

Gender, Educational attainment and Marital Instability as Predictors of Religious Affiliation among married teaching staff of Nigerian Universities.

Kelly Osariemen Okpamen

Department of Sociology
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
kellyokpamen@gmail.com

Sunday Ojonugwa Ameh, PhD

Department of Sociology
Federal University Wukari, Taraba State, Nigeria
sunday.ameh@fuwukari.edu.ng

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Abstract: The study examines the influence of gender, educational attainment and marital instability as predictors of religious affiliation among married teaching staff of Nigerian Universities. Using convenience sampling approach, data was collected from 324 married Participants whose ages ranges between 20-60 years. Marital Instability Index (MII) and Religious Affiliation Scale (RAS) were used for data collection. Hypotheses were tested using SPSS version 20. Gender and educational attainment shows to be positively and negatively influence religious affiliation respectively, while marital instability on the other hand, was found not to be a significant predictor of religious affiliation. Finally, there was a significant interactive effect of gender, educational status and marital instability on religious affiliation. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teaching staff should avoid allowing their educational attainment and marital conflict affect their level of religious devotion and commitment to their faith.

Keywords: Gender, Educational Status, Marital instability, Religious affiliation, married teaching staff, Nigerian Universities.

INTRODUCTION

The general view of religiosity is one intense involvement in worship and commitment to the activities of one's faith. Persons with these descriptions are often perceived to be closer to God, righteous and holy as God, they are either refers to as men of God, Imam, prophet or servant of God as the case maybe. Religion covers our faith and spirituality, so therefore, one may be conscious of the sacredness of the subject in discussion, however, we must look at religious affiliation from the social point of view in other to make an objective submission about the subject. Religious affiliation described the source of one's believes and explains to a greater extent why we do the things we do. Often at times, it serves as a way of group identification; when we categories people into being a Muslims, Christians, Catholics, and Protestants and so on. It's the extent to which individual engage in religious activities, hold strong religious views and believe in prescribed religious practices (Omoluabi 1995). The foregoing definition portrait religion as the basis for our idea of who God is, His existence, and the spirituality that surround His worship. Wasley (1980) see religious affiliation as absolute commitment to the values and beliefs of traditional religious institution. The author also defined religious affiliation as being identified and committed to the activities of a religious group.

Commitment to religious activities especially on the part of the wife, invariably strengthen the marital union between an husband and a wife, meaning that commitment to religious practices reduces the crisis at home and enhances marital stability (Joshua & Robert 2010). Marital instability reflects the level of conflict in marital unions. It's both cognitive and behavioral evaluation of instability and potential for divorce of couple (Edwards, Johnson & Booth, 1987) marital instability can affect the general wellbeing of a home as well as the productivity of the married couple irrespective of the religious group you are affiliated to. It interesting to note, that

Religious group affiliation in some cases provide a foundational knowledge especially in marriage: this implies that, some level of education is been provided by the religious institution.

The main objective of this study is to thoroughly examine the influence of educational attainment and marital conflict experience by a married University teaching staff on his/her level of religious devotion and commitment to his faith.

Previous investigations have been done in the area of the relationship between socioeconomic factors, marital instability and religious affiliation. However, many of these studies were carried out in developed countries like the US, UK and others leaving a scanty indigenous literature on these variables especially in the educational sector. This position therefore calls for attention.

Education and Religious Affiliation

Studies have examined the linkage between religious affiliation and educational attainment and found both positive and negative association. According to the work of Freeman (1986) when he was looking at the relation of Churchgoing and other background factors to the Socioeconomic Performance of Black Male Youths from Inner-City Tracts and find a positive effect of churchgoing on school attendance. Regnerus (2003) look out religion and positive Adolescent Outcomes and find that, participation in religious activities is related to better test scores and heightened educational expectations among tenth-grade public school students. In analysis of world value survey, they find a negative relationship between years of education and faith in God, with similar negative correlations for other religious faith while, in contrast, there were strong positive relationship between years of education and belief in God in many developed countries like UK, France and United States of America Sacerdoteet'al (2001).

In similar vein, internal survey by Gallup international (2015) conducted a study and find that, the most religious people had lower level of education and make up majority in all levels of educational attainment. In a similar vein, (Neil & Solon 2009) carried out a research on over 1,400 professors from different field of study and of different religious faith, they found out that in totality, most university professors were less religious than the general citizenry population of US.

Pew centre (2016) conducted analytical study on religion and education around the world, and found that the most religious group in the world is Jews with an average of 13.4 years of schooling and have the highest number of graduate and post-graduate degrees per capital, follow by the Christians group as the second religious group with 9.3 years of schooling. The lowest were Muslims and Hindus with an average of 5.6 years of schooling respectively.

Marital instability and Religious Affiliation

There are many variables that have influence religious affiliation; one of this variable is marital instability. According to Joshua and Brown (2001) in their study "Religious Homogamy, Marital Conflict, and Stability in Same-Faith and Interfaith Jewish Marriages" were they examine if a positive correlation would exist between religious homogamy and marital stability and if the relationship would be mediated by the level of marital conflict. That is, as marital conflict increases, marital stability should decrease. They found that more disagreement on Jewish issues predicted higher levels of marital conflict. Higher conflict, in turn, predicted less marital stability. The religious commitment of the wife has a significant influence on that of the children because the wife has a greater impact on the religious socialization of the children especially in inter-faith marriages (Glenn, 1982). Level of religiosity as correlated with marital satisfaction shows positive correlation which implies that heterosexually couples who observe religious beliefs have higher rate of marital satisfaction and stability (Khodabakhsh, Esfandiar, & Seyed 2008).

Arigbobuet'al (2011) in their study; gender, marital status and religious affiliation as factors of assertiveness among Nigerian Educational Majors find out that, there is no significant between gender and religious affiliation as well as assertiveness.

Vaughn and Tim, (2013) reported that couple with frequent religious attendance has the greatest significant impact on marital stability, especially when both partners attend church regularly, the couple has less risk of divorce, and spouse difference in commitment to church activities increase the risk of divorce. Jafariet'al (2015) in their study titled "marital satisfaction and adherence to religion" find out that couple who were both committed to religion tend to score high in satisfaction scale compared to couples without adherence to religion, therefore promoting religious beliefs and commitment thus increases marital satisfaction, failure to do so can lead to marital instability. From the above review, it is therefore hypothesized that:

Gander, educational status, and marital instability will independently and jointly predict religious affiliation among married teaching staff of Nigerian Universities.

METHOD

Design

The study employed a cross sectional survey approach. Responses were collected from teaching staff across selected universities within the six geo-political zones in the country using standardized questionnaires, to assess gender, educational attainment, and marital instability as predictors of religious affiliation.

Participants

A total of 335 questionnaires were sent out to all the selected Universities in Nigeria, 327 were returned and 324 were analyzed. Out of this number, 172 (53.1%) were males, 152 (46.9%) were females. The ages of the participants ranged from 20-60 years, with 14 (4.3%) were between 20-30 years old, 86 (26.5%) were between 31-40 years, 192 (59.3%) were between 41-50 years, 32 (9.9%) were between 51-60 years old and none of the participant were 61 and above. Their level of educational qualification is as follow; 41(12.7%) were first degree holders, 111 (34.3%) were second degree holders, 149 (46.0%) were third degree holders and 23 (7.1%) have post-doctorate degrees. 156 (48.1%) of the participants were Christians while 168 (51.9%) were Muslims. 180 (55.6%) of the participant were between the rank of a Graduate Assistant (GA) to Lecturer One (L1), and 144 (44.4%) were between the rank of a Senior Lecturer (SL) to Professorial cadre.

Instruments

Data for the study were collected using two instruments. They include the marital instability index (MII) and religious affiliation scale (RAS). Marital instability index was developed by Edward et'al (1987). The MII is a 14-item instrument designed to measure marital instability especially proneness to divorce. Questions was structured in a "Yes" or "No" response format, with "No" signifying Not Divorce prone and the "Yes" signifying Divorce prone. Question such as: "as far as you know, has your spouse ever thought your marriage was in trouble?" and "have you talked about dividing up the property?" the MII has an excellent internal consistency (reliability) with an alph of .93. The present study recorded a reliability coefficient of .72.

Religious Affiliation scale (RAS) was develop by Omoluabi (1995); it is a 21-item inventory designed to assess the extent to which individual engage in religious activities or hold strong religious view and believe the prescribed religious practices. The test items are scored based on 2-point; true or false format. Items are scored by counting the number of item in which the participant shade "True" and multiply by three. Score range from 3 to 63. Omoluabi (1995) and Okunola (1996) provided the psychometric properties for the scale. A test-retest reliability coefficient of .97 was reported by the author. Erinosa (1996) correlated RAS with life satisfaction index and obtained a divergent validity coefficient of -.26; (the more satisfied with life, the less the tendency to be religious). In this research, a reliability coefficient of 0.55 was recorded.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher personally as well as with the aid of a research assistant administered the questionnaires to the participants at their various departments in their Universities after duly seeking for permission from the heads of departments. The sampling techniques employed was the convenience sampling techniques, this means that only lecturers who were available at that time and accepted to participate in the study were administered the questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Collected data for this study were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences. (SPSS) Version 20. Regression analysis was used to test the study hypotheses, also descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation and percentages were used in analyzing the demographic data of participants.

RESULTS

Table 1: Interco-relations among study variables

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Gender	1			
2. Educational attainment	.05	1		
3. Marital instability	.14	.49**	1	
4. Religious affiliation	.40**	-.34**	.04	1

***: Correlation is significant at 0.01 level*

Table one shows there is a significant relationship between gender and religious affiliation. Also, there is a significant negative relationship between educational attainment and religious affiliation. And marital instability has a significant relationship with educational attainment. On the other hand, marital instability has no significant relationship with religious affiliation.

Table 2: Summary of multiple regressions showing gender, educational attainment, and marital instability as independent and joint predictors of religious affiliation.

Variables	R	R ²	F	Beta	t	p
Constant	0.57	0.32	52.40	43.27	14.96	< 0.05
Gender				0.39	8.51	< 0.05
Educational attainment				-0.47	-8.98	< 0.05
Marital instability				-0.12	-0.22	> 0.05

The result in table two shows that, gender significantly influence religious affiliation of universities teaching staff in Nigeria ($\beta = 0.39$; $P < 0.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that gender will independently predict religious affiliation is accepted. Also, educational attainment is negatively significant to religious affiliation ($\beta = -0.47$; $P < 0.05$). On the other hand, marital instability did not independently predict religious affiliation ($\beta = -0.12$; $P > 0.05$). Finally, the result in table two also shows that gender, educational attainment and marital instability jointly predict religious affiliation significantly ($F(3,320)=52.40$; $P < 0.05$).

DISCUSSION

The primary responsibility of an academic staff is knowledge acquisition through scientific research and dissemination via teaching. On this basis, one may expect them to be more devoted to religious activities due to their level of intellectual acumen, that is to say, having professors to be deacons, elders, even pastors and Imams in their respective worship centre due to their assumed level of understanding and teaching skills. On a contrary, the study shows that empirical knowledge is less relevant when it comes to knowing God or faith based knowledge.

The study was designed to assess the independent and joint prediction of gender, educational attainment and marital instability on religious affiliation of Universities teaching staff in Nigeria. The result of analysis shows that gender independently is significant to religious affiliation of University teaching staff. This result implies that, irrespective of your gender, one can be devoted to religious activities as an academic staff of a University; this result is in agreement with the work of McGowan (2012) who found female Christians showing more religiosity than the men counterpart.

The result also shows that educational attainment is independently negatively significant to religious affiliation, with educational attainment contributing -47% to the variability. This implies that, the level of educational achievement have a reverse impact on the level of dedication and devotion to religious activities among university teaching staff. This finding is in agreement with the work of Neil and Salon (2009) who reported negative impact of educational attainment of university professors on Religion devotion in US.

The finding also revealed that, marital instability on the other hand, does not predict religious affiliation, with marital instability contributing -12% independently to the variability of Religious affiliation, what this implies is that, crisis experience by married couples most times could be a distraction to religious commitment. This finding is similar to the finding of Vaughn and Tim, (2013) who find a significant correlation between attending church regularly and marital stability.

Finally, the result also shows a joint influence of gender, educational attainment and marital instability on religious affiliation with 43.2% variability. It means that other factors are liable to influence religious devotion of Universities teaching staff aside those captures in this study. And these call for a further investigation by researchers.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the independent and joint influence of gender, educational attainment and marital instability on religious affiliation among married teaching staff of Nigerian universities. It was discovered that gender and educational attainment have positive and negative significant influence on religious affiliation respectively will marital instability on the other hand has no

significant influence on religious affiliation. Finally it is also concluded that gender, educational attainment and marital instability have a combined influence on religious affiliation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Irrespective of gender, University teaching staff in Nigeria can be dedicated to their religious activities.
- ii. University teaching staff in Nigeria should avoid allowing their level of their educational achievement affect their religious affiliation and commitment.
- iii. University lecturers should also minimize the rate of marital conflict they experienced in their marriage influencing their level of Religious devotion.

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