

Interface between Sacredness and Profanity in the Places of Worship with Reference to Selected Sacred Centres in Southwest Nigeria

Oludare Olusegun Olurotimi, Ph.D

Department of Christian Religious Studies, Federal College of Education Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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ABSTRACT

In many parts of Africa, Nigeria in particular, the place of shrines as a sacred and a place of worship consecrated for religious purposes, conflict resolution, social control and moral development remain evident based on the beliefs and spiritual energy provided in the African religion context. In the recent time, there is symbiotic relationship between sacredness and profanity in the places of worship. This study was premised on Mircea Eliade and Durkheim's theory of sacred and profane dichotomy for analysis the spiritual content of the sacred place. Descriptive survey method was adopted for the study. In-depth interview was conducted with cultic functionaries, indigenes, devotees and government official. Multistage sampling technique and sample size was used to select 90 cultic functionaries, 90 indigenes 90 devotees and 30 government officials respondents in the study area while data obtained were analyzed with both descriptive and inferential statistics. Result of the study revealed that profanity in the place of worship has no effects on the sacredness on the place of worship ($X = 44.79$, $df=6$, $p=0.00$) constraints are mismanagement of the sacred centers ($X= 8.28$, $df=3$, $p=0.04$), free access to sacred places ($X=8.63$, $df=3$, $p=0.03$) inadequate supervision of sacred centre by the cultic functionaries ($X=7.22$, $df=3$, $p= 0.07$), government interference ($X = 6.53$, $df=3$, $p =0.08$) neglect of existing taboos ($X = 25.26$, $df=3$, $p=0.00$) were significant challenges facing the sacred centres at ($p < 0.05$) level of significance except inadequate supervision of the cultic functionaries at the worship centers and the government interference that were not significant. The result concluded that the rate by which the desecration at the places of worship is relatively high with the frequency showing higher percentage of free access to the place of worship by non-cultic functionaries reducing its potency. Also, the government interference to mutilate the sacred places to suit commercial and other socio-economic activities are the major challenges that affect the spiritual energy of these sacred centers.

Key words: Interface, Sacredness, Places of worship, Profanity, Southwest, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, sacred places have been referred to as places where worship are conducted in form of ritual and sacrifice in the context of African religion. In Africa, most especially among the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria, the place of shrines and sacred places cannot be underestimated. There is no doubt that Africans are notoriously religious and that religion colours all aspect of their lives (Mbiti 1979). Olupona (2003) asserts that sacred place can be called a centre consecrated, and preserved for ritual, prayer, meditation and other spiritual phenomena worthy of religious veneration to appease the gods and deities. The socio-religious and economic values of the shrines as a place of worship are amongst the make ups of the historical identity of the African people. African believe in the existence of the deities, spirits and the ancestors whose abodes are shrines and other sacred places. Oludare (2016) posits that some of the sacred places are man-made that belong to an individual and other member of a family while others appear in their natural form and belong to the whole community or certain race. Just like any other African religion, each other religion of the world is fixed to one sacred place or the other. On this note Oludare (2016) notes that 'there are lots of sacred places in Nigeria where people of different faith gather' to worship and perform religious rites to uphold their spiritual hunger. Based on this background, the role of shrines as a place of worship and sacred place for conflict resolution, social control and moral development remain evident based on the spiritual energy provided. This study therefore examines the interface between profanity and sacredness in the selected places of worship in Southwest Nigeria.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Among the Yoruba people of Southwest Nigeria, Awolalu (1979) postulates that sacred places are called by different names such as shrines, temples, and groves depending on the locations and to what divinities they are dedicated. To this end, Oludare (2016) affirms that the custodian and other cultic functionaries put restriction in form of taboos to checkmate people's activities not to desecrate the sacredness of the places of worship in one hand and to maintain the spiritual energies of these sacred centers on the other hand. In many parts of Africa, Nigeria in particular, the role of shrines as a place of worship and sacred place for conflict resolution, social control and moral development remain evident based on the spiritual energy provided.

In the same vein, Olowola (1993) reiterates that in African societies, sacredness is rated high especially among the Yoruba society. It is attached to object, plant, animal, stones trees, hills water and human beings in as long as it performs functions such as economic, social, religion, historical, cultural to an individual, group of people, community or society as a whole. To this end Oludare (2016) advocates that shrines and sacred places serve many purposes that aid sustainable development. They are the trusted avenues for conflict resolution, social control, cultural education and moral development based on the restrictions in term of taboos attached to them, thus, they are the instrumental for social development.

In the recent time, the purpose of sacred places started dwindling with the advent of western civilisation and globalisation. Many people now see shrines and sacred places as homes of demons, evil dwelling and archaic and those who still practice the traditional religion are termed as pagans and heathens. All these perceptions negate the purpose of shrines and sacred places from African religion perspectives. Because of these new perceptions about shrines and sacred places most of them were destroyed and used for erection of schools, churches, hospitals, tourist attraction centers, while the other ones are left and abandoned. The observed situation seems to be part of the factors for the increasing rate of corruption, indiscipline and other social vices in Nigeria(Jegede 2011).

Given the above, the importance and relevance of sacredness to Yoruba society and African religion cannot be underestimated. This is perhaps why Sree Raj (2011) considered sacred place as a point where symbolism and myths interact. Likewise, Mbiti (1979) stresses that African believed not only in the existence of the Supreme Being but also in divinities and spirits that populate the universe apart from human being. Evidence for the reality of spirit is apparent, because everywhere you are in Africa, you will find the objects of spirit worship.

In view of this illustrations, it can be construed that, sacred place is a reserved area restricted for religious purposes and other spiritual functions in the African context. Based on this background, the role of shrines as a place of worship and sacred place for conflict resolution, social control and moral development remain evident based on the spiritual energy provided. Therefore, this research examined the interface between sacredness and profanity in the selected places of worship in Southwest Nigeria with a view to protect them from losing their spiritual potency and religious values at the expense of modernization

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This research was premised on Mircea Eliade and Durkheim's theory of sacred and profane dichotomy for analyzing the spiritual content of the sacred place. The theory claimed that the history of religion from the primitive to the most highly developed society is constituted by the manifestations of sacred realities. A sacred thing is designated as the object of veneration and awe protected by superstition from irreligious actions. Eliade (1961) reiterated by Oludare (2016) defines the act of the manifestation of the sacred and stresses that man becomes aware of the sacred because it manifests and shows itself as something wholly different from the profane. By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes a something else, yet it continues to remain itself, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A sacred stone remains a stone; apparently from the profane point of view, nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those to whom a stone reveal itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality.

In the same vein, the profane, in the sacred may not simply mean 'not sacred', but it also has a meaning of being irreligious, and a misuse or abuse of the sacred, which might be termed the 'anti-sacred'. The sacred-profane

dichotomy is an idea posited by Durkheim, according to him, sacred/profane is not equivalent to good/evil; the sacred could be good or evil, and profane could be either as well. With this theory, it claimed that what is considered as sacred in one society may not be sacred in another society. In the same vein, Emile Durkheim claimed that all religions divide objects or phenomena into the sacred and the profane. He stressed that the sacred objects are those which are extraordinary and treated as if set apart from the routine course. To collaborate this Kin (2004) therefore affirmed that, most of the religions from primitive to the most developed were established through the manifestation of the sacred. Therefore, things of the sacred must be handled honourably because it is in the context of manifestations of the sacred that the religious beliefs emerged.

2.2 Problem Statement

Previous scholarly works have discussed the aspects of sacredness and profanity separately with little or no reference to interface between sacredness and profanity in the places of worship from the African religion context. Besides, an examination of relevant literature on sacredness and profanity revealed that little attempt had been made to investigate the interface between sacredness and profanity in the places of worship which this research tries to fill gap with particular reference to selected sacred centres in Southwest Nigeria specifically: Osun Osogbo grove in Osogbo Osun State, Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Ogun State and Oke Idanre in Idanre, Ondo State noting that there is need to investigate the level of sacredness and desecration at these sacred centres.

2.3 Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide this study:

1. What has been the interface between the sacredness and profanity in the places of worship?
2. In what ways has this interface affected the spiritual dimension of the people in these places of worship?
3. What are the implication and effect of this interface on the religious inclination of the people?
4. Is there any way by which the stakeholders can make these places of worship maintain and sustain their spiritual energies?
5. How can the places of worship be preserved to protect its spiritual potency?

2.4 General Objectives

The broad objective of the study is to examine the interface between sacredness and profanity in places of worship in Southwest Nigeria with a view of assessing the effect and its implications for the preservation of Yoruba cultural heritage and to preserve the spiritual energy of the sacred center

2.5 The specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the physical structures, infrastructures and the sacred spots in the places of worship in the study area
2. Probe into the activities of the devotees, cultic functionaries and the visitors in the places of worship in the study area
3. Assess the interface between the sacredness and profanity in the study area
4. Identify the challenges facing the sacredness in the study area
5. Probe into the roles played by the custodians of these places of worship in the study area
6. Preserve the sacredness of the places of worship in the study area

2.7 Hypotheses of the study.

The following hypotheses were raised to guide this study:

H1_o. There is no significant relationship between frequency of the profanity and the sacredness in the places of worship

H2_o. There is no significant relationship between government interference and the sacredness in the places of worship

RESEARCH METHODS

3.1 Sample and Sampling techniques.

The key respondents are the devotees, the objects of worship and the cultic functionaries in the places of worship in Southwest Nigeria. The study was carried out in selected places of worship in Southwest area of Nigeria. Sample random sampling technique was used to select three states namely: Ogun, Ondo and Osun states Nigeria. Multistage sampling technique was used to select respondents for the study.

3.2 Multistage Sampling technique and Sample size

Stage 1: The first stage was purposive selection of one sacred centre in each of the selected state. This gave rise to 3 places of worship that is Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, Oke Idanre in Idanre and Osun Osogbo in Osogbo

Stage 2: The second stage involved the focus group discussion and interview with the selection of 30 cultic functionaries, 30 indigenes, 30 devotees and 10 government officials in each of the selected places of worship using simple random sampling technique. This gave rise to 300 respondents as sample size for the studies.

3.3 Population of the study

The study population was carried among the indigenes, the custodians, the devotees the government officials and the cultic functionaries in the selected places of worship in the study area.

Table 1

State	Selected Communities	Sacred/Worship Center	Study Population	Government Officials
Ogun	Abeokuta	Olumo Rock	90	10
Ondo	Idanre	Idanre Hills	90	10
Osun	Osogbo	Osun Osogbo grove	90	10
Total	3	3	270	30

3.4 Data collection

Data were collected on the interface between the sacredness and profanity in the places of worship in the study area from the respondents. How the interface has affected the spiritual dimension of the people in the study area? The implication of this interface as it affects the spiritual inclination of the worshippers and devotees in the study area. The impact of the stakeholders and cultic functionaries in the study area. Proffer possible ways to preserve the potency of the sacred places in the study area.

Validity of the instruments was subjected to face validity involving supervisor' assessment, expert in the field of African traditional religion and social sciences. Their criticisms and suggestions were positively utilized for more valid instrument. The reliability test for the instrument was done for more than fifty non-indigenes that were not included in the in the actual study sample. Scores were designed to the respondents of the selected respondents and the instrument was considered reliable with coefficients (r) range from 0.75 to 0.87 as follow:

Identification of physical structures, infrastructures and the sacred spots 0.75 Activities of the devotees, cultic functionaries and the visitors 0.83 Interface between the sacredness and profanity and government interference 0.82 Identification of the challenges facing the sacredness and level of desecration 0.83. The roles played by the custodians and other stakeholders 0.87

3.5 Instrumentation

The characteristic of the respondents was based on the age, sex, marital status and occupation. The actual age of the respondents was obtained in years and measured at interval level. The respondents indicated whether they are male-1 or female-2. Frequency count and percentage were used to interpret the data generated. The marital of the respondents were categorized into Single (1), Married (2) Separated (3) while educational status indicated their level of education attainment from the list of four opinions as provided as; no of formal education (1) primary education (2) secondary education (3) tertiary education. The research was measured based on the level of the respondents. (1) Indigenes (2) visitors (3) devotees (4) cultic functionaries (5) government officials.

3.6. Method of Data Analysis

Data collected for the study was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. However, inferential statistics such as Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses one and two raised for the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Result of the findings was based on physical structures, infrastructures and the sacred spots in the places of worship. The activities of the devotees, cultic functionaries and the visitors. The interface between the sacredness and profanity and the involvement of government in the places of worship. The challenges facing the sacredness in the places of worship. The roles played by the custodians of these places of worship in the study and how it affects the religious inclination of the devotees. The socio-religious inclination of the devotees which include the age, sex, marital status, status, and their experiences. Impact of religion development, the profanity of the sacred places in the place of worship; frequency of the people patronage at the places of worship; frequency of the indigenes about the places of worship; frequency of the cultic functionaries and the challenges facing the places of worship in the recent time:

Finding revealed that the mean of the age of the respondents was 41.20 years with standard deviation of 12.9 (26.7%) of the respondents were between 31-40 years of age and 41-50 years of age respectively thus revealing the respondents that are devotees to the gods in the places of worship. This implies that participation of the devotees aids the sustainability of the sacredness of the places of worship with the help of cultic functionaries who maintain the taboos guiding the religious site. Over 55% of the respondents were male while 45% were female. This implies that more male used to visit the places of worship more than the female in the study area. (70%) of the respondents were married while (11.7%) were single, (7.3%) were divorced and (11%) were widows. It assumed that married people were involved in coming to places of worship for religious and other spiritual purposes. According to Fakoya (2000) and Oladoja et al asserted that marriage covers a level of responsibility. Education is a social which is expected to have positive influence on the people patronizing these worship centers for the solution of one problem or the other being social, spiritual, political, and family.

Moreover, result of the study revealed that (33.6%) of the respondents had tertiary education, (29.3%) had no formal education most especially the cultic functionaries, (24%) had secondary education while only a relative proportion of 13% of the respondents had the primary education. This implies that a good number of the respondents have education. The result revealed that (53.1%) of the respondents had 5-9 members in their household, (41.2%) of the respondents had less than or equal to three members in their household, (3.4%) of the respondents had between 10-15 members in their households while (0.5%) of the respondents had 16 and above members in their household. (16.2%) of the respondents in the study area were visitors while (21.6%) were cultic functionaries, (31.8%) were devotees, while (30.4%) were the indigenes. (30.6%) of the respondents are into farming, 28.6% of the respondents were artisan (21.6%) of the respondents are into petty trading while (10.6%) of the respondents are drivers respectively. (10.3%) of the respondents had income between 30,000 and 40,000 (34.6%) of the respondents had less or equal to 29,000 (20.4%) had 41,000 and above as income while (38.6%)

had 42,000-50,000. Majority of the respondents (94.4%) had different experience in coming to the worship center (5.6%) of the respondents had little experience about the religious significant of the worship centres.

Physical features and the infrastructures in the place of worship

The result revealed that the physical features and the infrastructures put in place at these site gave more attraction to the visitors than the devotees who patronize these centres. The respondents were asked to indicate the physical features and the infrastructures that put in place that attract them to visit these space of worship. (76.4%) of the respondents indicates that these centers look more attractive for them to catch fun and other social engagements whenever they visit these centres while (23.6%) said no. (71.6%) of the respondents showed that they enjoyed their visit when they visit the centres while (28.4%) said no. (58.7%) of the respondents said the centres facilitate more customer’s patronage during festival period more than ordinary day while (42.3%) said no. (64.5%) of the respondents indicates that there are increase in sales during the festival period at these centres while (36.5%) of the respondents said no. (57.8%) of the respondents showed that the centre encourages the visitors to patronize the center while (42.2%) said no.

Majority of the respondents (76.1%) said the infrastructures and facilities centre enhances attraction and interaction with the visitors and the foreigners who paid visit to these centres while (23.9%) said no. (80.4%) of the respondents said the physical features and the aesthetic of these centers were not enough for attraction while (19.6%) said no. (67.4%) of the respondents said the centre form trade cluster and association while (32.6%) said no. (75.3%) of the respondents said the centre gave exposure and social engagements to the people who visit these centres while (24.7%) said it doesn’t. This indicated that the center outlook gave more attraction for commercial purposes than spiritual purposes in the recent time.

Table: 2 Physical features and the infrastructures in the place of worship

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Physical infrastructures attract the visitors to the worship centres	Yes 229	76.4
	No 71	23.6
The infrastructures pave ways for social engagement at centre	Yes 214	71.6
	No 86	28.4
People patronize the centre during festival based on the infrastructures	Yes 176	58.7
	No 124	42.2
Commercial activities increases during the festival period based on the physical infrastructures	Yes 193	64.5
	No 107	35.6

Frequency of the activities of the devotees, cultic functionaries and the visitors

Findings revealed that (43.6%) of the respondents indicate that the activities of the devotees and the worshippers were not noticeable except during the festival period while (56.4%) said no. (65.9%) of the respondents indicate that the cultic functionaries put restrictions to the sacred spots at these centre while (34.1%) said no. (86.8 %) of the respondents indicate that there are taboos symbols for the visitors at these centres while (13.2%) said no. (64.7%) of the respondents said the visitors do not observe the taboos guiding the centers while (35.3%) said no. This implies that (22.2%) of the respondents said the activities of the cultic functionaries negate the religious taboos of the center while (77.8%) said no. non indigenes do not take the cognize of the taboos guiding the area hence it affects the spiritual dimension of the devotees at the centers

Moreover, 77.6% of the respondents said the activities of devotees were denied during the festival periods while 22.4% said it doesn’t. (53.9%) of the respondents showed that potency of the centre was reduced by the visitors patronizing these centers while (46.1%) said no. 35.6% of the respondents indicate that cultic functionaries frequently have friction with the visitors at these centres while 64.4% said no. 87.6% of the respondents said that the taboo guiding these centre were not observed during their visit while 12.4% said they observe the taboo. (76.9%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the worshippers and the cultic functionaries have cordial

relationship while (23.1%) said no. 75.5% of the respondents showed that the infrastructures put in place at the center affected the spiritual dimension of the devotees while 24.5% said no.

Table 3: Frequency of the activities of the patronage of the worship centres

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Activities of the devotees and the worshippers not noticeable at the worship centres	Yes 133	43.6%
	No 167	56.4%
The cultic functionaries put restrictions at the sacred spots at the worship centres	Yes 197	65.9%
	No 103	34.1%
There are taboos symbols for the visitors at the worship centres	Yes 260	86.8%
	No 40	13.2%
The visitors do not observe the taboos guiding the centers	Yes 195	64.7%
	No 105	35.3%
Non indigenes activities affects the spiritual dimension of the devotees at the centers	Yes 66	22.2%
	No 234	77.8%
Activities of the devotees were denied during the festival	Yes 232	77.6%
	No 68	22.4%
The potency of the centre was reduced by the visitors patronizing these centers	Yes 161	53.9%
	No 139	46.1%
Cultic functionaries frequently have friction with the visitors	Yes 106	35.6%
	No 194	64.4%
The taboos guiding the worship centres were not observed by the visitors	Yes 262	87.6%
	No 38	12.4%
The worshippers and the cultic functionaries have cordial relationship	Yes 230	76.9%
	No 70	23.1%
Infrastructures at the center affected the spiritual dimension of the devotees	Yes 227	75.5%
	No 73	24.5%

Interface between the sacredness and profanity in the study area

Finding revealed that the interface between the sacredness and profanity in the place of worship indicates that (56.3%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the sacredness of the worship center is desecrated by the visitors while (43.7%) said no. This implies that the spiritual energy deposited at these centers has been reduced based on the patronage of the visitors (76.3%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the devotees paid more attention to spiritual activities while (23.7%) disagree. 83.2% of the respondents indicated that the government interference has deface the natural outlook of the centre hence reduces the spiritual potency of the center while 17.8% said no. 79.4% of the respondents were of the opinion that the stakeholders of these centers were not allowed to be in charge of the activities at these center while 21.6% said no. (78.3%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the profanity of the center has affected the spiritual dimension of the devotees while (22.7%) disagree. This implies that the activities of the visitors at these centers affected the spiritual dimension of the worshippers.

Table 4: Showing the Interface between the sacredness and profanity in the study area

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sacredness of the worship center is desecrated by the visitors	Yes 168	56.3%
	No 132	43.7%

Spiritual energy deposited has been reduced by the visitors	Yes 228 No 72	76.3% 23.7%
Devotees paid more attention to spiritual activities	Yes 249 No 51	83.2% 16.8%
Government interference deface the natural outlook of the centre	Yes 220 No 80	73.4% 26.6%
Stakeholders were not allowed to be in charge of the worship centre	Yes 237 No 63	79.3% 20.7%
Profanity affected the spiritual dimension of the devotees	Yes 234 No 66	78.3% 21.7%

Preservation of the center for religious purposes

Result revealed that (78.8%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the religious stakeholders should be given chance to be in charge of these centers while (22.2%) said no. (57.6%) of the respondents showed that the center should be of religious aesthetic outlook while (43.4%) said no. (94.3%) of the respondents showed that there should be demarcation and symbols for the sacred spots at these center while (6.7%) of the respondents said it is not necessary. This implies that if there is a demarcation of the sacred spots at the center so that the visitors would not be able to trespass. (85.6%) of the respondents showed that the government should not commercialized the center for social purposes rather, they should intensify efforts to preserve them for religious purposes while (15.4%) said no. This implies that the religious purposes of these centres would be more profitable if it is well packaged compared to other world religious centres. (78.5%) of the respondents opined that the custodians were not allowed to participate in the development of the centers while (21.5%) said no. This implies that the government restricted the custodian to have an input in the development of the center hence the visitors have not been observing the sacred spots at the centers.

Table 5 Preservation of the center for religious purposes

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Custodians were not allowed to participate in the development of the centers	Yes 235 No 65	78.5% 21.5%
Religious stakeholders should be given chance to be in charge of the religious centers	Yes 236 No 64	78.8% 21.2%
Center should be of religious aesthetic outlook	Yes 170 No 130	56.7% 43.3%
There should be religious symbols and demarcation for sacred spots	Yes 282 No 18	94.3% 5.7%
Government should not commercialized the center for social purposes	Yes 256 No 44	85.6% 14.4%
Religious stakeholders should be given chance to be in charge of the religious centers	Yes 236 No 64	78.8% 21.2%

Identifying the challenges facing development of the worship centres in the study area

Problems associated with the devotees and the cultic functionaries of the study are were ranked in order of severity as the major problems affecting the development on the centers in ascending order of importance. Result shown that the infrastructures and facilities put in place at the center as indicated by 83.2% of the respondents have been the major problems. This implies that the government has put in place some infrastructures and facilities that make the center look attractive for social engagements and other commercial purposes which negate its religious purposes. Government interference is also a major challenge as 77.6% of the respondents

attest to this. Restriction of the custodians most especially the priests and the priestesses to participate in the development of the center also part of the challenges facing the center with 65.6% of the respondents attest to this. Poor management of the center by the government and other religious stakeholders most especially the cultic functionaries is another problem facing the center indicated by 76.7% of the respondents. Failure to observe the sacred spots at the center is another obstacle to the preservation of the center of which 63.7% of the respondents attested this.

Table 6: Identification of challenges facing development of the worship centres

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Infrastructures and facilities at worship centres have been the major problems.	Yes 249	83.2%
	No 51	17.8%
Government interference into the activities at the places of worship is also a major challenge	Yes 232	77.6%
	No 68	22.4%
Restriction of the custodians most especially the priests and the priestesses to participate in the development	Yes 196	65.6%
	No 104	34.4%
Poor management of the center by the government and other religious stakeholders most especially the cultic functionaries	Yes 229	76.6%
	No 71	23.4%
Failure to observe the sacred spots at the center is another obstacle to the preservation of the center	Yes 191	63.7%
	No 109	36.3%

Results of tested Hypotheses

Hypotheses one

HO1: *Frequency of the profanity has no effect on the sacredness in the places of worship*

Result of chi-square analysis revealed that the frequency of the profanity has no effect on the sacredness in the place of worship. Thus the null hypothesis that *'there is no significant relationship between frequency of the profanity and the sacredness'* is hereby rejected.

HO2: *Government interference has no effect on the custodians and other stakeholders of the places of worship.*

The chi-square results showed that Government interference has no effect on the custodians and other stakeholders of the places of worship.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that most of the people that patronize these places of worship are predominantly middle aged people. It was discovered that they visited the place for religious purposes and other aspirations of life and they get result for their visit based on their religious belief. Most of the respondents had good experience of different sacred centres with the activities of the priests and other cultic functionaries who attended to their request being social, political, and spiritual and other spheres of life. It was also discovered that there are taboos and symbols that demarcate the sacred spots as a restricted area to checkmate the activities of those who pay a visit to these centres.

It was revealed that the government interference has been the major challenge that sacrilegious most of these centres to suit tourism which negate the religious purposes that these centres are meant for. Findings revealed that the cultic functionaries and other religious stakeholders were not carried along by the government before embarking on the renovation and other projects at these sacred places. As a result of this, most of the sacred spots at these centres have been tampered with hence reducing the spiritual energies and potency deposited at these centres.

At Olumo Rock in Abeokuta, it was discovered that the introduction of elevators and steps deprived the devotees of the ritualistic encounters which climbing Olumo Rock offers. The construction of modern facilities and infrastructures eliminated the gushing water from the base of Olumo Rock. Consequently, there have been negative impact to diverse constructions and disregard for privacy and sacredness in the places of worship which the cultic functionaries have no power over. The proximities to secular activities permit the infiltration of the privacy, hindrance of devotee's meditation, shift of focus of devotees, contemplation and meditation, commercialization of the sacred places and disturbances to sacredness. All the aforementioned have been the major activities that profane the sacred spots at Olumo Rock.

At Idanre Hills, collection of tariff and the introduction of mountaineering competition have been the major activities that profane some of the sacred spots at Idanre hills. Most of the taboos and sacred objects were not observed by the tourists and other people patronizing Idanre Hills hence reducing the potency of the deity. At Idanre Hills, a hotel, a swimming pool and 660 steps were constructed by the government for commercial purposes which permit the infiltration to the private and sacred spots at Idanre hill. The Agbogun investigative footprint and other sacred spots and objects have been tampered with based on the thoroughfare and disregard for the existed taboos by the tourist and non-indigenes which the cultic functionaries have no power over.

At Osun Grove a pavilion was built for dignitaries and tariffs were also collected. The commercialization and proximities to other secular activities permit the infiltration of the privacy and the sacred places of worship at Osun Osogbo Grove. It was discovered that most of the architectural designs that connote religious affinity put in place by Susan Wenger are going into extinction.

On a final note, in line with what has been discussed from the beginning of the findings, efforts should be made in reviving the spaces of worship and possibly revert the corrupted spaces in the selected sacred places. Doing this, it will make these places to be more of spiritual to the practitioners and also appear vivacious when it is well repackaged and standardized as a religious and pilgrimage centre. This will earn the government more money as a way of diversifying the nation's economy apart from crude oil and agriculture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 The study is advocating that the religious stakeholders should retain the religious identity of each worship centres by putting the imaginary objects and infrastructures that connote religious affinity at each sacred centre.
- 2 The custodians and other religious functionaries should put distinctive demarcation like fence and symbols at each sacred spots and objects that possess spiritual energies so that people would not have thorough fare to them in order to retain their potency.
- 3 Based on the Diasporas tic' dimension of religion, people travel to places where they can find solutions to their various problems be it spiritual, social, political and other aspirations of life. In view of this, the government should choose two or three sacred places in Yorubaland and repackage them to an appreciable pilgrimage centre just like other world religious and pilgrimage centres.
- 4 The religious officials like the priests and priestesses and other cultic functionaries should be given more recognition and encouragement to enable them perform their duties as religious leaders and custodians of cultural heritage.
- 5 Infrastructures and other facilities that can sacrilegious or profane the sacredness of these worship centers should not be erected very close to the sacred sites as a way of reverence and respect for the existed deities believed to inhabit at these sacred sites. Hotels, swimming pool, and other relaxation facilities that can aids patronage should be built at a distance to these sacred sites.
- 6 There is need for the government to emphasis more on the sacred nature of the sacred sites by involving the custodian and other religious functionaries in the planning, implementation and execution of any developmental project at these centres. This will make these sites retain their natural position with religious mien.

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