together with sex partner), Instrumentality (sexual attitude towards enjoying the physical sex) BSAS is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scales response categories. It has an internal consistency for all four sub-scales. Cronbach's alphas for each scale were as follows: Permissiveness=.93, Birth control (sexual responsibility) =.84, Communion=.71

and Instrumentality=.77. A pilot study was conducted to validate the instrument and it was found to have acceptable psychometric properties for Nigerian samples. Observed Cronbach's alpha of the factors of BSAS using Nigerian sample was Permissiveness=.92, Birth control (sexual responsibility) =.57, Communion=.86, and Instrumentality=.75.

2.6 Procedure

A purposive sampling technique was used to select the three denominations/sects and the subjects in south-western Nigeria. Visitations were made by authors to various pastors' meetings as well as their offices, rapport was made then consents were subsequently obtained. This was followed by convenience selection of pastors who participated in the study. Detailed instruction and oral explanation of the study and instrument were made. The whole exercise of data collection lasted for about four weeks. Out of 573 returned questionnaires, 562 were well completed and considered for final analysis.

2.7 Data Analysis

Collected data were analysed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS) 23. Descriptive statistics (frequency count and percentages) were used to organize, summarize and describe the demographic characteristics of respondents, while inferential statistic (independent sample t-Test, and linear regression analysis) was employed to test the hypotheses.

3. RESULTS

Demographics of the selected clergy summarized in Table 1 showed that 410 (73%) were male and 152 (27%) were female this showed that male clergy was higher than the female counterparts [43]. Distribution by the denomination showed that 126 (22.4%) were from Orthodox, 249 (44.3%) were Pentecostals, 118 (21.0%) were white garment churches and 69 (12.3%) were from other denominations. Distribution by marital status showed that 255 (45.2%) were single, 276 (50.5%) were married, 12 (1.8%) were separated, 6 (.7%) were divorced, 9 (1.4%) were remarried and 4 (.4%) were celibates.

The observed prevalence of emotional exhaustion in ministry among the Christian

clergy in south-western Nigeria was 52.7% for low, 33.3% moderate while 14.0% for high/severe burnout.

Table 2 shows the patterns of sexual attitudes among the Christian clergy in south-western Nigeria. The findings of the study showed 43.1% for low Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude, 56.9% for high Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude. Whereas prevalence of low and high communion attitude was 46.6%, and 53.4% respectively. On instrumentally attitude the prevalence was 46.1%, and 53.9 for and high respectively. Finally, the prevalence of permissiveness sexual attitude among the clergy was 61.5%, low and 38.5% for high.

3.1 Hypothesis One: Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry will Significantly Predict Birth Control (Sexual Responsibility) Attitude of the Christian Clergy in Southwestern Nigeria

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the emotional exhaustion in ministry independently and significantly predict Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. The result shown in Table 3 revealed that emotional exhaustion in ministry independently and significantly predicted Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude among the participants [$F(1, 561) = 3.96$, $p = .047$, $R^2 = .007$]. The analysis suggests that .7% variance of sexual Birth control (sexual responsibility) is explained by burnout among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Based on this result, the hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that emotional exhaustion in ministry is a statistically significant independent predictor of Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude of the Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. In other words, emotional exhaustion in ministry is strongly linked to attitudes of Nigerian clergy towards taking sexual responsibility.

3.2 Hypothesis Two: Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry will Significantly Predict Sexual Communion of the Christian Clergy in Southwestern Nigeria.

A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the burnout independently and significantly predicts sexual communion

attitude of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. The result shown in Table 4 revealed that burnout independently significantly predicted communion attitude among the participants [$F(1, 561) = 20.6, p = .000, R^2 = .036$]. The analysis in Table 4 suggests that 3.6% variance of communion attitude is explained by burnout among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Based on this result the hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that burnout is a statistically significant independent predictor of communion attitude among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. In other words, Emotional Exhaustion (EE) in ministry is strongly linked to attitudes of Nigerian clergy towards communion (sexual attitude of appreciating the importance of melting together with sex partner).

3.3 Hypothesis Three: Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry will Significantly Predict Sexual Instrumentality of the Christian Clergy in Southwestern Nigeria

A linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether the emotional exhaustion independently and significantly predicts sexual instrumentality attitude of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. The result revealed that emotional exhaustion independently significantly predicted instrumentality attitude among the participants [$F(1, 561) = 19.55, p = .000, R^2 = .034$]. The analysis in Table 5 suggests that 3.4% variance of sexual instrumentality attitude is explained by burnout among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Based on this result

Table 1. Demographics characteristics of participants

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	410	73
	Female	152	27.0
	total	562	100
Denomination	Orthodox	126	22.4
	Pentecostal	249	44.3
	white garment	118	21.0
	others	69	12.3
	Total	562	100
Marital status	single	255	45.2
	married	276	50.5
	separated	12	1.8
	divorced	6	.7
	remarried	9	1.4
	celibate	4	.4
	Total	562	100.0

Table 2. Patterns of sexual attitudes among the Christian Clergy

Sexual attitudes	Low (%)	High (%)
Birth control (sexual responsibility)	43.1	56.9
Communion	46.6	53.4
Instrumentality	46.1	53.9
Permissiveness	61.5	38.5

Table 3. Linear regression analysis of birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude on emotional exhaustion

Model	B	B	T	sig	R	R ²	F	p
(Constant)	10.277		20.866	.000	.085	.007	3.963	.047
Burnout	.033	.085	1.991	.047				

Table 4. Linear regression analysis of sexual communion attitude on emotional exhaustion

Model	B	β	T	sig	R	R ²	F	p
(Constant)	13.901		17.904	.000	.190	.036	20.6	.000
Burnout	.120	.190	4.535	.000				

Table 5. Linear regression analysis of sexual instrumentality attitude by emotional exhaustion

Model	B	β	T	sig	R	R ²	F	p
(Constant)	10.448		13.136	.000	.185	.034	19.55	.000
Burnout	.120	.185	4.422	.000				

the hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that emotional exhaustion in ministry is a statistically significant independent predictor of instrumentality attitude of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Put together, Emotional Exhaustion (EE) in ministry is strongly associated with attitudes of Nigerian clergy towards instrumentality (enjoying sex).

3.4 Hypothesis Four: Emotional Exhaustion in Ministry will significantly predict Sexual Permissiveness of the Christian clergy in Southwestern Nigeria

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether emotional exhaustion in ministry independently and significantly predicts sexual permissive attitude of Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. The result shown in Table 6 showed that burnout independently significantly predicted sexual permissive attitude of the participants [F (1, 561) = 11.73, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .021$]. The analysis in Table 6 suggests that 2.1% variance of permissive sexual attitude is explained by burnout among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Based on this result the hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that burnout is a statistically significant independent predictor of the permissive sexual attitude of the Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. Put together this result shows that EE in ministry is strongly connected with the attitudes of Nigerian clergy towards sexual permissiveness.

3.5 Hypothesis Five: There will be a Significant Sex Difference in the Sexual Attitudes of Christian Clergy in South Western Nigeria

Table 7 is a summary of an independent sample t-test was carried out to determine sex difference on factors of sexual attitude (Birth control (sexual responsibility), communion, instrumentality and permissiveness) among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. The t-test scores revealed that there were 410 male and 152

female participants surveyed, while the mean (\pm SD) of Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude were 11.47 ± 3.30 and 10.58 ± 3.48 male and female respectively. The significant 2-tailed P value associated with this test was .005. The t-test reveals a statistically significant difference between the mean of the Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude of the male clergy and that of the female counterparts [t (562) = 2.71, $p = .007$]. It can be therefore concluded that Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude of the male participants is significantly higher than female.

Furthermore, the mean (\pm SD) of sexual communion attitude was 17.67 ± 5.27 and 16.29 ± 5.60 for male and female respectively. The t-test reveals a statistically significantly reliable difference between the mean of sexual communion attitude of the male clergy and that of their female counterparts [t (562) = 2.61, $p = .009$]. This study established that communion sexual attitudes of the male participants are significantly higher than that of their female counterparts.

Table 7 also revealed a mean (\pm SD) of sexual instrumentality attitude of 14.02 ± 5.65 and 13.26 ± 5.18 for male and female respectively. The t-test reveals no statistically significantly reliable difference between the mean of the sexual instrumentality of male clergy and that of the female counterparts [t (562) = 1.49, $p = .137$]. It was therefore concluded that sexual instrumentality attitude of male clergy is similar to that of their female counterparts.

Finally, Table 7 showed mean (\pm SD) of sexual permissiveness scores of 16.56 ± 7.53 and 15.12 ± 6.90 for male and female respectively. The t-test revealed no statistically significantly reliable difference between the mean of the permissive sexual attitude of the male clergy and that of the female counterparts [t (562) = 2.121, $p = .037$]. It was therefore concluded that permissive sexual attitude of male Christian clergy in South Western Nigeria is higher than that of their female counterparts.

Table 6. Linear regression of sexual permissiveness attitude on emotional exhaustion

Model	B	β	T	sig	R	R ²	F	p
(Constant)	12.660		11.753	.000	.145	.021	11.732	.001
Burnout	.125	.145	3.425	.001				

Table 7. Independent sample t-test of sex difference birth control (sexual responsibility), communion, instrumentality and permissive attitude

Variables	Sex	N	\bar{x}	SD	t	p
Birth control (sexual responsibility)	Male	410	11.471	3.300	2.71	.007
	Female	152	10.580	3.478		
Communion	Male	410	17.677	5.279	2.619	.009
	Female	152	16.293	5.601		
Instrumentality	Male	410	14.025	5.657	1.493	.137
	Female	152	13.266	5.158		
Permissiveness	Male	410	16.559	7.532	2.212	.035
	Female	152	15.116	6.907		

4. DISCUSSION

There is a high prevalence of emotional burnout syndrome as well as a high level of sexual attitudes among Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria. This is consistent with literature [30,46,47,48]. Estimation of the prevalence of burnout among pastors varies widely, ranging from 10% to 47% [25,32]. In a study of 1,242 Catholic priests in the United States, Rossetti and Rhoades, [48] reported a 42% prevalence of burnout. Some research found that 10%-14% of Protestant clergy had sexual contact with someone other than a spouse while in the ministry [49], while prior findings reported that 10%-12% of Protestant ministers had sexual contact with members of their congregation [50].

Furthermore, this study revealed that Emotional exhaustion in ministry is significantly linked with sexual attitudes (Birth control (sexual responsibility), communion, instrumentality and permissiveness) of the Christian clergy in southwestern Nigeria. Few studies have been carried out on the influence emotional attitude on sexuality [45] in general and of clergies in particular. Significant prediction of permissive sexual attitudes signifies that emotional exhausted clergies favoured casual sex. This rationale suggests that emotional exhausted clergies that approved of permissive sexual attitude in the study may be more tolerant of other sexual dysfunctions including homosexuality. Therefore, Sexual attitudes of the Christian clergy may show itself by positive or negative or by being formed in accordance with the right or wrong knowledge, emotions, thoughts, and beliefs about varied sexual behaviours. Seat and his colleagues [42] found

among Southern Baptist clergy that high levels of emotional exhaustion (burnout), poorly defined boundaries [41], a perception of poor pastoral training, an unassertive personality, a lack of intimacy with other ministerial colleagues and prior favourable sexual attitudes led clerics to engage in inappropriate sexual contact with members of their congregation.

Hence, emotional exhaustion is likely to produce powerful negative emotional states, especially if individuals lack the ability to control, or communicate emotions in a 'healthy' way. Such an inability to manage mood states efficiently may result in a loss of control, which, in conjunction with sexual beliefs, feeling and desire, may lead to disinhibited behaviour or the opportunistic use of sex as a strategy to meet emotional needs such as, spiritualizing or to see sex as bonding of soul, sensational seeking attitude as coping mechanism, poor decision making on premarital, extramarital sex with multiple pattern and permissive sexual attitudes to balance homeostasis [39,40,41].

This study established a 14% clinical burnout among the Christian clergies in southwest Nigeria. It was concluded that burnout is a statistically significant predictor of the four subscales of sexual attitudes among Christian clergy in South-Western Nigeria. There was a high tendency toward protective sexual activities to avoid unwanted pregnancy or ensure precaution against STDs among the sample as reflected in the significant prediction of Birth control (sexual responsibility) or responsible sexual attitude. Emotional exhaustion significantly predicted communion (attitude towards the importance of melting together with

sex partner) implying that the Christian cleric's belief in idealized sex and show a tendency to display a sharing sexual attitude with whom so ever. They also see sexual activities as merging of souls or the closest form of human interaction. Significant prediction of instrumentality (attitude towards enjoying the physical sex) by emotional exhaustion indicated that burnout clergies may have a manipulative sexual attitude. While the significant prediction of permissive sexual attitudes signifies that emotionally exhausted respondents have a casual sex life and an attitude towards this life. This rationale suggests that emotionally exhausted clergy that approved of permissive sexual attitude in the study may be more tolerant of other sexual dysfunctions including homosexuality.

Studies had lent support to the fact that emotional exhaustion in ministry may significantly influence sexual attitudes and behaviours [51,52]. Nwaka [53] and Beal, [54] found that long-standing patterns of beliefs, lifestyle and psychological health play a significant role in developing and maintaining several conditions. Similarly, variants of beliefs and attitudes in different communities based on racial, ethnical, religious, cultural and traditional contexts as well as socio-cultural taboos and misunderstanding or cognitive distortion of sexuality are vital factors impacting sexual attitudes, behaviours and sexual satisfaction [55,56]. Thus the inference drawn from this study is that emotionally exhausted clergy are more likely to be cynical or cognitively distorted as such, disparage tenets of the Christian fundamental beliefs, policy, and Christian moral values as such, predisposed to positively favour the profane and narcissism.

Further investigation showed statistically significant reliable sex influence in attitude towards Birth control (sexual responsibility) attitude among the clergy. Result revealed that male clergy had a higher tendency to prefer a responsible and tolerant sexual attitude employing protective sex as opposed to female clergy with a low score indicating risky sexual attitude. Studies vary on gender statistics on emotional exhaustion in ministry. For instance, while Miner, Dowson and Sterland [57] reported that male experience more exhaustion in ministry than do female cleric. Francis, Kaldor, Shevlin, and Lewis [44] found similar gender influence in emotional exhaustion among Australian pastors.

The finding of this study also showed the influence of gender on the Communion sexual attitudes, with male clergies having higher predisposition and belief toward idealized sexuality and religiosity or seeing sex as merging of soul than the female counterpart. However, the sexual instrumentality of the male clergy was similar to that of the female, meaning both male and female clergies in the study indicate biological and manipulative sexual attitude.

Studies show that active role to a great extent determines sexual pleasure [58,59,60]. This is consistent with theories which suggest that perceived control [61], sexual self-efficacy [62] autonomy [63] enhances satisfying sexual experiences as well as safer sexual practices. Thus our finding suggests that both male and female clerics achieve similar instrumentality depending on engagement in active roles during sexual activities which enhance the experience of sexual autonomy.

In the final analysis, there was a positive disposition in the permissive sexual attitude of the male clergies as opposed to female clergies. Male clergies tend toward permissive sexual attitudes, and attitude to accept casual sex outside of a committed relationship and wanting sex with multiple partners, premarital-extramarital sex, and co-habiting as compared to female clergies. This is consistent with previous findings of relationships between subjects' sexual attitudes and relevant demographic and psychosocial variables (e.g., gender, love experience) and demonstrated substantial links between the Sexual Attitudes Scale and measures of related concepts such as sensation seeking and love attitudes [19].

Exhaustion is reported as having a positive link with low sex drive [64]. According to Hendrick, Hendrick, and Reich [20] females observe more responsible, conventional, and idealistic (communion) sexual behaviour while males were reported to be more permissive, instrumental, and control and power-oriented. In a related study Goetz, [65] found that 19% of the sampled 374 ordained pastors indicated an affair or inappropriate sexual contact. Muck [66] reported that 12% of sampled 300 ordained priests reported having sex with someone other than the spouse. Chaves & Garland, [67] affirmed that seven females are engaged in sexual misconduct by clergy per impacted congregation in an average of 100-700 membership in the church.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is one among the first to explore the impact of emotional exhaustion in ministry on multidimensional sexual attitudes of the Christian clergy in southwest Nigeria. Emotional competency deficits are likely to produce powerful negative emotional states, for example, following an argument with a partner or a stressful life event such as real loss, the death a significant person and lack of social support and socio-demographics are implicated in how sexuality is experienced and expressed. This is especially probable if individuals cannot control, or communicate emotions in a culturally acceptable way. Such an inability to manage mood states efficiently (emotionally intelligent) may result in a loss of control resulting in disinhibited sexual behaviour or opportunistic use of sex as a strategy to meet emotional needs. Burnout clergy with the cynical symptom is likely to have cognitive distortion to justify their favourable sexual attitudes even toward deviant sexual behaviours. We, therefore, recommend an immediate psycho-sociocultural orientation and interventions taking into consideration of the vital impact of the Christian clergy in the society. Further studies employing other research methods and on a wider scale, using other social-cultural settings are recommended.

CONSENT AND ETHICAL APPROVAL

Informed written consents were obtained and written consent forms were completed by the sampled clerics after explanation of the purpose and importance of the study. They were assured that their responses would not affect them negatively in whatsoever way. Confidentiality of obtained information was ensured. The anonymity of the study subjects was assured as no name or any means of identification was requested. Ethics on human subjects was adhered to. Finally, researchers' intention for the study was subjected to scrutiny by the Internal Research Ethics Committee of Redeemer's University, Nigeria.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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