



Psychological Entitlement and Spiritual Entitlement as Correlates of Covid-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Among Students Christian Religious Studies

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the correlates of psychological entitlement and spiritual entitlement on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among students. A cross-sectional research design was adopted to purposely recruit a total population of 97 students studying Christian religious studies from Nasarawa State University. The students were administered the Psychological Entitlement Scale, the Spiritual Entitlement Scale, and the Oxford COVID-19 Vaccine Hesitancy Scale. The result showed no significant relationship between psychological entitlement and COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy ($r = -.154, p > 0.05$) and spiritual entitlement and COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy ($r = .117, p > 0.05$). However, the maladaptive subscale showed a significant negative relationship with COVID-19 vaccination hesitancy. The Psychological Entitlement and Spiritual Entitlement Scale jointly predicted COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy ($R = .393; F = 8.564, P < .01$). It is recommended that future vaccine campaigns engage with religious leaders to appeal to their beliefs and values and encourage them to accept the vaccine. This is the first study to link entitlement mentality with vaccination uptake in Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Global public health emergency status was given to the COVID-19 pandemic by the World Health Organization in 2020. Since then, Nearly 6.5 million fatalities have been reported as of this point, out of over 767 million confirmed cases (WHO, 2023). As a result, Numerous public health initiatives have been put in place to minimize the spread of the virus, including physical separation and the use of facemasks. Prio to this, earlier studies had shown that vaccinations are successful public health measures (Sokunbi, et al, 2023). A vaccination is an organism that has been damaged or rendered inactive and contains a small amount of an antigen (World Health Organization, 2020b). Vaccines are weakened or inactive pieces of an organism that include antigen-containing components. Vaccines aid in early pathogen detection so that our bodies can better prepare to combat them in the event of exposure (WHO, 2020). Additionally, having a high immunization rate benefits society. This is due to the idea of herd immunity, which states that if the majority of a population is inoculated, disease transmission can be considerably slowed down or stopped. Depending on the effective reproduction rates and the vaccine's efficiency, the immunity threshold is predicted by WHO to range between 60 and 90 percent in 2022c (Kadkhoda, 2021).

The globe produces a lot of vaccine doses, yet vaccination rates have remained low. Numerous immunizations have expired as a result of this. Ireland, year 2023 The hesitation people have when it comes to getting vaccinated against the dangerous Covid-19 disease, known as Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy, is one of the main causes of this poor vaccination intake. The choice whether or not to get vaccinated is not always a simple one, so it exists on the continuum (Morgan,2023). At one extreme, individuals readily accept vaccinations; at the other, they are reluctant to accept, refuse, or postpone some vaccinations; and at the third extreme, they vehemently reject all vaccinations.

Evidence of vaccine reluctance has been shown in recent literature. For instance, a poll conducted in the United States revealed that just 49% of people there were enthusiastic about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine (Kashte, et al, 2021). According to a survey conducted in the United Kingdom, 64% of participants claimed they would be "very likely" to receive a coronavirus vaccination (Sherman, et al, 2021). In Saudi Arabia, 67% of respondents stated they would receive a coronavirus vaccination. (Al- Al-Mohaithef & Padhi, 2020). In Africa, there have been reports of Covid hesitancy. For example, a study in Kenya found that covid hesitancy was as high as 60.1% (Orange, et al, 2021). Another study in Ghana was conducted by a team of researchers and clinicians (Acheampong, et al,2021). They found that 51% of mostly urban adults over the age of 15 were willing to take the covid vaccine, while 21% of respondents were not willing to take it. A study also found that the Nigeria had the highest rate of covid-19 hesitancy at 47.81%, (Nnaemeka, et al, 2023)

Researchers and medical professionals have been examining how people's personalities and religious convictions may influence their choice to receive Covid vaccines. Psychological entitlement, or the feeling that someone deserves more than everyone else, is one personality trait that may be in play.

According to Campbell and colleagues (2004), those who have this form of entitlement tend to make demands without considering how they may effect other and are less inclined to consider what is best for others. Additionally, they believe that because individuals are unique, they should have the freedom to choose not to follow the crowd. According to the same author, those with high psychological entitlement levels exhibited greater greed and treated their peers more selfishly and when selecting what they want to accomplish, they are less likely to show care for what is socially acceptable or advantageous for others. Additionally, entitled people think they are unique and should reject what everyone else does. According to Rose and Anastasio (2013), people with a sense of entitlement are often more refractory to being told what to do. As a result, individuals could decide to ignore orders in order to maintain their sense of independence. Therefore, psychologically entitled people are not concerned about the potential for spreading the infection if they do.

Religious and Spiritual factors have been cited are the third most frequent reason for vaccine hesitancy globally. (Machekanyanga, et al, 2017). A new spiritual concept attracting the interest of scholars is spiritual entitlement. Grubbs, and associates (2017). defined spiritual entitlement as feeling as if God is indebted to them, believing that their faith entitled them to positive experiences, and expecting God to make them joyful constantly. Spiritual entitled persons feel that as a result of ones spiritually advancement, they deserve more love and respect. The same authors proposed two facets of spiritual entitlement; positive expectations which is a generally hopeful attitude about one's perceived relationship with the divine and reveal a general expectation of blessings and happiness in one's spiritual life. maladaptive spiritual entitlement reflecting attitude of deservingness and demandingness in one's spiritual life, particularly in one's perceived relationship with the divine. This belief in God's active involvement in protecting one's people may reduce the need for the vaccine (Digregorio et al. 2022). People who are spiritually entitled think that God is responsible for their health, no matter what part he plays in it. This is because they think they're unique in God's eyes. Studies have shown that believing in God is in charge of your health and having faith in spiritual healing has a negative effect on taking medication. This means they're less likely to get sick with the virus and don't see any reason to get vaccinated.

Entitled person may tend to assign the control of their health to God as a result of their perceived uniqueness in Gods sight. Belief that God is in control of one's health and a belief in spiritual healing was negatively associated medication adherence (Finocchario-Kessler, et al.2011). As a result, he/Sshe is less likely to contact the virus and sees no reason to take the vaccine. Additionally, they may be more likely to believe that their religion or spiritual practice will keep them from getting sick, making it less likely that they will see a need to get vaccinated. On the other hand, people who feel entitled to a vaccine may also be less likely to get vaccinated if they believe vaccines are unnatural, or that they interfere with their religious beliefs.

University students are purposely choosen because students are at a developmental phase of psychological transformation, particularly

'*individuation*'; where they struggle to cultivate autonomy at a time when they are still dependent on their parents especially for financial up-keep. It would be curious to know their decision at school and away from the watchful eyes of parents / guardians. Few Christian religious leaders have outrightly reject the vaccine (Adewole, 2021) mentioning belief in the word of God as a better healer than belief in vaccine. For others, the blood of Jesus or the holy communion is an effective remedy from getting sick from covid (Whitetaker, 2021). Other Christian religious leaders accept the vaccine (Nwaubari 2021). This discrepancy calls for further studies. Since religion plays an important role in the lifes of Nigeria, it is necessary to examine the mindset of devoted Christians towards vaccine uptake there is currently a paucity of data on COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy among population of religious students. We therefore, conducted this survey to examine vaccine hesitancy among religious students of nassarawa state university. One unique aspect of this paper is that it focused on the population students who major in religion excluding students from others department. Another distinguishing feature of this paper is that it examines the influence of entitlement both as a trait construct and spiritual construct - the first study known by the researchers to link these variables to vaccination decision. Based on the foregoing, this research attempts to, among other things, We hope to provide highly informative empirical evidence that will stir up conversations, proactive preparation, and mobilization among religious leaders, clinicians, healthcare workers, and communication experts toward the likelihood of vaccine hesitancy. Insight from this study could contribute a perspective that would facilitate the need to establish a religious - based intervention program (which is obviously lacking in most vaccination The insights gained from this study might help guide targeted vaccine education efforts and encourage healthcare experts to have dialogues with these populations to increase other future vaccine uptake.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Review

In order to investigate the relationship between psychological entitlement and non-compliance with instruction, Zitek and Jordan (2019) recruited 202 participants, composed of 105 male participants and 95 female participants, with a median age (SD = 32.4) and a median score (SD = 10.0). Participants were presented with a word search task that required them to complete a set of instructions, such as finding words in a particular orientation, listing a total of five words, and completing a scale of psychological entitlement. The results indicated that the level of entitlement was positively correlated to the number of instructions that participants disregarded, thus indicating that those with higher levels of psychological entitlement had a higher likelihood of misinterpreting the word search responses.

A second study (Zitek & Schlund 2020) looked at how psychological entitlement affected non-compliance with health guidelines during the covid pandemic among 1001 online participants from the United States. Highly entitled individuals reported poor compliance with covid-19 health guidelines, such as hand cleansing and social distancing ($r = 0.20$ and $r = 0.37$ respectively).

On the other hand, people with higher levels of psychological entitlement believed the virus threat was exaggerated and were less concerned about harming others.

Hatemi & Fazekas (2022) looked at the impact of grandiose/vulnerable narcissism on mask use and vaccination during covid. The survey included 1,100 participants drawn from nationally representative, stratified sampling. Higher levels of grandiose or exploitative narcissism predicted less mask use and less vaccination, but more telling others to wear a mask if someone wears a mask.

Chipollini (2022) checked the level to which entitlement determined commitment of brutal action and treatment completion. The study evaluated MCMI-III/IV scores, discharge summaries, and aggression histories for a sample of 105 persons who were acknowledged as qualified for the study. Most participants (69%) were male (vs. 32% female). Participants also varied in age from 19 to 59 years old, with a mean age of 34 year .it was hypothesized that individuals who did not complete their treatment will have considerably higher average scores on the MCMI-III/IV entitlement subscale compared to individuals who completed treatment. A one-way ANOVA showed no significant mean disparity among entitlement scores between respondents who successfully ($M = 31.35$; $SD = 31.54$) and unsuccessfully ($M = 37.59$; $SD = 36.82$) completed treatment, $F(1, 104) = .547$, $p = .461$. Findings did not support the hypotheses

In a study conducted between May and June 2021, Digregorio, and colleagues (2022) used a national representative sample to investigate the relationship between belief in God's ability to intervene and the uptake of the Covid-19 vaccine. After regression analysis, it was found that belief in God's higher power supervision was not significantly associated with the uptake or intent of the vaccine, while belief in the power of God to intervene was significantly and adversely associated with the uptake and intent of the vaccine. In a study conducted in Nigeria, Kisenyi and Mulira (2011) examined the relationship between faith in divine healing and the adherence to medication in HIV/AIDS patients at Benue State General Hospital. The results indicated that the perceived potency of divine healing predicted the adherence to medication among the patients.

In view of the literature, this study was carried to contribute local and up-to-date information on the influence of psychological entitlement and spiritual entitlement on covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among christian religious students at Nassarawa state university.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

1. Psychological entitlement will significantly have a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among christian religious students at Nassarawa state university,

2. Spiritual entitlement will significantly have a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among christian religious students at Nassarawa state university,
3. Each dimension of soiritual entitlement will have a significant relationship with covid 19 vaccination hesitancy
4. Psychological entitlement and Spiritual entitlement will jointly and significantly have a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among christian religious students at Nassarawa state university

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted survey research the study focused on students who major in religion studies and philosophy and Christian religious education. the researcher approached the course representatives for each level and distributed the questionnaire to all the students. Only few students returned the filled questionnaire the same day the remaining returned theirs on a later date not exceeding two weeks. All hundred and twentytwo students from department of Philosophy & religion and Christian Religion studies were issued the questionnaire while only 102 were returned. Five were discarded for containing numerous missing values. of the 97 valid retrieved questionnaires, that 55 (56.7%) of the total respondents are male 42 (43.3%) are female. Age range 16-30.

Three instruments were employed in this research. The Psychological Entitlement Scale was created by Campbell et al. in 2004 to measure how much people think they deserve more than others. It's a 9-item scale with 7 points, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. It's been tested and found to be pretty reliable, with a reliability of.72 over a month and.70 over two months, and a Cronbach's alpha of.80 in two studies (Campbell et al., 2004). It's been adapted in Nigeria by Ugwu and Okafor in 2016, with a Cronbach's α of 0.77. In this study, the reliability indes is 703.

The researchers used the Scale (Grubbs, and colleagues, 2017)) to measure notions of spiritual entitlement, which is a nine-item scale with a likert scale of 1 to 7. It is composed of two dimentional dimensions: 1 (positive expectations) and 2 (maladaptive expectations). Positive expectations indicate an optimistic attitude towards one's spiritual life, while Maladaptive expectations reflect a demanding attitude toward deity and a perception of undeserved deservingness in one's spiritual life. A high score for the SES indicates a high degree of spiritual entitlement. The developers recorded an alpha value of 0.90 for the positive expectation dimension and 0.79 for the maladaptive dimension in the pilot studies. Subsequently, sixty-seven students from the Department of Accountancy were administered the questionnaire and the developers verified its face validity by experts from the Department of Psychology, Philosophy and Religion, and the Pentecostal Church. A cronbach alpha of 0.79 was found for the pilot studies. 0.834 and 0.744 for the positive expectation and maladaptive dimension respectively.

The Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy scale, developed by Freeman in Oxford university (Freeman, et al, ,2020), consists of item specific response options encoded from 1-5, with higher scores indicating greater hesitancy. This scale showed accepted convergent validity with the similar scale Vaccine hesitancy Scale (Shapiro et Al, 2018). The Cronbach's alpha of 0.97 was reported by the developers. Uzoigwe

(2021) reported a cronbach's alpha of 0.79 among the Nigerian population. For this study, a cronbach alpha of 0.945 was got.

RESEARCH RESULT

Table 1: Summary Result of the Relationship between Psychological entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy

VARIABLES	Mean	S.D	DF	R	P
			97	-.154	.131
Psychological entitlement	4.732	1.1914			
Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy	3.345	1.269			

Table 1 shows the summary results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Psychological entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. The results revealed the mean and standard deviation scores for psychological entitlement (M= 4.732 SD= 1.1914) and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy (M= 3.345, SD= 1.269). Further analysis revealed there was negative but insignificant relationship between Psychological entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy [$r(95) = -1.154, P > 0.05$ (NS)]. In other words, the hypothesis was not confirmed in this study. These results imply that psychological entitlement did not significantly have a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy.

Hypothesis 2: It stated that spiritual entitlement will significantly have a significant relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation in table 2.

Table 2: Summary Result of the Relationship between spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy.

VARIABLES	Mean	S.D	DF	R	P
			97	.117	.253
Spiritual entitlement	5.15	1.219			
Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy	3.35	1.269			

Table 2 shows the summary results of the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation relationship between spiritual title ment and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy The results revealed the mean and standard deviation scores for spiritual entitlement (M= 5.1523, SD= 1.2195) and CVH (M= 3.35, SD= 1.269). Further analysis revealed a positive relationship between spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among students in public secondary schools significant [$r(97) = 0.117, P > 0.05$]. In other words, the hypothesis was not confirmed in this study. These results imply that there is no significant relationship between Psychology entitlement and covid-

19 vaccine hesitancy among Christian religious students at Nassarawa state university Keffi.

Hypothesis Three: Each dimension of spiritual entitlement will have significant positive relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among students of Nassarawa state university Keffi.

Table1: Pearson Product Moment correlation showing the relationship between Each dimension of spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy

Variable	Mean	S.D	N	Relationship with CVH	p-value	remark
positive	5.1340	1.3061	97	.047	.650	Not significant
maladaptive	5.1890	1.5244	97	.201	.048	significant

There was an insignificant relationship between positive spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy. ($r = -.047$, $p > .05$). This suggests that increase in positive spiritual entitlement have no noteworthy change in the level of CVH. The study found a significant positive relationship between moral spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy ($r = .201$, $p < .05$). This suggests that students who scored higher in spiritual entitlement tend to have high scores in CVH

Hypothesis 4: It stated that Psychology entitlement and Spiritual entitlement will jointly and significantly have a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among christian religious students at Nassarawa state university.

Table 3: Summary Result of the Relationship between psychological entitlement, spiritual entitlement and covid-19 vaccine hesitancy

VARIABLES	B	t	R	R ²	F
PSYCHOLOGICALENTITLEMENT	-.492	-3.901	.393	.154	8.564
SPIRITUALENTITLEMENT	.456	3.612			

Table 4 shows the summary result of the multiple regression analysis where it revealed that, Psychology entitlement and Spiritual entitlement jointly and significantly had a relationship with covid-19 vaccine hesitancy ($R = .393$; $F = 8.564$, $P < .05$) and indicated a proportion of 15.4% variance for covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among religious students at Nassarawa state university keffi. In other words, this hypothesis was confirmed in the study.

DISCUSSION

The findings are discussed below, based on the study's hypotheses/research questions. From the study's first hypothesis/question, findings showed that psychological entitlement did not predict cardiovascular disease (CVH). The

conclusion to be drawn from this is that students' doubts about taking the vaccine to a reasonable amount may not be attributed to their psychological entitlement. This is different from Zitek & Schlund's (2020) findings, which found that highly entitled individuals did not comply well to with Covid-19 guidelines (e.g., hand cleansing, social distancing). The negative relationship in this study is surprising to the researchers. One possible explanation for this is that the vaccine's scarcity makes the entitled individual feel special, as they are among the privileged few who have access to the vaccine before it is made available to the general population. For example, according to point 3 of the psychological entitlement scale; "If I were in the Titanic (a sinking ship) and I were in the first life boat! titanic and lifeboat could be compared to the covid disease and covid-19 vaccine respectively. However, this is similar to Chipollini (2022) findings that treatment completion was not related to entitlement

Religious entitlement did not predict CVH This may be due to conflicting advice from church members, a belief that God works in different ways, and a belief that not getting vaccinated is like "putting God to the test". This finding is in line with Kisenyi (2011) who found that high religious belief did not correlate with high rates of adherence to antiretroviral therapy. I This is in line with Igbende (201) 6 who found that believing in spiritual healing and believing in the power of spiritual healing was a barrier to adherence to medication.

Positive spiritual entitlement had no relationship with CVH while negative spiritual entitlement had a significant positive relationship. This confirms Grubbs (2016) finding that only maladaptive spiritual entitlement emerged as a predictor of divine struggle while positive spiritual entitlement did not did not demonstrate a predictive relationship with any aspect of r/s struggle when placed into a hierarchical regression. This finding adds to the The conceptual distinction between these two facets of spiritual entitlement

On hypothesis number 3, parental entitlement and religious entitlement predicted CVH.

The findings showed that parental entitlement was predictive of cardiovascular disease (CVH) and that spiritual entitlement was predictive of CVH. Furthermore, according to Table 3 above, those who did not feel "more deserving" and "had a high level of expectation" from the divine were more likely to say they were "covid 19 vaccine undecided". This collaborated findings from Grubbs et al found that both personality factors (psychological entitlement) and spiritual entitlement were "significant predictors" of spiritual struggle, which could extend beyond spiritual life struggles to include decision-making struggles in general.

The results showed that psychological entitlement had a negative correlation with CVH, while spiritual entitlement had a positive correlation with CVH. Therefore, it is concluded that psychological entitlements and spiritual entitlement have "persistent barriers" to vaccination effectiveness among participants in the area of study. It is therefore recommended that clinical psychologists use psychohistorical cognitive therapy to "change patients" attitudes and beliefs about expectations from God and make them "believe" in the potency of vaccines.

It is suggested that governments, NGOs, and other organizations should launch vaccination education campaigns to teach religious leaders and their

followers about the importance of having a positive attitude towards vaccines. This study has some limitations, such as its cross-sectional design, which makes it difficult to draw conclusions, and the small sample size of the study, which is an obstacle to generalization.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The combined influences of psychological entitlement and spiritual entitlement are strong predictors of CVH among students though in opposite directions. That is, psychological entitlement influence was negatively related to CVH whereas spiritual entitlement influence was positively related to CVH. Based on the results, it was concluded that psychological entitlement and spiritual entitlement have remain barriers to vaccination effectiveness among participants in the study area. spiritual entitlement was indeed a distinct psychological construct. In a similar fashion, distinguishing between an optimistic view of one's spiritual life and a more maladaptive entitled, demanding view seems to be of importance, particularly when examining relationships between entitlement and health decision making It was therefore, recommended as follow:

- i. Clinical psychologists should use psycho-spiritual cognitive therapy to change patients' attitudes and belief about expectation from God and made them to believe in potency of vaccines as a way of enhancing vaccination.
- ii. Governments at all levels and non-governmental organizations should organize vaccination enlightenment campaigns to educate religious leaders and their members on the need to develop positive attitude towards vaccines

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Some of this study's notable limitations include the cross-sectional design which prevents the ability to make causal inferences. Additionally, the study was conducted among students majoring in Christian religion at Nassarawa state university Keffi. study employed was made up of small sample size which is an impediment to effective generalization. It was therefore, suggested that further studies should have large sample.

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