

Research Article

Sexual Phenomenon in Religious Institutions: Prevalence, Consequences, and Counselling Implications in North-Central Nigeria

Adegboyega G.J., Ocholi E.F., Adikwu V.O

Department of Guidance and Counseling, University of Abuja

Abstract: This study examined the prevalence and consequences of sexual phenomenon as perceived by religious clerics in North-Central Nigeria, with implications for counselling. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. From a population of 602 religious clerics, a sample of 234 clerics comprising 108 Muslim clerics and 126 Christian clerics was selected from Plateau, Kwara, and Niger States using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected using a structured instrument titled Prevalence, Perception and Consequences of Sexual Phenomenon in Moral Institutions Questionnaire (PPCSPMIQ). The reliability of the instrument was established through the test-retest method, with data analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, yielding a reliability index of 0.73. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while the independent samples t-test was applied to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that sexual phenomenon is fairly prevalent in moral institutions as perceived by religious clerics in North-Central Nigeria. The study further revealed that sexual phenomenon was perceived to have varied and negative consequences within moral institutions in the study area. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Religious institutions should organize interdenominational seminars for religious clerics to promote and intensify sermons and messages to the adolescents and youths on sexual abstinence, health sexual behaviours and appropriate sexual conduct in order to reduce the incidences of unhealthy sexual exploitation, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Keywords: Prevalence, Consequences, Sexual Phenomenon, Moral Institutions, Perception, Religious Clerics, North Central

How to cite this article: Adegboyega G.J., Ocholi E.F., Adikwu V.O. Sexual Phenomenon in Religious Institutions: Prevalence, Consequences, and Counselling Implications in North-Central Nigeria. *Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*.2026 Feb 12, 5(1):46-58.

Source of support: Nil.

Conflict of interest: None

DOI: doi.org/10.58924/rjhss.v5.iss1.p4

Received: 19-01-2026
Revised: 22-01-2026
Accepted: 28-01-2026
Published: 12-02-2026



Copyright:© 2026 by the authors. Submitted for possible open access publication under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

Sexual phenomena have become increasingly visible within core social institutions such as religious and moral organizations, educational structures, and the family system. In recent decades, diverse manifestations of sexually related behaviours and experiences have gained heightened attention within scholarly and public discourse, a trend largely driven by technological advancement and the forces of globalization. These dynamics have contributed to evolving interpretations of human sexuality, particularly regarding personal agency, sexual rights, and decision-making processes as individuals progress from adolescence into adulthood. As a result, religious and moral institutions cannot be considered detached from the extensive sexual realities shaping contemporary societies. Traditionally, religious institutions have played a pivotal role in shaping sexual norms and moral expectations through doctrinal teachings, sermons, and value-based guidance directed at young people. Nevertheless, existing literature demonstrates substantial variations in sexual norms and expectations across religious traditions and denominations. While certain religious groups promote strict abstinence prior to marriage, others conceptualize condom use solely within the context of contraception,

rather than acknowledging its role in both reproductive control and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (Eggebeen & Dew, 2019). Within the Nigerian context, there has been growing concern over emerging patterns of sexual exploitation involving religious leaders, commonly described as clerics. Reports of sexual abuse perpetrated against individuals under spiritual authority suggest a troubling deviation from established moral expectations. Akerele (2022) argued that sexual misconduct has become increasingly normalized within some Christian institutions, emphasizing that such practices have assumed an institutional character, particularly among segments of religious leadership. Parallel findings have been reported within Islamic religious contexts, where studies by Razan (2020), Sifat (2020), and Hussein and Tajuddin (2021) documented a noticeable escalation in sexual abuse cases involving Muslim religious leaders, thereby eroding the ethical and spiritual foundations of Islam.

Empirical evidence further indicates that morally unacceptable sexual behaviours have infiltrated religious institutions traditionally regarded as custodians of ethical instruction and moral discipline. Such behaviours manifest in various forms, including sexual deviance, extramarital relations, infidelity, sexual harassment, and rape, involving both religious officials and adherents (McMaster, 2020). Importantly, sexual violence is not confined to specific cultural groups or socio-economic categories. Global estimates from the World Health Organization indicate that approximately one-fifth of women have experienced sexual violence, while about 35% have been exposed to physical and/or sexual violence by intimate partners or non-partners during their lifetime (WHO, 2015). Despite the growing visibility of sexual phenomena, particularly within religious and moral environments, open engagement with these issues remains limited. This hesitation is largely attributable to deeply rooted socio-cultural norms that construct sexual matters as taboo, controversial, and morally stigmatizing, often associated with shame and social condemnation.

Against this backdrop, the present study examined the prevalence and consequences of sexual phenomena as perceived by religious clerics in North-Central Nigeria, with particular emphasis on the counselling implications of these experiences.

2. Statement of the Problem

In recent times, the prevalence of sexual immorality and misconduct in religious or moral institutions has become a serious public concern to religious clerics, medical practitioners, guidance counsellors, government in particular and society in general. These stakeholders are disturbed by the increasing incidence of rape, prostitution, sexual violence and abuse, sexual harassment and sexual perversion leading to unwanted pregnancies, abortions, non-completion of schooling among adolescents, sexually transmitted infections and diseases among others. More worrisome is the fact that these sexual phenomenon are taking place in social institutions that are expected to provide adequate sexuality education and protection to children, adolescent and youths in order to make them less vulnerable to forceful or voluntary pre-marital sex and its consequences for their sexual and reproductive health as well as personality and educational development.

Considering the fact that healthy sexual behaviours are instrumental to developing a society of sound, purpose-driven, and functional individuals, there is a need to address the recurring cases of sexual phenomenon in religious institutions using research as a tool to advocate for enhanced sexuality education.

Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are to examine the:

- i. Prevalent sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian Clerics in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.
- ii. Consequences of sexual phenomenon as perceived by clerics in North-Central, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the prevalent sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria?
2. What are the consequences of sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics in North-Central, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

Ho₁: There is no significant difference between the perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the prevalence of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

Ho₂: There is no significant difference between the perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the consequences of sexual phenomenon in North-Central, Nigeria.

3. Review of Related Literature

Sexual Phenomenon in Religious or Moral Institutions

Empirical research on sexual abuse within religious contexts consistently demonstrates that perpetrators exploit positions of authority, trust, and moral legitimacy to groom victims, often within environments characterized by secrecy and unquestioned loyalty (McMaster, 2020). The institutional authority of religion frequently facilitates grooming processes, as children, parents, and congregational members tend to place implicit trust in religious figures. Sexual grooming in religious settings typically involves the gradual normalization of boundary violations, beginning with non-sexual physical contact and progressively escalating into sexual abuse, often without the victim fully recognizing the inappropriate or abusive nature of the interaction (Raine & Kent, 2018).

In recent years, reports of sexual abuse within religious institutions have become increasingly visible. Although the Catholic Church has received the most public attention, clerical sexual abuse transcends Christianity and is evident across diverse faith traditions. Documented cases have involved leaders within Baptist and Evangelical churches, as well as non-Christian religious communities, including Muslim and Buddhist groups (Trujillo, 2019). Ajayi (2019) similarly observed that resistance against sexual violence in sacred spaces is longstanding and not confined to any single religion or denomination.

Within southern Nigeria, the proliferation of Pentecostal movements has been accompanied by intense competition among pastors who claim prophetic authority, miraculous powers, and divine favour. Some self-acclaimed prophets have been implicated in immoral and fraudulent practices, including the sexual exploitation of women who constitute the majority of their followers. Such exploitation is often justified through spiritual narratives, including promises of healing or "spiritual cleansing" (Agazue, 2016).

Ayodele (2019) attributed sexual offences within some religious contexts to institutional practices such as priestly celibacy, noting that victims are often silenced through financial

inducement, intimidation, and stigmatization. Predatory clerics, according to the study, violate their vows by weaponizing spiritual authority to manipulate congregants and obstruct disclosure of abuse.

Scholars emphasize that breaking the culture of silence within religious communities is critical to preventing and addressing child sexual abuse (CSA). Pulido, Vidu, Mello, and Oliver (2021) argued that faith-based institutions must actively participate in safeguarding efforts. Rudolfsson and Portin (2018) further stressed that survivors require supportive congregational environments where their experiences and needs are prioritized, underscoring the responsibility of religious institutions to be part of the solution rather than passive observers.

Notably, sacred texts across major religions explicitly condemn violence and sexual abuse. For instance, Leviticus 18:10 forbids incestuous abuse, while Matthew 18:16 emphasizes the protection of children within Christian doctrine. Similarly, Islamic teachings prohibit violence against children and explicitly condemn sexual abuse (Munir, 2015). Despite these doctrinal positions, violations persist within religious spaces.

Religious orientation has also been linked to variations in sexual behaviour. While most religions discourage premarital and extramarital sexual activity, individuals with intrinsic religiosity—those motivated by genuine spiritual commitment—tend to exhibit greater sexual restraint. Conversely, extrinsic religiosity, characterized by engagement for social or instrumental benefits, has been associated with higher levels of sexual permissiveness and infidelity (Ashton, 2018).

Quantitative studies examining religion and youth sexual behaviour across Sub-Saharan Africa indicate that religious affiliation alone does not eliminate vulnerability to abuse. In some cases, family members exploit religious rhetoric to normalize abusive behaviours, persuading children that such acts are divinely sanctioned. In Nigeria, the Ministry of Women Affairs (2021) reported that approximately 30% of women and girls aged 15–49 have experienced sexual abuse. Abatta (2022) further noted that religious institutions are implicated, with women, girls, and boys victimized by individuals masquerading as spiritual leaders.

Sexual abuse within religious establishments spans multiple faith traditions and is sustained by social stigma, fear of retaliation, and psychological manipulation. Perpetrators—including clerics, volunteers, religious educators, and camp counsellors—often prepare victims and their communities to accept abusive behaviour through spiritual justification and coercion. Strong religious identification may further discourage reporting, as congregants often prioritize institutional reputation over victims' testimonies (Abatta, 2022).

In Nigeria, evidence suggests that some Pentecostal pastors have used practices such as “exorcism” to disguise sexual assault, shielded by the absolute trust placed in them by congregations. Empirical findings on religious affiliation and sexual behaviour are mixed. Magadi and Uchudi (2015) found lower risks of early sexual debut among Protestant female adolescents compared to Catholics, while studies in Rwanda reported no significant denominational differences in primary sexual abstinence among male adolescents (Babalola et al., 2002, as cited in Somefun, 2019). In Zambia, affiliation with specific religious groups was associated with delayed sexual initiation but not with condom use, suggesting continued vulnerability to sexual health risks (Agha et al., 2014). Religious interpretations of sexuality vary widely. Some traditions conceptualize sexual behaviour as inherently spiritual, others as primarily physical, while certain religions

integrate both dimensions without distinction (Interfaith Working Group, 2015). Within Islam, sexual relations are prohibited outside marriage but highly valued within it, with both men and women encouraged to observe modesty in public life (Interfaith Working Group, 2015).

Religious institutions, including churches and mosques, therefore bear a complex responsibility in addressing sexual conduct and preventing abuse. However, contemporary debates surrounding issues such as homosexuality have further complicated moral discourse, as shifting legal and social norms in many Western societies increasingly challenge traditional religious teachings.

4. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. According to Thomas (2020), a cross-sectional design involves the collection of data from a diverse group of respondents at a single point in time, without manipulating or influencing the study variables. In this approach, variables are observed as they naturally occur, making the design particularly suitable for descriptive and comparative investigations. The choice of this design was informed by its suitability for obtaining data from a defined population or representative subset within a limited timeframe.

The population of the study comprised 602 religious clerics drawn from selected North-Central states of Nigeria, specifically Plateau, Kwara, and Niger States.

A sample size of 234 religious clerics was selected for the study. The sample size was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, which provides statistically acceptable sample sizes for given population totals. To ensure adequate representation and methodological rigor, a multistage sampling technique was employed. The adoption of this technique allowed for the integration of multiple sampling methods in a systematic manner.

In the first stage, 50% of the six North-Central states were selected using a simple random sampling technique. This approach was justified based on the assertion by Glenn (2012) that a 50% sampling fraction is permissible, particularly when the population size is relatively small. In the second stage, religious clerics were categorized into Muslim and Christian groups, and respondents were selected using a stratified sampling technique to ensure representation of both religious affiliations. Subsequently, proportionate sampling was applied to distribute respondents appropriately across the three selected states—Plateau, Kwara, and Niger—thereby ensuring equitable representation of the study population.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Prevalence, Perception and Consequences of Sexual Phenomenon in Moral Institutions Questionnaire (PPCSPMIQ)”. The instrument comprised 20 items, divided into two sections. The first section contained 10 items designed to measure the prevalence and perception of sexual phenomenon within religious and moral institutions, while the second section consisted of 10 items that assessed the perceived consequences of sexual phenomenon within these institutions.

The construct and content validity of the PPCSPMIQ were established through expert review by specialists in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. To determine the reliability of the instrument, a pilot study was conducted involving four religious clerics drawn from two moral institutions (one church and one mosque) located in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, which were

not included in the main study area. The test-retest method was employed to assess the consistency and stability of the instrument over time. Data obtained from the pilot test were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMC), yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.73. This value indicated that the instrument possessed adequate reliability and was therefore suitable for full-scale administration.

Data collected for the study were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques with the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. Mean scores and standard deviations were used to answer the research questions, while the independent samples t-test was employed to test the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

5. Data Analysis and Results

Research Question One

What are the prevalent sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 1: Analysis of Prevalent Sexual Phenomenon as Perceived by Muslim and Christian Clerics in Moral Institutions in North-Central, Nigeria

		N = 234					
S/N	Items	Muslims Clerics (n = 108)			Christian Clerics (n = 126)		
		\bar{x}	S.D	Decision	\bar{x}	S.D	Decision
1	Fornication is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.33	.98	Fairly Prevalent	2.64	.80	Prevalent
2	Adultery is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.30	1.00	Fairly Prevalent	2.53	.86	Prevalent
3	Rape is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.24	1.08	Fairly Prevalent	2.52	.89	Prevalent
4	Sexual perversion is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.41	.92	Fairly Prevalent	2.56	.84	Prevalent
5	Sexual exploitation is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.40	.93	Fairly Prevalent	2.44	.92	Fairly Prevalent
6	Sexual harassment is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.40	.94	Fairly Prevalent	2.50	.89	Prevalent
7	Pedophilia is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.40	.93	Fairly Prevalent	2.50	.88	Prevalent
8	Homosexualism is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.31	.96	Fairly Prevalent	2.27	.97	Fairly Prevalent
9	Bisexualism is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.29	1.05	Fairly Prevalent	2.20	1.07	Fairly Prevalent
10	Lesbianism is a prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions.	2.37	.94	Fairly Prevalent	2.30	.89	Fairly Prevalent
Section Mean/Standard Deviation		2.34	.97	Fairly Prevalent	2.44	.90	Fairly Prevalent

According to the results of the analysis in Table 1, Muslim clerics perceived fornication, adultery, rape, sexual perversion, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, pedophilia, homosexualism, bisexualism, lesbianism as fairly prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions in North-Central Nigeria; as all the items (1 – 10) had mean scores below the 2.50 decision rule and within the range of 1.75 to 2.49.

The results of the analysis also showed that Christian clerics perceived fornication, adultery, rape, sexual perversion, sexual harassment and pedophilia as prevalent sexual phenomenon in religious institutions; while sexual exploitation, homosexuality, bisexualism and lesbianism were perceived as fairly prevalent sexual phenomenon.

The section mean scores of 2.34 for Muslim clerics and 2.44 for Christian clerics were below the criterion mean of 2.50; which implies that sexual phenomenon is fairly prevalent in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics.

Research Question Two

What are the consequences of sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics in North-Central, Nigeria?

Table 2: Analysis of the Consequences of Sexual Phenomenon as Perceived by Muslim and Christian Clerics in North-Central, Nigeria N = 234

S/N	Items	Muslims Clerics (n = 108)			Christian Clerics (n = 126)		
		\bar{x}	S.D	Decision	\bar{x}	S.D	Decision
11	Fornication in religious institutions can lead to unwanted pregnancies.	2.72	.84	Agree	3.02	.65	Agree
12	Adultery in religious institutions can lead to termination of marriage.	2.64	.89	Agree	2.94	.72	Agree
13	Occurrence of rape in religious institutions can lead to loss of self esteem for the victim	2.67	.86	Agree	2.83	.79	Agree
14	Sexual perversion in religious institutions can lead to loss of self dignity for the perpetrator.	2.70	.85	Agree	2.89	.77	Agree
15	Sexual exploitation in religious institutions can lead to suicidal attempts for victims.	2.63	.89	Agree	2.86	.78	Agree
16	Sexual harassment in religious institutions can lead to depression of the victim.	2.68	.87	Agree	2.86	.78	Agree
17	Pedophilia in religious institutions can reduce to self confidence among the followership.	2.50	.93	Agree	2.63	.89	Agree
18	Homosexuality in religious institutions can lead to sexually transmitted diseases.	2.61	.90	Agree	2.88	.80	Agree
19	Bisexualism in religious institutions can lead to sexually transmitted diseases.	2.70	.86	Agree	2.83	.78	Agree
20	Lesbianism in religious institutions can lead to sexually transmitted diseases.	2.74	.82	Agree	2.86	.79	Agree
Section Mean/Standard Deviation		2.66	.87	Agree	2.86	.78	Agree

In Table 2, the results of the analysis on the consequences of sexual phenomenon shows that Muslim clerics agreed with all the items (11 – 20) with mean scores ranging from 2.50 to 2.74. Also, Christian clerics agreed with all the items (11 – 20) with mean scores ranging from 2.63 to 3.02. The section mean scores of 2.66 and 2.86 were observed for Muslim clerics and Christian clerics; which implies that there are consequences of sexual phenomenon as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics in North-Central, Nigeria. These consequences as perceived by Muslim and Christian clerics are unwanted pregnancies, termination of marriages, loss of self-esteem for the victim, loss of self-dignity for the perpetrator, suicidal attempts for victims, depression of the victim, and sexually transmitted diseases.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the prevalence of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference between the Perception of Muslim and Christian Clerics on the Prevalence of Sexual Phenomenon in Moral Institutions in North-Central, Nigeria

t-test for Equality of Means									
Prevalence of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions	Clerics	N	Mean	S.D	t	df	Sig.	Decision	
	Muslim Clerics	108	2.34	.97	-0.8127	232	0.194	Accepted	
	Christian Clerics	126	2.44	.90					

* $p > 0.05$ = No Significant difference

The result of the test of hypotheses in Table 3 shows that $t = -0.8127$, $df = 232$, $p = 0.194$, indicating that the probability value (p) is greater than the alpha level ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, which implies that there is no significant difference between perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the prevalence of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between the perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the consequences of sexual phenomenon in North-Central, Nigeria.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Significant Difference between the Perception of Muslim and Christian Clerics on the consequences of Sexual Phenomenon in Moral Institutions in North-Central, Nigeria

t-test for Equality of Means									
Consequences of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions	Clerics	N	Mean	S.D	t	df	Sig.	Decision	
	Muslim Clerics	108	2.66	0.87	-1.8383	232	0.187	Accepted	
	Christian Clerics	126	2.86	0.70					

* $p > 0.05$ = No Significant difference

The result of the test of hypotheses in Table 4 shows that $t = -1.8383$, $df = 232$, $p = 0.187$, indicating that the probability value (p) is greater than the alpha level ($p > 0.05$). Thus, the null hypothesis is accepted, which implies that there is no significant difference between perception of Muslim and Christian clerics on the consequences of sexual phenomenon in moral institutions in North-Central, Nigeria.

6. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that sexual phenomenon is fairly prevalent within moral and religious institutions in North-Central Nigeria, as perceived by both Muslim and Christian clerics. This outcome suggests that religious settings, traditionally regarded as moral strongholds, are not insulated from sexually related misconduct. The finding aligns with earlier studies which reported that inappropriate sexual behaviours have increasingly penetrated religious institutions expected to instil moral values, attitudes, and acceptable conduct among adherents (McMaster, 2020; Raine & Kent, 2018; Trujillo, 2019; Agazue, 2016; Ayodele, 2019; Akerele, 2022; Razan, 2020; Sifat, 2020; Hussin & Tajuddin, 2021). Collectively, these studies documented manifestations of sexual phenomenon such as sexual perversion, adultery, infidelity, sexual harassment, and rape involving religious leaders, clerics, and practitioners. The consistency between the present findings and existing literature underscores the pervasive nature of sexual phenomenon within religious institutions across different faith traditions.

Furthermore, the study established that the perceived consequences of sexual phenomenon among clerics are largely negative and multidimensional, encompassing physical, mental, health-related, personality, and educational domains. This finding corroborates previous empirical studies that highlighted the adverse outcomes associated with sexual misconduct, particularly among adolescents and young people (Adeola & Adams, 2019; Okereke, 2016; Budeba & Timothy, 2014; Sule et al., 2015; Isokon et al., 2020; Odo et al., 2020). Specifically, Adeola and Adams (2019) reported that engagement in premarital sexual behaviour predisposes students to relational and social challenges that negatively affect academic performance in Kabba-Bunu Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria. Similarly, Budeba and Timothy (2014) identified examination failure, school dropout, unintended pregnancy, and exposure to sexually transmitted infections, including HIV, as prominent consequences of illicit sexual relationships.

Consistent with these outcomes, Isokon et al. (2020) found that sexual immorality among teenage girls contributed significantly to increased rates of teenage pregnancy, school dropout, and youth restiveness in Yakur Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Likewise, Odo et al. (2020) observed that sexual promiscuity among adolescents was associated with diminished self-worth, heightened dropout rates from secondary schools, depression, and truancy. These findings reinforce the present study's conclusion that sexual phenomenon poses serious psychosocial and educational risks, thereby warranting sustained preventive and counselling interventions within religious and moral institutions.

7. Conclusion

The findings of the study indicate that sexual phenomenon is fairly prevalent within moral institutions in North-Central Nigeria, as perceived by both Muslim and Christian clerics. Additionally, the study revealed that clerics across both religious affiliations perceived sexual phenomenon as having diverse and predominantly negative consequences within moral institutions in the study area.

In conclusion, the study established that sexual phenomenon represents a contemporary and significant reality within moral institutions in North-Central Nigeria, with consequences that are multidimensional in nature, affecting various aspects of individual and institutional wellbeing.

8. Recommendations

The following recommendations were made in view of the findings of the study

1. Religious institutions should organize interdenominational seminars for religious clerics to promote and intensify sermons and messages to the adolescents and youths on sexual abstinence, health sexual behaviours and appropriate sexual conduct in order to reduce the incidences of unhealthy sexual exploitation, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.
2. Religious heads of moral institutions should continuously demonstrate eagerness to promote sexual morality among religious clerics and members of their congregations using various enlightenment programmes that are structured to facilitate sexuality education.
3. Religious institutions, teachers, parents and students in the North-Central should collaborate towards initiating and implementing regular sexuality education based programmes that emphasize sexual discipline in order to reduce the prevalence of sexual phenomenon in religious, educational and family based institutions.

9. Implications for Guidance and Counselling

The findings of this study have several important implications for guidance and counselling practice. First, guidance counsellors should collaborate with moral institutions to establish structured counselling forums that provide professional support to victims of sexual abuse and related misconduct. Such services would help affected individuals cope with stigma, restore self-confidence, and rebuild self-esteem.

Additionally, guidance counsellors should organize regular enlightenment and educational programmes within moral institutions to sensitize members of congregations about the consequences of engaging in illicit sexual behaviours. These interventions would contribute to promoting the overall physical, psychological, and social wellbeing of individuals within the institutions.

Furthermore, guidance counsellors should advocate for continuous counselling and value-oriented discussions within moral institutions to address inappropriate sexual behaviours among both religious clerics and congregation members. By fostering awareness and encouraging corrective interventions, counsellors can play a critical role in mitigating sexual misconduct and promoting healthy moral and sexual conduct within these settings.

References

1. Abatta, A. (2022). How Nigeria can disrupt the abnormality of sexual abuse in religious institutions. Retrieved on 5th May, 2023 from <http://www.sexualabusetrends-in-Nigeria.ng>.
2. Adeola, M.F., & Adams, D. (2019). Influence of premarital sexual behaviour on secondary school students' academic performance in Kabba-BunuL.G.A of Kogi State, Nigeria. *Journal of CUDIMAC*, 7(1), 19 – 24. <http://cudimac.unn.edu.ng/volume-7>.
3. Agazue, C. (2016). "He told me that my waist and private parts have been ravaged by demons". Sexual exploitation of female church members by "prophets" in Nigeria. *Dignity: A Journal of Analysis of Exploitation and Violence*, 1 (10), 1 – 16. <https://digitalcommons.uri.edu/dignity/vol1/ISS1/10>.
4. Agha, S., Hutchinson, P., & Kusanthan, T. (2014). Sexual initiation and condom use in Zambia. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 38(5), 550 – 555.
5. Ajayi, T. (2019). #Church Too? The women's right movement and the sexual emancipation of "sacred" spaces in Nigeria. Brookly, NY: Social Science Research Council.
6. Akerele, A. (2022). Sexual immorality and the church. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/508738>.
7. Ashton, M.C. (2018). *Individual differences and personality* (3rd edition). www.researchgate.net/publication/285935709_individual_differences_and_personality.
8. Ayodele, J.O. (2019). Clergy men and victims' reporting of sexual abuse in Lagos, Nigeria: A qualitative study. *Journal of Gender and Behaviour*, 17(2), 118-122. Retrieved on 12th June, 2023 from <https://hdl.handle.net/10520/EJC-16f17dccaC>.

-
9. Budeba, P.M., & Timothy, N. (2014). Effects of students' sexual relationships on academic performance among secondary school students in Tanzania. *Academic Research International*, 5(4), 278 – 286.
 10. Eggebeen, D., & Dew, J. (2019). The role of religion in adolescence for family formation in young adulthood. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 71(1), 108-121.
 11. Findarticles.com (May 2012). You may have thought your sexual pressure was the one thing that could get any one better. <http://www.findarticles.com.you-may-have-thought-your-sexual-pressure-was-the-one-thing-that-could-get-any-one-better>.
 12. Gallagher, S., & Tierney, W. (2013). Religiousness/religiosity. *Encyclopedia of behavioural medicine*. Springer. https://link.springer.com.referenceworkentry/10.1007%2F978-1-4419-1005-9_489.
 13. Glenn, I.D. (2012). Determining sample size. University of Florida Press.
 14. Hussin, N., & Tajuddin, H.H.A. (2021). An Islamic perspective on preventing sexual abuse against children. *IIUM Law Journal*, 29(1), 155-175.
 15. Isokon, B.E., Onyema, O.A. Ede, V.I., Archibong, E.P., & Oeten, U.B. (2020). Sexual behaviour and domestic violence among teenage girls in Yakurr Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 9(2), 102 – 108.
 16. Lyinto, W.J., Masinde, J.M., & Chege, K.G. (2017). The influence of sex education on adolescents' involvement in premarital sex and adolescent pregnancies in Arusha City, Tanzania. *International Journal of Educational Policy Research and Review*, 4(6), 113 – 124.
 17. Magadi, M.A., & Uchudi, J. (2015). Onset of sexual activity among adolescents in HIV/AIDS-affected households in sub-Saharan Africa. *Journal of Biology and Social Sciences*, 47(2), 238 – 257.
 18. Mc Master, G. (2020). Researchers reveal patterns of sexual abuse in religious settings. <https://www.ualberta.ca/folio.2020/08/researchers-reveal-patterns-of-sexual-abuse-in-religious-settings.html>.
 19. Munir, M. (2015). Rights of the child: An Islamic perspective on preventing violence, abuse, and exploitation of children and Pakistani Law. *Hamdard Islamicus*, 38, 33 – 58.
 20. Pulido, C.M., Vidu, A., Mello, R.R. & Oliver, E. (2021). Zero tolerance of children's sexual abuse from interreligious dialogue. *Religions*, 12 (549), 1 – 11, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12070549>.
 21. Raine, S., & Kent, S. (2019). The grooming of children for sexual abuse in religious settings: Unique characteristics and select case studies. *Aggression and violent behaviour*, 48(2), 189-216. Doi.10.1016/j.avb.2019.08.017.
 22. Razan, M. (2020). Muslim women are speaking out on being sexually abused by sheikhs. <https://stepfeed.com.muslim-women-are-speaking-out-on-being-sexually-abused-by-sheikhs>.
 23. Rudolfsson, L. & Portin, F. (2018). It's almost impossible to speak about it: Sexual abuse, forgiveness and the need for restitution rituals. *Religion*, 9 (421), 10 – 12.
 24. Sifat, R.I. (2020), Sexual violence against women in Bangladesh during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Asian Journal of Psychiatric*, 54, 118-127. Doi:10.1016/i.ajp.2020102455.
-

-
25. Somefun, O.D. (2019). Religiosity and sexual abstinence among Nigerian youths: Does parent religion matter? *BMC Public Health*, 19, 416 – 424.
 26. Sule, H.A., Akor, J.A., Toluhi, O.J., Suleiman, R.O., Akpihi, L., & Ali, O.U. (2015). Impact of sex education in Kogi State, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(3), 31 – 34.
 27. Thomas, L. (2020). What is a cross-sectional study? <https://www.scribbr.com/methodology/cross-sectional-study/>
 28. Trujillo, Y. (2019). The role of theology and organizational structure in addressing clergy sexual abuse. Berkley Center.
 29. WHO (2015). Guidelines for medico – legal care for the victims of sexual violence. Geneva.

ABOUT EMBAR PUBLISHERS

Embar Publishers is an open-access, international research based publishing house committed to providing a 'peer reviewed' platform to outstanding researchers and scientists to exhibit their findings for the furtherance of society to provoke debate and provide an educational forum. We are committed about working with the global researcher community to promote open scholarly research to the world. With the help of our academic Editors, based in institutions around the globe, we are able to focus on serving our authors while preserving robust publishing standards and editorial integrity. We are committed to continual innovation to better support the needs of our communities, ensuring the integrity of the research we publish, and championing the benefits of open research.

Our Journals

1. [Research Journal of Education , linguistic and Islamic Culture - 2945-4174](#)
2. [Research Journal of Education and Advanced Literature – 2945-395X](#)
3. [Research Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies - 2945-4077](#)
4. [Research Journal of Arts and Sports Education - 2945-4042](#)
5. [Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Technologies - 2945-4158](#)
6. [Research Journal of Economics and Business Management - 2945-3941](#)
7. [Research Journal of Multidisciplinary Engineering Technologies - 2945-4166](#)
8. [Research Journal of Health, Food and Life Sciences - 2945-414X](#)
9. [Research Journal of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences - 2945-4336](#)
10. [Research Journal of Applied Medical Sciences - 2945-4131](#)
11. [Research Journal of Surgery - 2945-4328](#)
12. [Research Journal of Medicine and Pharmacy - 2945-431X](#)
13. [Research Journal of Physics, Mathematics and Statistics - 2945-4360](#)