

INFLUENCE OF PRE-RETIREMENT ANXIETY, AGE AND YEARS OF SERVICE ON AGEING MALE SYNDROME AMONG CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN OWERRI ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE

Cyprian I. Ogu, Ekeh P. U.

Department of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, NIGERIA.

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of pre-retirement anxiety, age and years of service on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. It is ex-post facto and correlational research design study in which a sample of 436 catholic priests purposively drawn from a population of 1427 catholic priests participated. The instrument for data collection is Psycho-Demographic Questionnaire. It was validated through the assistance of experts in psychology, measurement and evaluation. The reliability coefficients of the instrument were obtained using Chronbach alpha technique and found to be 0.73 for the section on ageing male syndrome and 0.86 for the section on pre-retirement anxiety. The data obtained with the instrument were analyzed using mean and coefficient of regression from simple regression analysis for research questions and t-values associated with simple regression analysis for hypotheses. The major findings of the study are as follows; (1) Pre-retirement anxiety has a very low positive and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. (2) Age of the priests has a moderate positive and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. (3) Years of service of the priests have a positive, moderate and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. It was therefore recommended that Catholic authorities should be cautious about the way they handle priests' retirement issues to forestall the development of pre-retirement anxiety which may culminate in precipitation of ageing male syndrome. Catholic priests should embark on periodic check up with a view to diagnosing ageing male syndrome at its onset so as to seek medical treatment and counselling to manage the condition.

Keywords: Pre-retirement anxiety, ageing male syndrome, androgen, symptoms, physical weakness, aggression.

INTRODUCTION

Ageing male syndrome is a medical condition through which men could pass sometimes in their lives, when serum hormone particularly testosterone levels decrease considerably (Keenan, Takahashi & Liu, 2006). Ageing male syndrome is associated with a number of somatic and psychic manifestations such as decreased libido, changes in the general state, fatigue, depression, anger, sleep disorders, decreased intellectual capacity, decreased lean body mass and muscle strength, incidence of metabolic syndrome, reduction of body hair and skin changes (increased facial wrinkles), reduced bone mineral density and appearance of osteoporosis (Keenan, Takahashi & Liu, 2006). Ageing male syndrome is also associated with increased risk of mortality (Shores, Smith & Forsberg, 2012).

From the researcher's personal observation in his area of service, some ageing men show verbal aggression, irritability, and tend to quarrel at a slightest provocation. Such nagging, irritable and aggressive behaviour of some elderly men in our society may be likely associated with the ageing male syndrome. In some cases, some of such men are lethargic in

their normal daily activities. They can be uncooperative and difficult to deal with and may be arrogant in dealing with people around them.

Furthermore, based on the researcher's experience in the various dioceses he has worked, some ageing priests manifest similar unwholesome behaviours of verbal aggression towards some fellow priests and even members of the congregation (parishioners) which is uncalled for. Catholic priests are known to be well trained in academic, religious and inter-personal relationship matters after which they are ordained to start offering their wealth of experiences and services to the people. They are trained to be humble and cooperative with all people in their environment without discrimination. In fact, they are trained to constitute the model of behaviour for members of the society to copy. Contrary to these expectations, based on the experience of the researcher in the areas of his service, some priests who are supposed to exercise self-control, relate well with colleagues and parishioners in a humble manner, turn out to manifest uncooperative and arrogant behaviour in their relationships with people and also exhibit the symptoms associated with ageing male syndrome. It is worrisome to observe such behaviours of arrogance, poor inter-personal relationship, irritability, aggression and lethargy among such well-trained clergymen in the catholic church on consistent and regular basis. Hence, some of these priests may be experiencing ageing male syndrome. There are some psychological and demographic variables that are touted to have influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. These include celibacy worries, pre-retirement anxiety, job stress, self-esteem, age, years of service, etc.

Some retirement can cause a loss of influence, loss of social standing, respect and recognition. Retirees may become inactive leading to physical and mental weaknesses. Retirement can sometimes remind one of ageing and dying. This assertion is collaborated by Taylor and Doverspike (2003) who stated that some workers have difficulties deciding whether benefits of retirement surpass the loss of income, status and regimented work life. They sometimes associate retirement with declining health status, happiness and activities as well as enhancing premature death. Adewuyi (2008) added that some workers are concerned about whether the combination of their retirement benefits and savings will be adequate to sustain them. Retirement may disrupt long-standing friendship and support networks in the place of work. Hence, a retiring worker has to think about coping with and adjusting to the possible loss of interpersonal relationships and social activities connected to work setting or developing new interpersonal relations and extra-work or social activities.

So with dwindling resources, loss of some benefits, ever-increasing responsibilities and uncertainty about retirement, an average civil servant in Nigeria may have every reason to be apprehensive of impending retirement. The thoughts about retirement in itself can precipitate pre-retirement anxiety. Pre-retirement anxiety was defined by Dada and Idowu (2007) as fears and worries about the future of the individual as a result of cessation of active working life. Fletcher and Hannson (1991) defined pre-retirement anxiety as generalized feeling of apprehension or worry regarding the uncertain, unpredictable and potentially disruptive consequences of impending retirement. Arogundade (2016) defined it as fear and worries about imminent retirement even in the course of performing one's duties at work, to the extent of affecting job efficiency or effectiveness. Oluseyi and Olufemi (2015) saw it as a feeling of intense fear, discomfort and uncertainty that consistently interfere with prospective retiree's thought processes and preparation towards retirement. Alpaslan (2006) reported that pre-retirement anxiety had varied effects on workers' performance on the job and level of productivity.

In the view of Ode (2004), some major sources of retirement anxiety include inadequate funds, challenges in managing a new and lower social status, inadequate planning for

retirement, difficulty in time management, total dependence on present salary, problem of securing residential accommodation, ignorance of what to do with pension money, attitude of friends and family members.

However, it can be emphasized that Catholic church is a world-wide Christian denomination. It is a highly organized religious organization which demands moral perfection from members so as to be in good relationship with God and man in order to inherit the kingdom of God. The church believes that physical, physiological and psychological wellbeing of people correlates with their integrity, moral rectitude and relationships with God and man. In other words, the appetite to commit sins depends on the general wellbeing of people under normal circumstances. Hence, people who have sufficient resources to take care of their needs are least expected to get involved in crime and criminality except in abnormal situations.

Accordingly, catholic church lays emphasis on the wellbeing of members especially the ordained priests. Ordained catholic priests are priests for ever. As a result, the church has good welfare packages for retiree priests. Retired priests are not asked to go home and fend for themselves. Instead, they are accommodated in their official residence among the serving priests. Food is provided to them as when they were in active service. At retirement, priests have reduced mobility, but cars are placed at their disposal any time they want to travel. Remunerations of retired priests do not decrease appreciably. In fact, overall benefits of priests at retirement do not change much from those who are still serving. Thus, their welfare at retirement is guaranteed. Fears and worries about retirement have no place in the mind of the catholic priests. Hence, pre-retirement anxiety is most likely to be low among catholic priests under normal circumstances. Except for the thoughts of reduced activities which can lead to physical and mental weaknesses, and the thoughts of ageing and dying associated with retirement, retirement may not be of serious concern to the retiring priests. Hence, there is reduced possibility of pre-retirement anxiety among catholic priests.

Years of services and age could influence ageing male syndrome among the catholic priests. "Age and ageing" in itself has its inherent worries. Various findings have been made in studies on ageing and dying (Lahey, 2003). As people become older, the walls of the arteries and heart become less elastic, cardiac and respiratory efficiency declines, hormone production declines, the body immune system becomes weak and efficiency of the nerves and brain, and mental processes deteriorate. Restrictive myths and stereotypes associated with ageing prevent people from engaging in meaningful activities such as sporting, fishing and working even to a reduced extent at old age. Ageing usually associated with dying precipitates fears and anxiety in people. This may be the explanation as to why ageing brings about worries in old people. Catholic priests may also have worries associated with age and ageing. Like other human beings, their body metabolic and biological processes deteriorate with age. Furthermore, ageing may remind catholic priests about retirement from active service. Hence, it may be possible that the age of a catholic priest is linked to ageing male syndrome.

Years of service in one's profession may be directly related to age and therefore ageing male syndrome. The more years of service someone puts in his profession, the more he advances in age and gets closer to retirement. Uncertainty which beclouds life after retirement is a sufficient condition for manifestation of worries among catholic priests. Therefore, older catholic priests are more likely to put in more years of service than the younger priests and hence the influence of age and years of service on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests worths investigating. This study, therefore, investigated the influence of pre-

retirement anxiety, age and years of service of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ageing male syndrome is a medical condition characterized by reduced levels of testosterone and covers areas such as reduction in libido, reduction in energy level, muscle weakness, weight loss, sad mood, erectile dysfunction, decline in exercise capacity, tiredness after dinner and decline in work performance. Catholic priests who are experiencing ageing syndrome may also experience physical/mental weaknesses, weight loss, sad mood, decline in physical/mental activities, tiredness after dinner and reduced productivities. They may manifest verbal aggression. When these happen, the priests' ability to perform their statutory functions wanes. They may also have poor interpersonal relationship with others. Since ageing people who are having pre-retirement anxiety share characteristics similar to those experiencing ageing male syndrome, the researchers were motivated to investigate the influence of pre-retirement anxiety, age and years of service of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. Find out the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?
2. Determine the influence of age of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?
3. Verify the influence of years of service on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

RQ1: What is the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

RQ2: What is the influence of age of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

RQ3: How do years of service influence ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

HO1: There is no significant influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

HO2: Age of the catholic priests does not have a significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

HO3: There is no significant influence of years of service of catholic priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

METHODOLOGY

This is ex-post facto and correlational research design study in which a sample of 436 catholic priests purposively drawn from a population of 1427 catholic priests participated.

The instrument for data collection is Psycho-Demographic Questionnaire. Its section A was designed to elicit demographic information from the respondents while section B measured levels of ageing male syndrome and pre-retirement anxiety of the respondents. The items are

of Likert format with four response options of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The items of the instrument are non-cognitive with no right or wrong answers. The instrument was validated through the assistance of experts in psychology, measurement and evaluation. The reliability coefficients of the instrument were obtained using Chronbach alpha technique. Hence, the reliability coefficient is 0.74 for the section on ageing male syndrome and 0.86 for section on pre-retirement anxiety. The data obtained with the instrument were analyzed using mean and coefficient of regression from simple regression analysis for research questions and t-values associated with simple regression analysis for hypotheses. The data analysis was done using SPSS (version 21).

RESULTS

RQ₁: What is the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

Research question 1 was answered using correlation coefficient from simple regression statistical tool and the results are as presented in table 1.

Table 1. Regression coefficient for the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
0.221	0.049	0.047

It can be seen from table that coefficient of regression is 0.221. The square of coefficient of regression is 0.049 while the adjusted square of coefficient of regression is 0.047. The value of coefficient of regression (0.221) shows that pre-retirement anxiety has a very low positive influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The value of adjusted coefficient of regression (0.047) suggests that only 4.7% variation in ageing male syndrome can be accounted for by pre-retirement anxiety while the remaining 95.3% variation in ageing male syndrome was not accounted for by pre-retirement anxiety, but by some other factors.

HO₁: There is no significant influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Data for hypothesis 1 was analyzed using t-test associated with simple regression analysis. The results are presented in table 2.

Table 2. T-value for the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	44.596	0.983		45.360	0.00
Preretirement anxiety	0.148	0.031	0.221	4.721	0.00

Table 2 shows that standardized beta coefficient for pre-retirement anxiety is 0.221. The t-value for pre-retirement anxiety is 4.721 which is significant at 0.00 alpha level and also significant at 0.05 alpha level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis upheld. This implies that there is a significant influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. The

model for the influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome is given by $AMS = 44.596 + 0.148PRA$ where PRA stands for pre-retirement anxiety.

RQ₂: What is the influence of age of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

Table 3. Influence of age of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests

Age	N	\bar{x}	Sd	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Below 40	29	43.81	1.37			
40 – 50	76	49.71	2.26			
51 – 60	128	57.23	1.66	0.516	0.266	0.264
61 – 70	136	64.35	2.15			
Above 70	67	67.29	1.24			

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations of ageing male syndrome experience among the various age categories of catholic priests. The mean ageing male syndrome for priests below 40 years is 43.81 with a standard deviation of 1.37. Those in the age bracket of 40 – 50 years had a mean ageing male syndrome of 49.71 with a standard deviation of 2.26. The age brackets and the corresponding ageing male syndrome for others are as follows; 51 – 60 years ($\bar{x}=51.23$; $sd=1.66$); 61 – 70 years ($\bar{x}=64.35$; $sd=2.15$); above 70 years ($\bar{x}=67.29$; $sd=1.24$). The mean sizes indicate an increase of ageing male syndrome experience as the priests advance in age.

Furthermore, coefficient of regression from simple regression analysis shows that coefficient of regression (R) is 0.516 implying that age has moderate positive influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. The square of coefficient of regression (R²) is 0.266. The adjusted square of coefficient of regression (Adj.R²) is 0.264 implying that the influence of age accounted for only 26.4% variation in ageing male syndrome while the remaining 73.6% variation in ageing male syndrome among catholic priests was not accounted for by age, but by some other factors.

HO₂: Age of the catholic priests does not have a significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Data for hypothesis 2 were analyzed using t-test associated with simple regression analysis. The results are presented in table 4.

Table 4. T-value associated with simple regression analysis for the influence of age on ageing male syndrome

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	35.929	1.066		33.694	0.00
Age	0.260	0.021	0.516	12.546	0.00

Table 4 shows that the standardized beta coefficient is 0.516. The calculated t-value is 12.546 which is significant at 0.00 probability level and also significant at 0.05 probability level. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternative hypothesis accepted implying that age of catholic priests has a significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Based on the unstandardized b-coefficients, the predictive model for the influence of age on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests is given by $AMS = 35.929 + 0.260A$ where A represents age.

RQ₃: How do years of service influence ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province?

Table 5. Influence of years of service of priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests

Years of service	N	\bar{x}	Sd	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
Below 10	74	44.23	1.83			
10 – 20	125	56.15	1.62			
21 – 30	141	63.27	2.08	0.520	0.270	0.268
Above 30	96	66.89	1.71			

Table 5 shows the means and standard deviations of ageing male syndrome among catholic priests based on their years of service. Catholic priests who had put in below 10 years of service obtained a mean ageing male syndrome of 44.23 and a standard deviation of 1.83. Those who had put in 10 – 20 years of service obtained a mean ageing male syndrome of 56.15 and a standard deviation of 1.62. Those who had put in 21 – 30 years of service obtained a mean ageing male syndrome of 63.27 and a standard deviation of 2.08. Those who had put in above 30 years of service obtained a mean ageing male syndrome of 66.89 and a standard deviation of 1.71. The table shows that the mean values of ageing male syndrome increase as years of service of the priests increase. Hence, ageing male syndrome of the priests increases with years of service.

Furthermore, coefficient of correlation from simple regression analysis shows that the coefficient of regression (R) is 0.520 which implies that years of service had a positive moderate influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. The square of coefficient of regression (R²) is 0.270. The adjusted square of coefficient of regression (Adj.R²) is 0.268 which implies that 26.8% variation in ageing male syndrome among catholic priests is attributable to the influence of years of service of catholic priests. The remaining 73.2% variation in ageing male syndrome is not attributable to the influence of years of service of priests.

HO₃: There is no significant influence of years of service of catholic priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Data for hypothesis were analyzed using t-test associated with simple regression analysis. The results are presented in table 6.

Table 6. T-value associated with simple regression analysis for the influence of years of service on ageing male syndrome

Model	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	T	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	44.690	0.387		115.559	0.00
Years of service	0.258	0.020	0.520	12.668	0.00

From table 6, it can be seen that standardized beta coefficient is 0.520. The calculated t-value for years of service is 12.668 which is significant at 0.00 alpha level and also significant at 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and the alternative hypothesis upheld. This implies that there is a significant influence of years of service of catholic priests on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

Based on the Unstandardized b-coefficients, the predictive model for the influence of years of service on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests is given by $AMS = 44.690 + 0.258YS$ where YS stands for years of service.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

It was found that pre-retirement anxiety has a very low, positive and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. This implies that an increase in pre-retirement anxiety results to a very low but significant increase in ageing male syndrome among catholic priests. The finding that pre-retirement anxiety has a very low, positive and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests is similar to the finding of Lork (2011) which showed that the relationship between pre-retirement anxiety and ageing male syndrome was low, positive and significant, and the result was the same for both senior and junior priests. However, the finding of very low positive and significant influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests as made in this study is at variance with the finding of Jordan (2014) which revealed that confinement anxiety of prison inmates had no relationship with ageing male syndrome. The possible source of disparity in the finding of this study with that of Jordan (2014) is that Jordan used a sample size of 92 inmates which is low compared to 436 priests used in the present study. Besides, prison inmates might not be at the right frame of mind to respond to the instruments as candidly as possible.

The finding of very low positive and significant influence of pre-retirement anxiety on ageing male syndrome is not surprising. This is because pre-retirement anxiety has some psychological effects which may impact positively on the precipitation of ageing male syndrome among the catholic priests.

It was also found in this study that age and years of service each has moderate, positive and significant influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. From this finding, it can be understood that as the age and years of service of the priests increase, there is a moderate increase in the ageing male syndrome among the priests. The finding of moderate, positive and significant influence of age and years of service on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests is similar to the finding of Tymore and Fuklore (2010) to some extent. Tymore and Fuklore (2010) found that age and years of service had low positive joint and individual relationships with ageing male syndrome and the relationships were significant at 0.05 probability level.

The finding of positive significant influence of age and years of service on ageing male syndrome can be explained from the fact that significant reduction in the level of testosterone which is the male hormone of which deficiency is responsible for ageing male syndrome. Since the level of testosterone reduces with age, it is possible that age can exert some direct influence on the ageing male syndrome. Furthermore, years of service bears direct relationship with age to some extent because most of the catholic priests were ordained within the age bracket of 30 to 35 years on the average. As the years go by, their age increases and their years of service increase also. Therefore, years of service like age can possibly influence ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

CONCLUSION

Psychological concept (anxiety) of pre-retirement type has been found to have positive influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province. Beside pre-retirement anxiety, age of the priests and years of service of the priests have been found to have a positive influence on ageing male syndrome among the priests. Hence, it is concluded that psychological and demographic variables have influence on ageing male syndrome among catholic priests in Owerri Ecclesiastical Province.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Catholic priests while performing their duties are exposed to situations capable of precipitating ageing male syndrome in them. When they are exposed to a condition that can trigger off negative psychological feelings like pre-retirement anxiety, they are inadvertently or indirectly exposed to a condition that can precipitate ageing male syndrome in them. Catholic authorities should be cautious about the way they handle priests' retirement issues to forestall the development of pre-retirement anxiety which may culminate in precipitation of ageing male syndrome in them. Catholic priests should embark on periodic check up with a view to diagnosing ageing male syndrome at its onset. Those who experience it should seek medical treatment and counselling to manage the condition. Priests in the age brackets that are susceptible to ageing male syndrome should avoid conditions that are capable of precipitating ageing male syndrome.

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