APPRAISAL OF THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN CURBING DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This study appraised the role of religious institutions in curbing deviant behaviours in Nigeria. The study focused on religious attendance and religious commitment as predictors of deviant behaviours among adolescents. Fifty (N = 50) adolescents participated in this study. They included individuals between the ages of 13 to 19. The sample was selected using convenient sampling techniques. Their age ranged from 13 to 19, with a mean age of 15.2 and a standard deviation of 2.25. They comprised thirty-eight (38) males and twelve (12) females. Two instruments were used to obtain data: General deviance subscale of the Normative Deviance Scale and Religious Commitment Inventory (RCI-10). Step-Wise, Multiple Regression and cross-sectional design were used for the study and to analyse the data. The result showed that Religious attendance entered in step 2 of the equation significantly predicted deviant behaviours among adolescents (β = .51, t = 4.023, p<.001). Religious commitment entered in step 3 of the equation significantly predicted deviant behaviours among adolescents (β = .39, t = -2.431, p<.001). Both null hypotheses were rejected. Merits and demerits of the study were stated, and recommendations made.

Keywords: Appraisal, Religious Institutions, Deviant behaviours, Adolescents, Nigeria.
APPRAISAL OF THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN CURBING DEVIANT BEHAVIOURS

Introduction
There has been an on-going debate for more than 30 years on the deterrent effect of religion on crime and deviance. While many of these studies support that religion is inversely associated with various kinds of deviant and criminal behaviours (Benda 2002; Johnson et al. 2000; Johnson and Jang 2011; Marsiglia et al. 2005), others report that religion is unrelated to deviance and crime (Heaton 2006; Hirschi and Stark 1969). Some of the results suggest that the relationship between religion and crime is spurious since both religiosity and criminal behaviours are entirely attributable to the individual’s neurological predisposition (Cochran et al. 1994; Ellis and Peterson 1996).

Religious beliefs and commitments are intertwined with a variety of socialization patterns and behavioural outcomes. These relationships are complex and multidimensional, and it can be difficult to assess with precision what effect “religion” – in both its private and public forms – has on social life in the aggregate. Survey research on children and youth has frequently (but not universally) yielded a generic finding: that religious belief and practice protect against a range of delinquent behaviour.

From the prayer habits and beliefs of the individual to the organizational collaboration of the interfaith community, the cognitive aspects of religion (e.g., supernaturalist beliefs, self-identifications, etc.) motivate and direct important behavioural outcomes (and vice versa). In short, religion, in both its private and public forms, shapes the behaviour of our youth. As Regnerus (2008) argued in his study of religion’s influence on delinquency, even youth who enjoy the resources and other advantages that already put them at low-risk for delinquency (e.g., two-parent homes, higher SES) still benefit from religious affiliation compared to religiously unaffiliated youth.

From Durkheim ([1912] 1965), Merton (1938, 1957), and beyond, there has been an argument between social theorists on the role that religion plays in social integration and regulation. Glock and Stark (1965) claim that “one of the abiding general propositions of sociology is that religion serves the central and crucial function in the society of supporting…social integration” (p. 170). From this position, religious factors should be focused on reducing the level of personal anomie among anomic individuals (for this case, professional football players), and as a result, reduce the probability of both deviant and criminal behaviour. This can be achieved by providing regulation, social integration, and support. Thus, individuals who are part of a religious community would be less likely to engage in deviant and unlawful behaviour.

Baier and Wright’s (2001) meta-analysis of 60 studies published between 1969 and 1998, found that religious beliefs and behaviours exert a moderate negative effect on individuals' criminal behaviour. Similarly, Johnson et al ’s (2000) systematic review1 of the religiosiy and delinquency literature analysed 40 studies published between 1985 and 1997. They concluded that religious measures are usually inversely related to deviance with a higher proportion of more rigorous studies finding this relationship.

The three most recent reviews assessing the association between religion, substance use, and recovery, all find that religion negatively affected these behaviours. Chitwood, Weiss, and
Leukefeld’s (2008) systematic review of 105 studies published between 1997 and 2006 saw a relationship between religiosity and reduced risk of substance use. Likewise, Weaver, Flannelly, and Strock (2004) reviewed the 29 studies published between 1990 and 2003 on the relationship between religion and adolescent tobacco use and found that the majority included at least one significant relationship between religion and tobacco use. In the most recent study of the religion and substance use relationship, Yeung, Chan, and Lee’s (2009) meta-analysis of 22 studies published between 1995 and 2007 found that religion is usually associated with less youth involvement with substance use, most notably alcohol, cigarette, marijuana, and other illicit drugs.

However, research on the effect of religion on deviance has long been a source of controversy among social scientists. Hirschi and Stark’s (1969) in their classic research, "Hellfire and Delinquency," cited that religion had no real deterrent effect on deviant, delinquent behaviour. Since then, a number of other researchers (Lee, Rice and Gillespie, 1997; Johnson et al., 2000; Baier and Wright, 2001; Johnson, 2003) have also found religious influence to have moderate to significant deterrent effects on both deviant and criminal behaviour. Therefore, the perspective that religion reduces the occurrence of deviance and crime is not “without empirical foundation” or, for that matter, the need for more research (Dilulio Jr., 2009, p. 115).

The last two decades, however, have brought about some significant changes in the religious landscape, especially with regard to younger generations (Hout, 2017). Changing demographics, shifting patterns of religious affiliation and religious switching (Sherkat, 2014), increasingly organized secularism (Cimino & Smith, 2014), growing numbers of those claiming no religion (Hammer et al., 2012), and evolving attitudes on a wide range of political, social, and religious issues (Wuthnow, 1998) all have implications for the premise that religion reduces deviant behaviour. This situation warrants continued study of this premise, given these societal changes.

Therefore, the question remains: Does religion really prevent or reduce deviant behaviour among American youth in general? And are adolescents without religious faith more likely to be delinquent? Although we have a vast body of literature dealing with the relationship of religion to social deviance, and much empirical work has examined the behaviours of religious believers – and increasingly nonbelievers (Zuckerman, 2013) – few studies directly compare them to each other (Didyoung et al., 2013), especially with regard to children and adolescents. The present study furthers this line of research, exploring whether such assumptions are justified by examining relevant empirical relationships between (non)religious identification and deviant behaviour.

Using multiple regression models, the effects of religious commitment and church attendance are estimated while controlling for other risks/protective factors and demographics, in order to provide new insights into the effects of religion on deviance.

**Objectives of the Research**

Religious attendance will significantly predict deviant behaviours among adolescents.

1. Religious commitment will significantly predict deviant behaviours among adolescents.
Research Questions

1. Will religious attendance significantly predict deviant behaviour among adolescents?
2. Will religious commitment significantly predict deviant behaviour among adolescents?

Hypotheses

(a) Religious attendance will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among adolescents
(b) Religious Commitment will not significantly predict deviant behaviour among adolescents

Conceptual Review

Concept of Deviance
In the sociological context, deviance describes actions or behaviours that violate cultural norms, which include formally-enacted rules (e.g., crime) and all informal violations of social norms (e.g., rejecting folkways and mores). Norms are the specific behavioural standards and ways in which people are supposed to act. They are the paradigms for predictable behaviour in any society, but are not necessarily moral or even grounded in morality. In fact, they are just pragmatic and paradoxically irrational. Norms are described as rules of conduct; not neutral or universal, but ever-changing. They shift as society shifts. They are reflective of inherent biases and interests and sometimes can be very selfish and usually one-sided. Norms vary from class to class and in the generational gap. They are contextual in nature.

Deviance can be defined as a violation of norms or failure to conform to culturally reinforced norms. Social norms are different in each culture. For example, a deviant act committed in one society or culture may break a social norm in that society but may be considered normal for another culture and society. Deviance can break the intact social norms.

Viewing deviance as the violation of social norms; sociologists have characterized it as any thought, feeling, or action that the members of a social group judge to be a violation of their values or rules. To them it includes the violation of the norms of a society or group; conduct that violates the concept of appropriate conduct as shared by the members of a social system; the departure of certain kinds of behaviour from the accepted norms of a particular society at a particular time, and the violation of certain types of group norms where behaviour goes in a disapproved direction and meets sufficient degree to exceed the tolerance limit of the community.

Concept of Religion
The term "religion" is relatively vague, and while there is no universal consensus on the definition, the general nature of the concept can be delineated. Religion is an organized system of beliefs, practices, and rituals of a community. Religion is designed to increase a sense of closeness to the sacred or transcendent (whether that be God, a higher power, or ultimate truth/reality), and to promote an understanding of one's relationship to and responsibility for others living together in a community. Religion, then, is community-focused (organized into formal practices that are observable and measurable), maybe authoritarian in terms of
behaviours and responsibilities, and is often concerned with beliefs and doctrines that, among other goals, seek to separate good from evil (Koenig, 2005).

In addition, one must consider how, specifically, the individual accepts religion. Allport and Ross (1961) describe intrinsic and extrinsic religious orientations. Those individuals with an intrinsic religious orientation value religion in and of itself. Any other benefits religion offers are secondary to this ultimate significance. "Having embraced a creed, the individual endeavours to internalize and follow it fully. It is in this sense that he lives his religion" (P. 434 original emphasis). Individuals with an extrinsic orientation use religion as a means to an end whether to gain social status and networks, comfort, or to justify their life and actions. In any case, religious teachings are secondary, shaped to serve the individual's primary needs. "The extrinsic type turns to God, but without turning away from self" (P. 434). The presence of these differing orientations has significant consequences for individual well-being. One's level of intrinsic religious orientation is one of five factors that predict the speed of depression recovery (Koenig 2005; McCullough and Larson 1999). Research also indicates that anxiety is positively correlated with an extrinsic orientation but is negatively associated with an intrinsic orientation (Baker & Gorsuch 1982 c.f. Koenig 2005)

Religion, thus, is multidimensional and empirical research has targeted each of its varied aspects in the interest of uncovering its dynamic relationship with other indicators. Studies tend to emphasize the following facets: public participation, private practices, religious affiliation, religious attendance, and religious commitment (George et al. 2002).

**Empirical Review**

Xiuhua and Sung (2018) examined the moral community thesis in the secular context of China. Using multilevel logistic regression, they tested (1) whether both individual- (measured by affiliation with Islam, Buddhism, and Christianity) and aggregate-level religiosity (measured by the number of mosques, Buddhist temples, and churches per 10,000 people in the province) are inversely related to law and rule violations at the individual level and (2) whether province-level religiosity enhances the inverse relationship between individual religiosity and deviant behaviours. Results from the 2010 China General Social Survey and the Spatial Explorer of Religions provide some support for the moral community proposition that contextual religiosity affects deviance at the individual level. Specifically, they found provincial as well as individual levels of Islam to be inversely related to the violation of the law and rules. However, they found that neither the provincial level of Christianity and Buddhism nor cross-level interaction is related to deviance. The only exception, cross-level interaction involving the individual and provincial level of Islam, is in the opposite direction (i.e., positive, not negative).

Xiuhua and Sung (2016) examined the religion–deviance relationship in China, analysing the 2010 China General Social Survey data to estimate ordinary least squares, logistic, and negative binomial regression models. First, they found respondents who followed some form of religion to be no different from those without religion in law or rule violation. Second, respondents of folk religion were more favourable to unconventional sex than those without religion, and those of organized religion were less so. Finally, respondents of organized
religion were less likely to report daily drinking and smoking than their irreligious counterparts, whereas those of folk religion were not different from the religious ones.

Robyn (2009) investigated the relationship between adolescent delinquency (crime and illegal drug use) and religiosity and spirituality. The study utilized data from the 2005 Transition to Adulthood supplement to the Panel Study of Income Dynamics. Using Probit analysis, results showed that attendance of religious services is negatively and significantly associated with arrest, "light" and "heavy" crime, and marijuana use. Religious affiliation, the importance of religion, and the importance of spirituality were all negatively and significantly affiliated with marijuana use as well.

DeCamp and Jesse (2019) explored the stance that religion, as a source of social support and moral guidance, can function to protect individuals, especially children, and adolescents, from a range of deviant and delinquent behaviours, using data from over 10,000 American middle school and high school youth to examine the relationship between religion, non-religion, and different forms of deviance. The results show that youth who identify with a religious (rather than nonreligious) label are not less likely to take part in deviant acts after controlling for protective factors. The effects of some of these protective factors are significant and stronger than the effects of religion.

Theoretical Review

Hirsch's Social Bonding Theory

According to Hirsch’s social bonding theory, someone who has a weak bond with their community and who does not have social attachments, is more likely to go against the norms and therefore accept deviant behaviour (Hirschi, 1969). Those who have a strong bond with their own community and conventional others will think the other way around. This is because individuals in the social network, family, friends, neighbourhood members, and other people with whom there is a tie, can affect someone’s life in different ways. According to Hirschi, it is crucial that people are attached, committed, and involved in their community in order to act and think according to the norms shared in society as a whole and norms shared by the community in particular. This theory is an application of Durkheim's socialisation theory (Durkheim, 1897), where the extent to which people are integrated within a group influences the norm obedience of this group. Since a majority of the religious denominations are conventional, and participation in religious institutions or activities lead to having ties with conventional others, people who are members of a church and who are religiously participating will be more likely to support the norms shared in society, hence they will be less permissive towards deviant behaviour.

Differential Association Theory

The differential association perspective was developed by Sutherland & Cressey (1966). According to this theory, values are learned by others, which means that interaction is a crucial element. The environment of a person is critical in this case. Almost all religious denominations promote norm obedience and that being surrounded by religious people leads to a condemning attitude towards deviance. An example is when someone lives in a country with a strong religious climate; the interaction of this person with religious people is hardly
inevitable. Hence, this person’s values will be learned through these interactions. Despite their own religious background, they will eventually share the same values as religious people.

The Deterrent Doctrine by Gibbs (1975)
According to Gibbs, norm obedience is based on the costs that will be made and the potential reward that can be received. If the reward for norm violation is higher than the costs (sanction), people will behave deviant, and their attitude towards deviant behaviour will become more permissive. Now, being a part of a religious community, which is being a member of this group, will increase the costs of norm violence because the probability of being sanctioned by a group member (due to, for example, control) is higher. In addition, a person who is a member of a religious group and violates the norms, by behaving in a deviant manner, loses aspects such as respect and support from the other members. Attitude towards deviant behaviour will be negative because it is an unattractive behaviour both in morality and costs.

Methods
Participants
Fifty (N = 50) adolescents participated in this study. They included individuals between the ages of 13 to 19. The sample was drawn from adolescents residing within Kaduna metropolis. A convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample. All participants were senior secondary students of various schools in Kaduna, and their ages ranged from 13 to 19, with a mean age of 16.2 and a standard deviation of 2.09. They comprised thirty-eight (38) males and twelve (12) females.

Instruments
Normative Deviance Scale: Deviance was measured by the 55-item Normative Deviance Scale (NDS) developed for the ISAD project (2001). The purpose of this scale was to measure adolescent deviance in a manner that would capture norm violating conduct in all cultures in the present investigation (norm-violating conduct that is independent of cultural definitions of crime and deviance), as well as in general adolescent populations, and to provide etiological data; in a sense, we wanted to develop and employ a serviceable cross-national measure. This measure, therefore, examined a broader spectrum of deviant activities rather than status and index offenses (Junger-Tas, 1988). The NDS was also developed to measure lesser forms of norm violating conduct that are common in most cultures and countries. The NDS measures the degree of deviance and deviance subscales as trait-like constructs that are assessed by multiple, overlapping items. Although this approach does not support prevalence or incidence estimates of deviance, it may produce more reliable and robust overall assessments of deviant behaviour for etiological work in particular.

The current investigation examined one subscale of the NDS (general deviance). Responses for all the items in the NDS were given on a 5-point Likert type scale and identified lifetime frequency of specific behaviours (1 = never, 2 = one time, 3 = two to three times, 4 = four to six times, and 5 = more than six times). Reliability coefficients on the deviance subscales for the entire sample ranged from _ = .76 to _ = .89.
Religious Attendance: Attendance at religious services was assessed using the question, "How often do you attend your place of worship?" The response format used a seven-point scale:

1. More than once a week
2. At least once a week
3. At least once a fortnight.
4. At least once a month
5. At least once every few months.
6. At least once a year
7. Less often

Total possible scores range from 1 to a maximum of 7, with lower scores indicating a higher frequency of religious attendance.

Religious Commitment Inventory
The Religious Commitment Inventory-10 (RCI-10; Worthington et al., 2003) describes the level of one's religious commitment. That is, it is used to assess the degree to which a person adheres to his or her religious values, beliefs, and practices and uses them in daily living. RCI subscales measure intrapersonal religious commitment with 6 items, and interpersonal religious commitment with 4 items. Thus, RCI-10 contains a total of 10 items rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 = Not true at all of me, to 5 = totally true of me. All items of Intrapersonal religious commitment had factor loadings of .59 or above and those of Interpersonal religious commitment had factor loadings of .62 or above. The coefficient alphas were .93 for the full scale, .92 for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment, and .87 for Interpersonal Religious Commitment (Worthington et al., 2003). For the purpose of this study only total full score was used. A Pearson correlation coefficient for intercorrelation between the two subscales indicated them highly correlated, $r (154) = .72$. Typical items include, "My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life" and "I spend my time trying to grow in understanding of my faith" from the Intrapersonal subscale, and "I enjoy participating in the activities of my religious organization" and "I enjoy spending time with others of my religious affiliation" from the Interpersonal subscale. In the current study, the coefficient alphas were .89 for the full scale .76 for Intrapersonal Religious Commitment, and .87 for Interpersonal Religious Commitment. Due to the number of variables measured in the current study, the various aspects of religiosity will be measured in terms of religious commitment scores for full scale.

Procedure
The researcher explained the purpose of the research to the participants and obtained consent from them. For the ones below the age of 18, consent was obtained from their parents or guardian. 60 questionnaires were distributed, 54 were returned, and 4 were wrongly filled, making it a total of 50, which was used for the analysis. There were no identifiers on the questionnaire to ensure the anonymity of the participants. The researcher gave lots of thanks to the participants after they completed the questionnaire.
Design/Statistics
The study was carried out using a cross-sectional design and Step-Wise multiple regression was used to analyse the data. Social Science version 20 was employed as the Statistical Package.

Results
Table 1: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations for Demographic Variables, Religious Attendance, Religious Commitment and Deviant Behaviour.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Dev. Beh</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Rel.Att</th>
<th>Rel.Com</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deviant Behaviour</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>11.06</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.52***</td>
<td>-.56***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.67***</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rel_Attendance</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rel_Commitment</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>7.05</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 50, * = p < .05(two-tailed), ** = p < .01 (two-tailed), *** = p < .001 (two-tailed)

Result of correlation table show that deviant behaviours was significantly positively related religious attendance (r = .52, p < .001) and religious commitment (r = -.56, p < .001), but not significantly related to gender and age. Religious attendance shows a significant relationship with religious commitment (r = -.67, p < .001).

Table 2: Showing the prediction of Deviant Behaviour from Demographic Variables, Religious Attendance and Religious Commitment.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R2</th>
<th>R2Δ</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Beta(β)</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.121</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.325</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>.423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.795</td>
<td>-.109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Attendance</td>
<td>.521</td>
<td>.271</td>
<td>.256</td>
<td>4.316</td>
<td>.510</td>
<td>4.023***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Commitment</td>
<td>.596</td>
<td>.356</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>- .617</td>
<td>-.393</td>
<td>-.243***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 50, * = p < .05(two-tailed), ** = p < .01 (two-tailed), *** = p < .001 (two-tailed)

Regression result in table 2 above indicated that none of the demographic variables entered in step 1 significantly predicted deviant behaviour among adolescents. Demographic variables accounted for 2% variance in predicting deviant behaviour (R2Δ = .02, p > .05).
Religious attendance entered in step 2 of the equation significantly predicted deviant behaviour among adolescents ($\beta = .51, t = 4.023, p<.001$). Religious attendance accounted for 26% variance in predicting deviant behaviour ($R^2\Delta = .25, p<.001$). Religious commitment entered in step 3 of the equation significantly predicted deviant behaviour among adolescents ($\beta = .39, t = -2.431, p<.001$). Religious commitment accounted for 9% variance in predicting deviant behaviour ($R^2\Delta = .09, p<.001$).

**Discussion of Findings**

This study examined religious attendance and religious commitment as predictors of deviant behaviours among adolescents. Results showed that both religious attendance and religious commitment were significant predictors of deviant behaviour among adolescents. This finding does not confirm both null hypotheses stated earlier, therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected. This result implies that as religious attendance and commitment increases, reported deviant behaviours decreases. This finding is supported by findings from previous researches. Baier and Wright’s (2001) meta-analysis of 60 studies published between 1969 and 1998, found that religious beliefs and behaviours exert a moderate negative effect on individuals’ criminal behaviour. Similarly, Johnson et al.’s (2000) systematic review of the religiosity and delinquency literature analyzed 40 studies published between 1985 and 1997. They concluded that religion measures are usually inversely related to deviance with a higher proportion of more rigorous studies finding this relationship. This finding is also consistent with the propositions of the social bonding, differential association and deterrence theories. Tittle & Welch explain that since the majority of the religious denominations are conventional and participation in religious institutions or activities lead to having ties with conventional others, people who are member of a church and who are religiously participating will be more likely to support the norms shared in society, hence they will be less permissive towards deviant behaviors.

**Relevance of the Study in the Nigerian Context**

Nigeria has numerous churches and religious institutions and her people are regarded as being very religious, yet, Nigeria is bedeviled with constant reports of deviant behaviours, either in its subtle forms or in criminal terms. This reality is opposed to what research findings have to say about the relationship between religiosity and deviance, including the finding of the present study. This may be as a result of the ignorance of the church on the major role they play and have to play in curbing deviance in the society. This study is an exposition on the role religious institutions can play in curbing deviance in the society. The findings of this study would inform and put into the consciousness of the leaders of various religious institutions of their role in making society a better and more secure place. This can be done through their messages or pastor-member or imam-member relationship. Most members of different religious institutions obey their religious head even more than the government, so, their behaviours can also be kept in check by those with religious authority.

**Conclusion**

The study appraised the role of religious institutions in curbing deviance in the society. The study focused specifically on religious attendance and religious commitment as predictors of deviant behaviours among adolescents. The study adopted a cross-sectional design and step-wise multiple regression for analysis of data. The results showed an inverse relationship
between religious attendance, religious commitment and deviant behaviour among adolescents. It was concluded that religion plays a major role in curbing deviant behaviours in the society.

**Recommendations**

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

1. Further research should be conducted to examine the relationship between religion and deviance using a larger population and different age groups.
2. A longitudinal study should be conducted to investigate how religion transforms one over a long period of time.
3. Parents should encourage their adolescent children to go to church as church attendance predicts less deviance.

**References**


