

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MASS MEDIA IN PROMOTING RELIGIOUS
TOLERANCE IN NIGERIA
(A STUDY OF 'CHRISTIAN HALF HOUR' RADIO PROGRAMME ON ITV RADIO)**

BY

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DEPARTMENT OF MASS COMMUNICATION, AUCHI POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI

NOVEMBER, 2022

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF MASS
COMMUNICATION, SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION
TECHNOLOGY, AUCHI POLYTECHNIC, AUCHI
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this project entitled “**An Assessment of the Mass Media in Promoting Religious Tolerance in Nigeria (A Study of ‘Christian Half Hour’ Radio Programme on ITV Radio)**” was written by me and it is the record of my research. To the best of my knowledge, it has not been presented in any previous application for an academic award. All sources of information have been acknowledged using references.

Festus Happiness

Date

APPROVAL

This project is approved based on the student's declaration and its compliance with the requirement of the Department of Mass Communication, Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi; in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma (HND) in Mass Communication.

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(Project Supervisor)

Date

Mr. Joseph Ikerodah
(Ag. Head of Department)

Date

DEDICATION

To God Almighty for His love, mercies, provision and protection

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I sincerely want to give God all the glory for making this a reality. It wasn't easy but He always come through for me.

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the mass media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria. The researcher embarked on this study basically to assess the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria and to find out the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria. Based on the objectives of this study, four research questions were formulated to serve as a guide for this study. This study is anchored on the structural conflict theory. Survey was deemed as the most appropriate research design for this study and data were collected through the use of well-structured questionnaires. Findings show that the media has been identified as a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria. The media as the watchdog of the society cannot be divorced from religious institutions. The media need the religious institutions to survive while the religious institutions also need the media to survive. Broadcast media can be used to propagate morals, ethics and godliness which are the basic principles for nation building in a country that forbids the establishment of broadcast stations for outright religious broadcasting. The power of the media can be used to redress and reconstruct a country's national value system by carrying out religious activities. This study recommends that the Nigerian government at the Federal, State and Local levels should adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in this country. This simply means anyone in the position of power in a country with various religious groups should not allow his own religious inclination to over-ride common interest of the nation.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Nigeria was rated eight in terms of people under threats of mass killings or other systematic violent repression as a result of religious crises, by the Minority Rights Group international Report in 2008. In the same year, The Punch Newspaper estimated that as at 2004, some 10,000 people have been killed in clashes between rival ethnic and religious groups across the country; while 10,000 others were displaced from their homes (Dogarawa, 2012). The Human Right Watch (HRW) in 2010 put the estimate of people that lost their lives to various ethno-religious crises in Nigeria, from 1999 to 2010 at 13,500. Further, Kukah (1993) cited in Richard (2018) documented one of such religious crisis in Kafanchan, Kaduna state and attributed the cause of the crisis to a broadcast on Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) Kaduna of an alleged massacre of Muslims and burning of mosques in Kafanchan. Over 300 lives and properties worth of millions of naira were lost to that crisis. Thus, the loss of lives as a result of religious crisis has increased over the years and this is very worrisome.

Nigeria has been characterized as a very complex state in which major political and economic issues are vigorously contested along the lines of ethnic, religious, and regional divides which in some cases, if not properly handled leads to conflicts and violence, (Maku, 2012). The causes of these conflicts may be connected to the way and manner intolerance has negatively influenced the people's beliefs about their religion and ethnic belonging, (Aliyu, 2009).

According to Idris (2012), religious intolerance plays a background role in fanning the embers of inter-group conflict in Nigeria and that religious intolerance which often leads to violence has created tensions that resulted in bloody and destructive crises thus seriously threatening the peaceful-coexistence and interaction among the various ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. Similarly, Terwase, (2012) states that the myriad of problems associated with religious intolerance in the country have drastically affected the various social, political, religious and economic strata that make up the Nigeria society. The author further argued that religion could serve, and has indeed served as an instrument of social harmony in many civilizations and has also served as a motivation for violence if exploited. Ezeanokwasa, (2009) observed that statistics on religious crises across Nigeria show that at least 95 percent of them occurred in the northern part of the country. This may be attributed to religious intolerance by various groups in the region. Many of these conflicts were mainly between

Christians and Muslims. There were cases where members of the same group engaged in violent conflict as a result of internal problems. Such conflicts occurred in places like Sagamu in Ogun State, Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Plateau, Yobe and Borno states. These conflicts threaten to transform religion in Nigeria from a unifying and edifying force to a destructive or even disintegrative social element that threatens the peace, stability and security of the country, (Aliyu, 2009).

At the state level, Kaduna state has had several religious crises during the last two decades such as the Kafanchan crisis in 1999, the Sharia crisis in 2000, the Gwantu crisis of 2001, Kaduna Miss World crisis in 2002, amongst others. A common trend of these crises is that they start as an ethnic-driven and quickly move to religion. A common characteristic of these crises is massive destruction of lives and property and their spill-over effect to neighboring towns and other parts of Nigeria.

Therefore, for peace, unity and tolerance to reign in Nigeria, it requires the effort of all Nigerians in general and the media practitioners in particular especially radio. Aldrich (2013) observed that radio programming can alter norms and change people's perception, especially if such norms are designed to increase hostility between ethno-religious groups. The author did a study on whether or not radio programming can be designed to reduce potential conflict and increase civic engagement and positive views of foreign nations. The study surveyed more than 1,000 respondents in Mali, Chad, and Niger and results show that individuals who listened more regularly to such programs on peace participated more frequently in civic activities. As noted by Idris, (2012), radio is at a vantage position in building or destroying any society depending on how it is used. This is because, radio helps to increase information dissemination and education thereby making people more aware and conscious of issues that affect their society. Furthermore, it prepares people for effective participation in the management of important issues such as religion that brings about intolerance and disagreement. Folarin (2005) noted that radio can facilitate the process of peace building by inviting people with similar and opposing views to interact, debate and exchange ideas, with a view to enhancing learning and promoting community development and national consensus. According to Betz (2004), by the 1930s, radio had become a prime tool for propaganda and counterpropaganda within and between countries, with large numbers of open and clandestine stations broadcasting partisan views, and this pattern was accentuated in World War II as radio was most often used as a propaganda instrument to secure loyalty and support of the colonies. In 1994, radio in the Great Lakes region of Africa was again in the headlines due to the Rwandan RTLM (Radio Television Libre Mille

Collines). Notably, in the case of Rwanda, an estimated 800,000 people were killed, due to incited violence by the words heard on RTLM. Essentially, radio has had a legacy of divisiveness and hatred as well as peace depending on how it was used. But if radio can be used so effectively to promote hate, can it not then also be used at least as effectively to promote peace? One of the longest standing examples of the use of radio as a tool for social development is that of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Since the 1960s the FAO has been using radio as a means of assisting those in rural areas of developing countries. The goal of which was to assist rural workers so they could come up with concrete solutions to the shared problems they faced together, (Betz 2004). It was through radio that the 1999 crisis between the Ebira and Bassa people of Nassarawa State was brought under control by the then Commissioner of Information, Mr. Labaran Maku who took a neutral ground and addressed the issues with facts. According To Babafemi (2009), radio has grown and stood the test of time by reinventing itself despite the routine threats that latest invention and technology has brought. Radio's significant informational and educational potential should be put to good use, especially in terms of raising awareness and engaging people in the management of issues that are important to the societal life. This media channel could stimulate populations towards partaking in important discussions, rarely or never discussed in their presence. It helps them face the situations which they were poorly equipped to handle in the past and to participate in decision making process. Thus, radio media channel has an important role to play in tackling the menace of religious crises in Nigeria. It may be a frightful weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance, or misinformation that raise negative or positive public sentiments. Radio will also be an instrument of conflict resolution and crises management when the information its provide is reliable and respect human right. Media can contribute to societal reconciliation, change misperceptions, and broaden understanding of the causes and consequences of conflicts (Babafemi, 2009).

Puddephatt (2006) noted that the media often plays a key role in today's conflict. Basically, their role can take two different and opposed forms. Either the media takes an active part in the conflict and has responsibility for increased violence, or stays independent and out of the conflict, thereby contributing to the resolution of conflict and alleviation of violence. Which role the media takes in a given conflict, and in the phases before and after, depends on a complex set of factors, including the relationship the media has to actors in the conflict and the independence the media has to the power holders in society.

It can be said that media is both a protagonist and an antagonist to a peace process. The media can foster human security, and there is evidence that media can reinforce motives

for fuelling wars it can be an instrument for peace and conflict management, which promotes messages and strategies that can lead to peaceful agreements and tolerant behaviour in a given society. The media can also be a weapon of violence that propagates biased information and manipulates societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict. The influence of the media over conflicts has never been under doubt, the question is do the media actually have an impact on how the conflict progresses?

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Despite various attempts through newspapers, television and radio to find solution to religious tension and conflicts in Nigeria, cases of religious conflicts, sentiments, discrimination and hatred still prevail in Nigeria such as the killings and burning of places of worship; and of course the results of these conflicts have always been wanton destruction of lives and properties. This shows that the media has not contributed towards finding a solution to this problem. The literature has accused the media of not living up to expectation in creating the needed atmosphere for peace and tolerance among the various religious groups in Nigeria. Kukah (1993) cited in Richard (2018) documented the Kafanchan religious crisis and posits that Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN) Kaduna broadcast regular bulletins (in both Hausa and English) concerning the massacre of Muslims and burning of mosques in Kafanchan, while they failed to report details on the counter-attack on Christians by the Muslims. According the author, the report alleged that Christians were killing Muslims indiscriminately, burning their Mosques and copies of the Holy Qur'an, and banishing them from the town. The author opined that the media's involvement in the religious affairs and programmes has always been biased and as a result, it led to intolerance from the various religious groups. Eti (2009) documented the inter-religious crisis at Bauchi State in 2009 and observed that Federal Radio Corporation (FRCN) reported that 20 Christians were killed and churches burnt without mentioning Muslim victims and mosques burnt in the reprisal attacks.

Looking at the roles played by the media in conflict situations, one can deduce that the power of media is clearly apparent. As much as they can start conflict, they can also play an important role in defusing tension, reducing and containing conflicts. Okoro (2008) stated that in the search for peace, the mass media, being at the forefront of promoting development, and peace, the media have the power to use their various communication strategies not only to avert violence and strife, but to douse tensions that arise. According to Okoro (2008), if the media concentrate more in creating an atmosphere for peace in Nigeria, those aggrieved will

be provided with alternative platform in the media to air their grievances instead of taking to arms. Thus, through adequate, balanced and objective reportage, people who hitherto would have taken to arms to express their displeasure are informed, enlightened and most importantly convinced to seek the option of dialogue or legal redress. Therefore, to bring about peace, there is urgent need for a paradigm shift by the media towards creating a platform for peace, unity and tolerance among various religious groups in Nigeria. A study by Obasi, (2003), observed that radio through its various programmes has been contributing towards the reduction of many social problems and vices in Nigeria such as human trafficking, child abuse, child labor, and the upsurge in crimes. If the discovery by Obasi is something to go by, then, radio should replicate same as regards to reducing religious intolerance. Radio should be more proactive through its numerous programmes by developing anti-religious conflict programmes. More of its programmes, advertisements and concepts should emphasize that religion is a practice that should be driven by conviction for peace, understanding, love and tranquility among all religions in Nigeria.

It is in the light of this that this study assessed the role of the mass media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows;

- i. To assess the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria.
- ii. To find out the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria.
- iii. To ascertain the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria.
- iv. To suggest ways of improving Christian half hour for better contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria.

1.4. Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated based on the research questions;

- i. How effective is the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- iii. What are the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?
- iv. What are the ways of improving Christian half hour for better contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study assessed the mass media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria. In dealing with this subject, the researcher decided to limit the scope of this study to Christian Half Hour, a religious programme aired on ITV, Radio.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The media as a social institution has over time been used as a powerful instrument for the pursuit of peace and unity in many societies. Despite this, several scholars have rated media as not up and doing in contributing to religious tolerance in Nigeria. While some scholars see media's bias in coverage of conflicts as the main cause of intolerance, others focused on the challenges faced by the media in reporting religious related violence just as others focused on how the media can surmount these challenges in reporting conflicts. In all, it was observed that while they focused on the media and religious conflicts, they failed to recognize the fact that conflicts can only occur in the absence of peace. It is on this premise that this study takes a departure from media and conflict to advocating for a paradigm shift to using the media to creating the needed atmosphere for peace. Through series of programmes on peace the media may be closer to finding a solution to the problem of religious violence as people who are aggrieved will be enlightened and most importantly convinced to seek the option of dialogue. It is expected that findings and recommendations of this study will motivate the broadcast media practitioners into creating programmes that will be geared towards promoting peace, unity and tolerance among various religious groups in Nigeria.

This research is very timely, judging by the fact that Nigeria is in dire need of national cohesion among the multi-ethnic and religious groupings. Therefore, this research will set the tone for the media to embrace national integration and religious tolerance as the core functions of the modern day Nigerian media.

Through this investigation, therefore, both the print and broadcast media in Nigeria will understand their shortcomings and subsequently drive a synergy aimed at curtailing religious crises in Nigeria. The result of this research will entrench professionalism in the coverage of religious-related conflicts in the future.

Also, this research will significantly bring to the fore the media/religious crises theory, by defining the extent to which media reports could fuel or exacerbate religious crises in Nigeria. Therefore, the study will strive to unbundle the theory for other scholars to replicate or possibly refute.

More importantly, this research will contribute significantly to literature that will be useful to communication teachers, social workers, scholars and researchers in various fields of learning, particularly those embarking on similar studies in the future.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

Every research work definitely has its limitation; therefore, this is not an exemption. One of the limitations encountered during the course of this study was sourcing for adequate and related materials for the study. Also, some of the respondents did not also help matters because some of the questionnaires given to them were not returned while few of the questionnaires were wrongly filled. Apart from the undisputed fact that the researcher limited by time, the most serious limitation to this study is the lack of sincerity on the part of some respondents to the questionnaires administered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Review of Relevant Literature

Religion by its nature is supposed to enlighten, inspire and unify people in any society. It is an irony that it often engenders strife, intolerance and hatred among the religious groups in Nigeria today. The danger posed by religion has assumed a frightening dimension under which no meaningful development can endure. According to Okoro (2008), religion in some quarters and her institution are suspected to be major causes of violent, crises and conflicts not only in the contemporary history but down to the history of development of human society. Agi (1998) noted that the problem of religious violence in Nigeria is very complex, not only have Nigerians to contend with inter and intra-religious or (sectarian) violence, they have perforce to contend with Northern and Southern variants on the one hand, and reckon with the changing face of religious violence from one era with another on the other hand. For example, manifestation of the phenomenon in the pre-colonial period differs from colonial, both differ severally from the post-colonial era, and all three differ from the contemporary period.

There are a number of disturbing phenomena in the society arising from religion. Religious organizations have sometimes exerted discriminating influences which have often generated disaffection, apathy and separation among people in the society. Tension and incessant killings always grip non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria due to intolerance among religionists in the society. Religion has often caused the disruption and disintegration of domestic unity as homes and fragmented churches into protestant, Roman Catholic; Pentecost and orthodox, Presbyterian as well as Brotherhood of the cross and star. Social discrimination sometimes follows denominational differentiation and legacy of denominationalism has often led to serious interdenominational competition, hostility, and discrimination. Critically appraised, many of the educational, economic, medical and social welfare services rendered by various Christian groups may have divisive and competitive purposes. Denominational differences have often led to interdenominational crises and conflicts as a result of intolerance (Ekechi, 2007).

Against this background, Okoro (2008) maintains that, religion is therefore a contentious issue in the world history. This is because, where eternal salvation is at stake, compromise can be difficult and may be considered sinful. Hence religion instigates conflict because as a central part of many individuals identity, any threat to one's belief is considered a threat to one's very being. Therefore religious fanatics take a serious consideration of the

society, as they see human existence in the society as a struggle between the forces of good and evil. Definitely it is difficult to justify compromise with the devil; hence, any sign of moderation or toleration is always seen as selling out, more importantly as abandoning the will of God or the gods.

Whichever way the above assumption may be viewed there is still the other side of the story. Agi (1998) observes that the contribution of religion to the creation and exacerbation of social conflict can never be disputed. Still, it is to be noted, however, that a conflict does not become religious by the mere fact that it is referred to as such. According to Scholz (2009) underscores that “the error of attributing to religious motives what may well only be an expression of a purely secular and political stand point abound”. Some of what conventional wisdom tags as religious violence in Nigeria has nothing to do with religion, or at best has only tangential relations with it. The issue is that certain violent acts have been perceived by Nigerians as “religious violence”, and they have reacted in that light.

General Perspective of Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance is conterminous with religious extremism which Iwe (2000) has descriptively defined as:

An irrational attitude to religion which leads the religionist to the practice of religion beyond the bounds of reason and therefore without moderation. Those who perpetuate intolerance in the practice of religion are fundamentalists and they come as sects and fashion out extreme literal myopic and selfish interpretation of their scriptures to justify or give credence to their radical and often violent religious activities.

Fundamentalism arose in the protestant American during late 19th century and later in Islamic states mostly after those countries have gained independence following the Second World War (Lawrence, 2009). In the same vein, Nnanna (2018) further criticized fundamentalists’ movement saying that:

They have arisen through the world and within virtually all the major religions, most notably in Islamic societies and among protestants in the USA together they represent an ideological movement of comparatively recent origin.

Unlike other movements however, fundamentalism represents a directly hostile response to the great Western transformation, modernization and indeed has become a kind of code word for all that fundamentalists abhor and fear. The modern rational secular state

tolerates different moral convictions, political opinions, scientific theories and artistic expressions; and relativism, individualism as well as, immorality and depravity (Nnanna, 2018). In their quest to attain their selfish goals, fundamentalists intolerant of other faiths and movements. As far as they are concerned, no other group or movement deserves to exist alongside with them not even the original body from where they grew or split from. In extreme cases they normally resort to violence in order to assert their selfish desires. Religious intolerance is manifested in several ways by the fanatics who perpetuate intolerance in varied manifestations categorized in the following order:

i. Overt Religious Fanaticism

This group does not hide their feelings and actions, the members normally display their violent, often than not, (unreasonable enthusiasm in crude form) publicly, usually associated with rustles illiterates instance of Maitatsine and Boko-Haram sects.

ii. Hidden Religious Fanaticism

The fanaticism associated with educated and diplomatic elites who indulge in religious prejudice, subtle and in surreptitious manner. Those fanatics exhibit their level of intolerance in different ways displayed through hatred and intolerance openly without pretension. They go to any length to prove that their views override the views of other adherents and that everybody must do their bidding and if they are resisting, they will take to arms and embark on widespread destruction of life and properties. The other groups of fanatics do not openly display their intolerance. They are non-violent but not friendly. They use any opportunity that comes their way to vent their anger on people of other faiths. If this category occupies position of authority, their worst would be to discriminate against people who are not of the same religion with them.

Okoro (2008) noted that the religious fanatics or the fundamentalists are any religious group or sect, which adopts purely a literal as opposed to metaphorical or mythical interpretations of their holy scripture and who deny the validity of interpretations of other religions traditions and assume that religious truth resides with their own perspective. Actually, fundamentalists in any religious tradition turn their belief System into dogma by giving exclusive and particularistic literal interpretations to their scripture. Often they build their dogma by using one verse or even sentences or even phrase from their scripture without taking cognizance of the historical or circumstantial context in which the original speaker made the statement. By these means, the fundamentalists miss the subtle levels of meaning as

well as analogies with the teaching from other world religions and as such present lopsided message to their membership and the society.

Obviously the fanatics stress more on their uniqueness and specialty and on how they are peculiar and different from other religions and from other sects within their own religion. The fundamentalists in order to substantiate their assumed uniqueness status, de-emphasize the commonalities they share with other religious traditions and sects. The implication of this religious posture is that the fundamentalists enter into an error of thinking that their „faith and perception of reality is only the correct one, while everyone else is wrong.

The role of religion in making a good citizen out of the individual cannot be overemphasized. Anyanwu (2009) noted that religion reminds its adherents that they have dual citizenship, the earthly and heavenly citizenship. Religion contains values that promote human rights, human relationship and human virtues (Uka, 2007). It is religion that also reminds members of society that they are duty bound to respect legitimate authority and cooperate with them for peace and progress.

Religion enjoins every member of society to be a good and patriotic citizen. It sees the government of the land as divinely sanctioned institution, and considers morality to be the paramount important in society and so expects all her faithful to be champions and image of good morality in their society.

In other words, intolerance is a blind refusal to understand and respect views or positions that are opposed to one's cherished views. Religious intolerance is an expression of a blind and fixed mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious beliefs and practices. Such negative attitudes exhibit themselves in situations whereby leaders or groups in any society blindly refused to understand and respect contrary religious views and practices except the ones they consider to be true. There is religious intolerance when members of the self-acclaimed true religion proclaim in practice that persons they consider to be in error have no right to live, no right to legitimate political, social and economic amenities unless they renounce their error and be converted to the supposed true religious views and practices. There is religious intolerance when political leaders or the ruling class overtly or covertly collide with some citizens on purely religious grounds. Under such a situation some citizens are denied their fundamental rights to religious liberty, liberty of religious beliefs and practices. Often, this refusal to understand and accept contrary religious views and practices is accompanied by series of violence and destruction (Gianfranco, 2016).

A Survey of Nigeria Religious Landscape

Lijphart (2008) thesis explained that a country is classified as homogeneous if 80 percent or more of its population belong to the same religion or the same language. Based on this assertion, one must perforce concede that Nigeria is by no means a homogeneous society. Rather, Nigeria is not only a plural-ethnic society, it is also one made up of diverse and sects. Within religious groupings in Nigeria are the African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam.

Idowu (2009) in defining African Traditional Religion noted that there is a common “Africanness” about the total culture and religious beliefs and practices of Africa. This common factor may be due either to the fact of diffusion or to the fact that most Africans share religious practices. In certain cases, one could trace specific cultural or religious elements which are common over wide areas. Which lies proximate to one another, and often there are elements, which jump over whole territories to reappear in several other scattered areas on the continent. With regard to the concept of God, there is a common thread, however tenuous in places, running throughout the continent. Whatever outsiders may say, it is in fact this one factor of the concept, with particular reference to the “character” of deity, which makes it possible to speak of religion of Africa.

It is in this context that the use of the term, African Traditional Religion, when discussing Nigeria’s indigenous religion becomes relevant. If for nothing else, it is African in the sense that it has not been imposed from outside. ATR and its manifestations had their days in pre-colonial times. The then congruence between the political and religious subsystems was high. The gods of the group guaranteed or represented its values and the roles of the citizens and believers could not be separated. As Ayandele (2007) pinpointed, scholars of African religion and the anthropologists agreed on the fact that religion is central to the life of the Africans. It bound the king with divinity and awe, permeated the life of the individuals from birth to the grave, subjected the lowborn to their superiors and because of the fear it instilled, formed the basis of secular authority. Remove religion from an African society and it would be deprived of its very life; its moral and political systems would collapse at once.

The creation of the modern state has greatly weakened the political force of ATR through its influences on individuals and events have been quite considerable (Idowu, 2009). Based on this, the main two religions in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam.

Christianity

In Nigeria, although Roman Catholic Missionaries arrived in Benin as early as 1516, and remained until 1688, their efforts failed to make any significant or lasting impression. Nearly two centuries elapsed before Nigeria became a target for renewed missionary enterprises. During 19th century Christian missionaries from Europe and America penetrated interior of what is now Nigeria either shortly before or simultaneous with colonial occupation. Christianity expanded rapidly in first half of the century through the joint efforts of missionaries and their African converts. Scholars pointed out, political significant aspects of Christian doctrines that are impossible to summarize, but in all monotheistic religions, ultimate allegiance is owed not to the sovereign but to God, whose kingdom is not of this world. The supreme guiding principle in individual's life is personal salvation, which is God's sole purpose in the creation of any individual soul, and this must therefore be put before all worldly cares (Roger, 2008).

Secondly, charity is the font of virtue and pride is the font of sin. This doctrine requires the belief of the miseries of others, and a reluctance to pursue worldly glory to power (except as a means of exercise of charity and the worship of God). A policy of concern for and identification with the under privileged - sometimes advanced as "the imitation of Christ" - has often seemed to flow from that (White, 2003).

Thirdly, the doctrine of the incarnation, that God is identical with Christ and dwells among us, as a suffering and redeeming presence, reinforces the belief that man in his compassionate aspect is nearer to God, whereas man in his pride is cast out etc.

Islam

Classical Islam is intensely socio-theocratic. In principle, all human behaviour is under divine order, and that social law and theology are fused. In its integral vision of reality, Islam tends to identify the social conglomerate with religious group, the community with the state, and therefore is inclined to formulate rules for social life according to its religious ethics. Islam trailed the path of Arab traders, and is reputed to have arrived the North of what is today Nigeria about the 9th century A.D but it was only from the beginning of the 19th century that its impact over most of Northern Nigeria became established fact (Agi, 2008).

As indicated above, there are two processes which have created the present religious map of Nigeria. The Fulani conquest and the accompanying "purification" of Hausa Islam as well as the penetration of the South of Nigeria by Christianity and its relationship with the subsequent establishment of colonial rule. Not surprisingly, adherents of Islam are

concentrated in the former Northern region as well as the former Western region including Lagos. Islam had begun to make in road into those later too even before the imposition of colonial rule. In the former Eastern region, even today Islam's following is marginal yet frightening.

Christianity can with qualifications, be said to be the religion of the South, particularly the South-east where it has deeply penetrated. It is to be noted, however, that Christianity seems to have a very large following in the middle belt, and quite a good number of adherents all over the rest of Northern Nigeria.

In terms of pure adherents, ATR in Nigeria has dwindling number of adherents ostensibly, while the adherents of Islam and Christianity seem to be increasing by leaps and bounds. It will be flying in the face of facts to deny that ATR or certain of its aspects has persisted within and under the surface of Muslims and Christians through wide reaches of Nigeria (2008).

Religious Intolerance and Nigeria Experience

Religion in all societies is an instrument of cohesion, unity and progress. It is also used to control the social and spiritual life of the people in a community and in the wider society. Every society has a religion in one form or the other, and as a definition of reality, values and goals. Explaining the Nigerian situation Edlyne (2004) noted that religion is a means to perpetuate violence, fueling of ethnic consciousness and solidarity, acquisition of political power, socio-economic gains, massive killings and the wanton destruction and vandalization of property of those considered infidels or who pay allegiance to other religions. As a means of commanding political legitimacy in Nigeria, it has dictated the pace of the political democratization process which hitherto nurtured ethnic consciousness in the country.

Nigeria as it exists today is a pluralistic society, with different cultural and religious groups. The notion of pluralism as it is needs further explication. Pluralism involves awareness on the part of those affected of the existential differences in cultural behaviours, philosophy of life and even certain attitudes and values. It further implies a conscious acceptance of those differences as inevitable in the search for significant and relevant common goals, objectives and philosophy which take cognizance of the common needs, aspirations and values of the different ethnic groups within the same Nation. The reflection on pluralism seems to agree with Turner's (2017) definition of a pluralistic state or society when he intones that;

A pluralist state or society is one in which (i) there co-exist more than one religion, philosophy which are in relationship of conflict (ii,) there is some degree of recognition by all the parties concerned that a fundamental incompatibility between them exists; and (iii) there is nevertheless some degree of awareness that this co-existence of incompatibles is of positive value, both to the community as a whole, and to each of the people concerned.

The unification of the Northern and Southern Nigeria by the British colonizers in 1914 is like the beginning of the problem. Besides this, another vital and relevant event in the history of what is known as Nigeria today was the introduction of two militant missionary religions; Christianity and Islam. Before the arrival of those missionary religions, each ethnic group that makes up what is now known as Nigeria were under the prop of the traditional religion (A.T.R). Religion then, was no problem since it was a means to an end and not an end in itself. Ahmadu (2011) rightly observed that;

The presence of oriental religions in Nigeria thrust a discordant note into this serene religious atmosphere. Through the history of their developments Islam and Christianity have co-existed in mutual hostility. Though emerging from the same roots with almost identical literature and tenets, their strides for proselytization have often been marked by violence and intolerance.

The contention here is that the seed of religious intolerance in Nigeria was quietly sown through the agencies of colonialism, Islam and Christianity.

Religious Crisis in Nigeria

Nigerians have witnessed series of religious crises in the past and they are still witnessing such today. As a result of those crises, many people had died and properties worth billions of Naira were destroyed. In recent times, religious crisis, especially between Muslims and Christians had reached a dimension whereby each group of adherents enthusiastically calls on God to annihilate the other group (Okoduwa, 2016). There are different levels and forms of religious crises in Nigeria that degenerated into intra and inter-.religious crises. Intra-religious crises as earlier mentioned exists within a particular sect or denomination, intra-religious crisis, instance of the Maitatsine riot of 1980 in Kano and skirmishes between the Izala and the Tijanyia in Gombe in 1987 (Larkin, 2009). The same Maitatsine sect launched a violent attack on the people of Kano. There have been several similar upheavals in some parts of the country. The sect leader, Mohammed Marwa Maitatsine had his famous kingdom in the heart of Kano with about 10,000 followers. Towards the end of 1980s,

Maitatsine struck following a two week ultimatum given by Kano State government to quit the area said to be illegally occupied by his followers. In response to this order, they put Kano under siege for two weeks killing and maiming thousands of innocent people. Eliagu (1993) cited in Nnanna (2004) noted that:

In reality, however, the Maitatsine unrest is a religious phenomenon, Islamic in nature both from the point of view of its participants and of historical trends. Like all other major religious uprising, however, it is basically a power struggle, employing the mass mobilization potential of Islam in Nigeria for selfish aims.

The various Christian denominations in Nigeria are also guilty of religious intolerance towards each other. Such attitudes have led to open denials of basic political, economic, educational, social and religious rights. Method used to whip up religious intolerance include: derisive songs against each other; indoctrination of members on the weakness of each other's religious systems: ex-communication technique, denial of spiritual benefits etc. Bola (2011) critically examined the rivalry between the Roman Catholic Missionaries and protestant missionaries in Igbo land, within 1885-1914. While some healthy areas of these rivalries produced positive results like mass formal education, healthcare delivery and apparent material progress while their negative metamorphosed into religious intolerance. Christians in Igbo land are still harbingers of this vice and some of them are our political leaders to date.

There are crises that occur between two or more different religious groups or traditions, among the crises that fell under this category were the Bulmukutu riot of October 1982, the various Kaduna riots of 1987, 1988 and the year 2000. As if these were not enough, there was Kaduna riot on 22nd November 2002 where about 200 people were reported killed and properties worth millions of naira were also destroyed. Those crises were said to have been caused by what the people termed "blasphemous publications". Also on the same day there was a protest against Miss World Beauty contest scheduled to hold on 7th December, 2002 in Abuja. Down to the Southern part of the country, there were crises that erupted because of religious symbols. For instance, there was a religious crisis in May 1986 at the chapel of Resurrection, University of Ibadan when the statue of the Risen Christ was set ablaze by an unknown group of people. Besides, in Imo State, the Ikenga Symbol which signifies an upright man struggling through the vicissitudes of life in Igbo land was destroyed by a group of religious fanatics who described the symbol as an object of idol worship (Adamolekun, 2013).

The ideal of religious tolerance has constantly eluded the devotees of three major religions of Nigeria such as African Traditional Religion (A.T.R), Christians of this country contemptuously regarded traditional religious beliefs and practices as devilish, paganish, satanic and fetish. Traditional shrines are often looted and valuable sacred symbols and images carted away and sold either in Europe or America, this unkind act has caused violence and crises in the affected areas in the country.

Since 1986, when the news of the alleged membership of Nigeria in the organization of Islamic Conference (O.I.C) filtered into the ears of Nigerians, voices of dissent have been rife from well-intentioned Nigerian citizens especially the Christians. As Iwuchukwu (2009) succinctly observed:

The O.I.C issue is an acid test of president Babangida's wisdom and commitment to the cause of Nigeria's political stability, unity and peace. Anybody in Nigeria who cannot yet understand that, with the possible exception of the Nigerian civil war, there is no other issue that has so far threatened the peace, unity and stability of this country more than the OIC issue is either dishonest or a dreamer.

The up-shot of this alleged deal is that it has divided Nigerian political citizens into two major religious camps - Islam and Christianity. While the adherents of the former tried to throw some light on the benefits of membership, the latter saw the venture as an attempt to Islamize the whole Nation. The then government presidency had not made any categorical official statement on the issue. The alleged enrolment of the entire citizens of Nigeria as members of the O.I.C smacks of religious intolerance and imperils the future political peace and stability of the country which is obvious. To accord any religious group a right which directly and indirectly involves other religious groups in a heterogeneous society as Nigeria is to light an unquenchable conflagration of religious strife and intolerance.

Another issue of national importance which seems to border on religious intolerance is the sharia the sacred law of Islam governing all aspects of Islamic life of a Moslem. Should it be placed side by side with the secular laws of the state? Should non-Muslims be bound by it especially in areas of Muslim domination in a pluralistic country? The problem seems to be one of divided loyalty to the National laws of the state and loyalty to the religions. Kenny brilliantly made a historical survey of this problem from the pre-colonial period to Nigeria second Republic. The conclusion to this thorny problem was that: "the apparent socio - political peace and unity of Nigeria would be hanging as long as the Sharia question remained unsolved".

Sharia law was in practice by the Muslims but Zamfara State was the first to make it a state law in a secular Nation (Nigeria). This act epitomizes religious intolerance. The development did not take into consideration the fact that there existed other religious minority, such as Christians and adherents of traditional religion. The adoption of Sharia as a state law in Northern Nigeria began in Zamfara state on October 27, 1999 at the instance of the then governor Ahmed Sani Yerima. This action caused serious crisis that later spread like a wild fire in all the core Northern states like Kaduna, Sokoto, Niger, Yobe, Borno, Katsina, Bauchi, Kano, Jigawa and Gombe. According to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) African service of 22nd Feb, 2000, as many as 25 bodies were picked by police from the streets the previous night. By September 2000 the same station reported that Sharia related violence claimed over fifteen lives and properties worth millions of naira were destroyed. This is a clear case of religious intolerance because Moslems assumed that no other religion existed in the state (Diara, 2012).

Consequences of Religious Intolerance in Nigeria

Since there is no value - free action, every piece of action carries consequences on the actor and the society at large. Therefore, religious intolerance produces negative effects on the Nigerian socio-economic and political development. Obviously religious crises in Nigeria had served and are still serving as a great obstacle to achieving national relevance that would enhance socio-economic and political development. Fundamental among the militating factor against efforts of the people toward nation building is religious crisis with political undertone (Okweze, 2012).

Religious intolerance, that often than not results in crisis often leads to loss of lives and properties. Arising from those losses deprives the Nation (Nigeria) of much needed manpower. Affected families have lost either their bread winners or economically useful members. All these have negative impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of the country at large. So, religious crisis leads to security risk and fear of uncertainty on both local and foreign investors. This no doubt, has discouraged investment in Nigeria. There are many cases where international and local business enterprises concerned have pulled out from certain areas considered troubled spots.

To win those investors back, a lot of money and time will be spent on overseas trips in order to regain confidence. Furthermore, religious crises have always been a threat to political stability. In most cases some of those crises are politically motivated, it has been observed, from the time of independence there has been a gradual and continuing polarization of the

country across religious lines. This directly or indirectly negatively affect the choice of presidential or governorship candidate, the major concern is often the religion the candidate professes (Abdul, 2002).

According to Iwe (2000) the intolerant spirit of religious fanatics often led to religious totalitarianism which seeks to impose religious conformity and uniformity on the society by force. This attitude is capable of plunging the country into religious war, as no religious group will be ready to compromise its faith. This can paralyze the country for a long time. The more people experience these unrests, killing of innocent souls, destroying properties people labored to acquire, and undemanding the progress of the nation in general. This poses strong doubt on the issue of one Nigeria.

Ethno-religious conflicts have a lot of economic consequences. Conflicts in which ever form, lead to unemployment and loss of income because of disruption of economic activities, infrastructure, uncertainty, increased cost of doing business, and capital flight. Furthermore, during conflicts social spending is often reduced to accommodate increased security spending as the economy undergoes structural changes. According to African Bank (2009), the most obvious legacy of conflict is destruction of public infrastructure. However, infrastructure does not only deteriorate as a result of direct damage from conflict as the government shifts expenditure towards restoring peace and unity, public investment and expenditure on maintenance are squeezed. The post conflict legacy of these effects is an acute shortage of public capital.

Violent ethno-religious conflicts have adverse effects on the economy of any society or nation from which recovery may take many years. Ethno-religious conflicts retard economic progress, hamper economic activities and consequently lead to unemployment and poverty. Ethno-religious conflicts equally disrupt small and medium scale and other commercial activities. They destroy the lives of able bodied men and women who would have engaged in productive activities in order to contribute to the economic development of the nation or community.

The cost of rehabilitating and reconstructing destroyed property after each violent conflict in Nigeria is very high and could have been channeled for development purposes. After conflicts, government spends millions of naira to put in place infrastructures which were destroyed during crises. Resources which could have been used to improve these amenities and embark on other developmental projects would have to be used on restructuring and replacing what had been damaged during the crises. Thus persistent ethno-

religious conflicts are inimical to the development of the nation as the country's source of revenue is equally affected.

For instance, imposition of curfews during conflicts brings every economic activity to a standstill because of restriction of movements until normalcy returns. Also, in the areas of investment, persistent ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have added to the fear of foreign investors coming to Nigeria, especially with the rampant cases of kidnapping of expatriates. Conflicts therefore, have political, social and economic effects on the larger society.

The constant incidences of religious intolerance has led to various religious conflicts in Nigeria in the past three decades have contributed in overheating the nation's politics and political processes as the country is being constantly threatened with disintegration and separatism. This tensed political situation has become more severe as adherents of each of the two dominant religions in Nigeria, Islam and Christianity try to dominate the political landscape using ethnicity and religion as instruments for bargaining. The question now becomes, is he a Muslim or Christian President, Minister, Governor or Local Government Chairman? The consequent abuse of basic human rights following these ethno-religious conflicts cannot go unnoticed.

In the face of political instability following these persistent ethno-religious conflicts in the past three decades, some Nigerians were forced to relocate to their states of origin and even to their communities for safety. Apart from this, government policies are influenced by emotional sentiments and manipulation of ethno-religious cleavages. Right from the formation of political parties to electioneering campaigns and voting patterns, all are being influenced by ethno-religious tendencies and affiliations. As a result of this, politics in Nigeria is always volatile and usually leads to violence and the destruction of lives and property.

The social effects of religious conflicts caused as a result of religious intolerance cannot be overemphasized. Incessant religious conflicts have continued to threaten the socio-economic development, peace, unity and stability of Nigeria in the past three decades. Ethno-religious conflicts have equally, adversely affected the existing social relationships between neighbors that were hitherto living peacefully. These conflicts have further negatively increased ethno-religious consciousness among Nigerians and have led to hatred, enmity and persistent suspicions among the adherents of Islam and Christianity.

In Nigeria today, religious consciousness has led to various social ills ranging from problems of ethno-religious influence on job recruitments, promotions and securing admission to schools. Also, projects like road constructions, schools, electricity, water works,

health centres and other projects were either frustrated or sited in wrong places as a result of religious influences.

In the area of education, due to frequent disruption and closure of schools during religious conflicts in some parts of northern Nigeria, the educational quest of the children has been adversely affected and retarded. Apart from this, schools, students/pupils and their teachers were not spared during ethno-religious conflicts. Many schools had been burnt down while many were forced to close down for months thus affecting the schools calendars.

Religious conflicts affect children, girls and women in various ways. Deaths of men during violent conflicts raise the proportion of female-headed households. After each round of ethno-religious-conflict, women tend to face a much heavier burden of caring for their various families alone. Some of the deaths during violent conflicts occur as a result of preventable communicable diseases but because public health programmes such as immunization for disease control and prevention cannot be carried out during violent conflicts. This has implications for the health of the citizens in the conflict areas. Also, the adverse effects of violent ethno-religious conflicts on women and girls' reproductive and sexual health cannot be overemphasized. This is because their psychological, reproductive and overall wellbeing is often greatly compromised during violent conflicts.

The Role of the Media in Resolving Religious Intolerance in Nigeria

The mass media have a special relationship with conflict situations. This relationship exists because, all over the world conflict, especially ethno-religious conflict is of major news value for the mass media and it is a matter of public importance and interest because of its security implications. This relationship goes in many ways. In as much as the mass media is very much interested in ethno-religious news and thus can positively or negatively affect ethno-religious conflicts, ethno-religious conflict situations and insecurity do also affect the operations of the mass media in diverse ways.

There are many man perspectives on the issue of the relationship between the mass media and religious conflicts, ranging from the view that a society gets the mass media it deserves, to the argument that the mass media is a mirror that shows what a country is, what its people are and the kind of society in place. Others still explain that the mass media is only a tool which the ruling class uses to protect their interests, advance their cause, and control the society they live in and the people they govern. The mass media according to this view therefore, is a weapon of further oppression by the ruling class.

According to Akingbe (2007), the output of the mass media outlets depends on the professional, moral and intellectual caliber of the persons owning and manning it as much as their personal backgrounds, convictions, interests and outlook on life. Journalists are human beings like everyone. However, journalists are expected to be professionals, operating within the provisions of the ethics and the laws governing the profession. The fact remains that there is crass commercialization of the mass media. The products of the media are being sold like any other commodity in the market, and most of those who run the media, do it mostly for purely commercial or political interests. The subtle understanding therefore, is that "anything that pays is welcome." This, being the motto of profit seeking commercial media, sensationalization of ethno-religious conflict situations is not a taboo, nor false motivated versions of the incidents.

Hassan (2008) opined that one of the major areas that ethno-religious conflict affects the mass media is that the parties in conflicts try to use the media to further their own ends. As a result, the mass media comes heavily under all sorts of undesirable pressures and pulls and also threats. In most cases the mass media comes under duress and intimidation and the blandishment of these influences. Moreover, ethno-religious conflicts like any other conflict are very disruptive of the normal market conditions in which the media operate. The print media in particular, faces serious production and distribution problems during conflicts. In the past three decades of ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria, many media organizations have closed shops as a result of outright government censure or seizure of printed copies of newspapers or magazines.

The media, whether local or international, will always face a considerable challenge in trying to cover conflicts. There will inevitably be commercial pressure to focus on the immediate, most violent or dramatic incidents, at the expense of explaining the background and issues that may underpin the conflict. The mass media faces a lot of problems during ethno-religious conflicts as media professionals and members of their families are exposed to various intimidations and violence. In times of conflicts, media professionals are not safe as they have no place to run to in the discharge of their duties. In times like that, some media professionals were killed or internally displaced with members of their family. This situation adversely affects the work environment of the journalists, their psychology and output in the discharge of their duties.

Nwabuike (2008) opined that during religious conflicts, the economic situation of media organizations are precarious because the infrastructure upon which the media depends- reliable power supply, transport network, equipment- are likely to be destroyed or damaged.

This of course affects the performance of the mass media adversely. Also, during ethno-religious conflicts, newspapers and news magazine organizations loss huge revenue sources when they could not sell their copies due to government seizure or insecurity which compels newspaper vendors to abandon their duty posts. This too is capable of driving media organizations out of business.

Another area ethno-religious conflicts especially insurgency affects the media is the area of intimidation and destruction of media establishments. A typical case in point was when on 26th April, 2012 Boko Haram bombed some media houses for under reporting them. According to the report:

Boko Haram on Thursday explained its grouse with ThisDay over alleged misrepresentation of its position and perceive bias led to the bomb attacks on its office in Abuja and Kaduna...Suspected Boko Haram members bombed ThisDay's Abuja office as well as a complex housing ThisDay, the Sun and the Moment newspapers in Kaduna, leaving a number of people dead and many more injured. The sect also known as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Waljihad said in an interview with a website, premiumtimesng.com, that it was targeting Nigerian and foreign journalists.

The Nigerian media since these series of bomb explosions have been operating under a very dangerous environment. Most of them have removed their sign boards and have gone underground in their operations. This has adversely affected the psychology and morale of the media professionals who have to be more careful in carrying out their duties to the society. Another major area that ethno-religious conflicts affect the mass media is free access of media professionals to the areas of conflicts, mobility and safety during conflict situations in discharging their duties and reasonable access to official information. If all these requirements are denied, then obviously media professionals cannot do their jobs. If access to official information and access to the conflict areas are made possible, the quality of news coverage is again heavily dependent on the honesty and cooperation of official sources.

Not only that, the prolonged ethno-religious conflicts that have plagued this country for over three decades have adversely exposed the fact that the media professionals were mostly influenced by their ethnic and religious divides. Their professional ethics were jettisoned in favor of parochial, ethnic, religious, ideological, political and commercial interests. The rise of religious sentiments and the urge to defend one's religion has colored the way news about religious crises are reported in the Nigerian mass media. During ethno-religious conflicts in the country, the news that one reads in newspapers and magazines, listens to over the radio and on television are as varied as the state of faith of the reporters. In

order to properly propagate, articulate and defend their religious views, many religious organizations in some instances establish their own media outfits. Therefore, from these few examples, it is clear that in as much as the mass media influence conflicts situations, conflict in turn do affect media operations adversely.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Social scientists have always devised theories in their attempts to explain the nature, causes, and effects of events in their societies. To this end therefore, the theoretical framework which is deem much relevant, suitable and appropriate to this study is Structural Conflict Theory.

The main argument of the structural theory is that social conflicts arise due to the ways societies are structured and organized. The theory views social problems like political and economic exclusion, injustice, poverty, exploitation, inequality, as sources of conflict (Faleti, 2006). This has strong leaning on Marxists theory of historical materialism. The structuralists opined that societies with unjust and exploitative organization that makes one class to dominate another, especially when the dominated class constitutes the majority are prone to conflicts (Faleti, 2006).The liberal structuralists call for the removal of structural defects through new policies with human face.

The concerns of structural conflict theory is about how the competing interests of group tie conflict directly into social, economic and political structure of society, as well as the nature and power of social networks within and between ethnic groups (Faleti,2006). Normally, ethnic rivalries and conflict arise from a desire of one group to exploit another with the exploited seeking independence and self-determination of which the exploiter is surely disposed not to give, thereby making conflicts inevitable (Odeh, 2006)

The wish of major ethno-religious groups in Nigeria is to dominate the minorities group is what we call internal colonialism. Alabi (1999), argue that the minorities shall be given more access to the political space in Nigeria since power of the state are limited due to the over concentration of power at the centre stage. Furthermore to attain national security, integration and development in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria, much effort is needed by government to ensure equal opportunity, access to political, economic, social and educational institutions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Design

The survey design was used for the purpose of this study. Survey is a method of collecting and analysing social data via highly structured and often very detailed interviews or questionnaires in order to obtain information on large numbers of respondents using a representative sample of a population.

The survey method scientifically selects subsets (samples) of a population that will represent the entire of the parent population. Therefore, the survey method is suitable for this study to enable the researcher a representative sample of the population. Also, it is cheap and it is seen as a simple method carrying out research studies such as this.

3.2. Population of the Study

Population, according to Nworgu (1991) is the limits within which the research findings are applicable. It is defined in such a way that the results of the investigations are generalized. Obaze and Onosu (2009), defines population as a theoretically specified aggregation of survey elements. Therefore, the populations used in this study are the residents of Benin City community which is estimated at about 1,495,800 (National Population Commission, 2015).

3.3. Sample Size

The sample size for this study is 400 which were drawn from the population. This sample size is made up of individuals who have been selected randomly from the population.

In getting the sample size of 400, the researcher employed the Taro Yamane's formula;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (0.05)^2}$$

n = sample size

N = Population

0.05 = Margin of error

$$n = \frac{1,495,800}{1 + 1,495,800 (0.05)^2}$$

$$\begin{aligned}
&= \frac{1,495,800}{1 + 1,495,800 (0.0025)} \\
&= \frac{1,495,800}{1,495,801 \times 0.0025} \\
&= \frac{1,495,800}{3739} \\
&= 400
\end{aligned}$$

3.4. Sampling Procedure

The random sampling method was used in this study. The random sampling is a scientific technique whereby every element within a population has an equal chance of being selected.

3.5. Validity of the Instrument

Questionnaire was the valid instrument used for the study. The survey questionnaire was rightly structured to measure the independent and dependent variables identified in the research questions. The questionnaire consisted of close-ended questions appropriate to elicit the desired information. The questionnaire was chosen as a valid instrument for this study due to its ability to standardize the research questions to ensure uniformity of answers from respondents. The questions were brief and direct for easy responses allowing approximately 30 seconds for each question.

3.6. Reliability of the Instrument

The measuring instrument was constructed in a way that the items in the questionnaire were used to measure the research questions and relevant variables which led the respondents to answer the questions in the instrument. Therefore, the test-retest method was used to ascertain the reliability the instrument. The questionnaire was also submitted to my project supervisor for corrections and approval upon which the instrument was certified valid. Also, the research instrument was pre-tested among twelve respondents in order to ascertain whether they understand the questions raised in the questionnaire or not.

3.7. Method of Data Collection

Data was collected by use of structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed to ask respondents to tick only the options that best agreed with the survey questions asked as well as indicating their opinions in writing where necessary. The questionnaire for the study consisted of both closed and open ended questions.

3.8. Method of Data Analysis and Discussion

The data collected were analysed using the simple percentage analysis and were presented with the aid of tables. The simple percentage data analysis was adopted to enable the researcher fully explore and plain the data that were collected and collated from the questionnaire without the use of complex mathematical models which are generally not easy to grasp.

Below, is the formula used for calculating simple percentage which was used for this study:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{actual response}}{\text{total sample size}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1. Preamble

This chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire.

During the course of this research, 400 copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents. Out of the 400 copies of questionnaires that were administered to the respondents, 20 copies were wrongly filled and 380 copies were returned. Therefore, the data collected is shown in the tables below

4.2. Analysis of Respondents' Bio-Data

Table 1: Gender of the Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Male	217	57
Female	163	43
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 1 above, 217 respondents (57%) are males while 163 respondents (43%) are females.

Table 2: Age Range

RESPONSE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
18-25	111	29
26-45	200	53
46 and above	69	18
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 2, it is shown that 111 respondents (29%) are between the ages of 18-25 while 200 respondents (53%) are between the ages of 26-45 and 69 respondents (18%) are between the ages of 46 and above.

Table 3: Marital Status

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Married	179	47
Single	201	53
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 3, only 179 respondents (47%) are married while 201 respondents (53%) are single.

Table 4: Educational Qualification

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
FLSC/SSCE	17	4
OND	130	34
HND/BSC	209	55
Others	24	7
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 4, only 17 respondents (4%) had FLSC/SSCE while 130 respondents (34%) possess OND, 209 respondents (55%) had HND/BSC and 24 respondents (7%) holds other degrees.

Table 5: Occupation of Respondents

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Students	109	29
Civil Servants	217	57
Self Employed	54	14
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

On Table 5, it is evident that 109 respondents (29%) are students while 217 respondents (57%) are civil servants and only 54 respondents (14%) are self-employed.

4.3. Presentation and Analysis of Psychographic Data Collected

Research Question 1: How effective is the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria? Item 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question.

Table 6: How often do you watch or listen to religious programmes?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Daily	23	6
Weekly	216	57
Fortnightly	107	28
Monthly	34	9
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 6 shows that 23 respondents (6%) watch or listen to religious programmes on daily basis; 216 respondents (57%) watch or listen to it on weekly basis while 107 respondents (28%) choosed fortnightly and 34 respondents (9%) choosed monthly.

Table 7: Has the media been a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly agree	177	47
Agree	46	12
Strongly disagree	110	29
Disagree	47	12
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 7 shows that 177 respondents (47%) strongly agree that the media has been a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria; 46 respondents (12%) agree while 110 respondents (29%) strongly disagree and 47 respondents (12%) disagree.

Table 8: How will you rate the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Excellent	122	32
Good	103	27
Moderate	21	6
Poor	57	15
Very poor	77	20
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 8 shows that 122 respondents (32%) rated the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria as excellent; 103 respondents (27%) rated it as good; 21 respondents (6%) rated it as moderate while 57 respondents (15%) rated it as poor and 77 respondents (20%) rated it as very poor.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria? Item 9 and 10 were used to answer this research question.

Table 9: How do you perceive the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Positive	315	83
Negative	0	0
Neutral	65	17
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 9 shows that 315 respondents (83%) perceived the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance as positive while 65 respondents (17%) were neutral.

Table 10: How will you rate the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Excellent	160	42
Good	115	30
Moderate	72	19
Poor	33	9
Very poor	0	0
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 10 shows that 160 respondents (42%) rated the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria as excellent; 115 respondents (30%) rated it as good while 72 respondents (19%) rated it as moderate and 33 respondents (9%) rated it as poor.

Research Question 3: What are the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria? Item 11 and 12 were used to answer this research question.

Table 11: Are there perceived factors militating against Christian half hour's contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Strongly agree	311	82
Agree	69	18
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 11 shows that 311 respondents (82%) strongly agree that there are some perceived factors militating against Christian half hour's contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria while 69 respondents (18%) agree.

Table 12: Which of the following factors is militating against Christian half hour's contribution to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Segmentation of the programme	117	31
Subjectivity of the presenter	106	28
Inability to give room for different views	157	41
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 12 shows that 117 respondents (31%) noted that segmentation of the programme is a factor militating against Christian half hour's contribution to religious tolerance in Nigeria while 106 respondents (28%) choosed subjectivity of the presenter and 157 respondents (41%) choosed inability of the programmes to give room for different views.

Research Question 4: What are the ways of improving Christian half hour for better contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria? Item 13 and 14 were used to answer this research question.

Table 13: Do you think that there are ways Christian half hour can be improved upon?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
Yes	380	100
No	0	0
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 13 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that there are ways Christian half hour can be improved upon.

Table 14: How can Christian half hour been improved upon in order to effectively contribute to the promotion of religious tolerance in Nigeria?

RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
The programme should accommodate diverse views	114	30
The programme should be objective	103	27
It should involve all audience	163	43
TOTAL	380	100

(Source: Field Survey, 2022)

The data on Table 14 shows that 114 respondents (30%) shows that one way Christian half hour can be improved upon in order to effectively contribute to the promotion of religious tolerance in Nigeria is for the programme to accommodate diverse views while 103 respondents (27%) noted that the programme should be objective and 163 respondents (43%) noted that the programme should involve all audience.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

All the data collated for the purpose of this study will be discussed here and inferences will be made where necessary;

Research Question 1: How effective is the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to assess the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria. The data on Table 6, 7 and 8 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 6 shows that 23 respondents (6%) watch or listen to religious programmes on daily basis; 216 respondents (57%) watch or listen to it on weekly basis while 107 respondents (28%) choosed fortnightly and 34 respondents (9%) choosed monthly. The data on Table 7 shows that 177 respondents (47%) strongly agree that the media has been a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria; 46 respondents (12%) agree while 110 respondents (29%) strongly disagree and 47 respondents (12%) disagree. The data on Table 8 shows that 122 respondents (32%) rated the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria as excellent; 103 respondents (27%) rated it as good; 21 respondents (6%) rated it as moderate while 57 respondents (15%) rated it as poor and 77 respondents (20%) rated it as very poor.

Based on this, the media has been identified as a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria. The media as the watchdog of the society cannot be divorced from religious institutions. The media need the religious institutions to survive while the religious institutions also need the media to survive. Broadcast media can be used to propagate morals, ethics and godliness which are the basic principles for nation building in a country that forbids the establishment of broadcast stations for outright religious broadcasting. The power of the media can be used to redress and reconstruct a country's national value system by carrying out religious activities. The media can communicate religious messages that will assist the people to achieve lofty ambitions and greatness through hard work, godliness and civic principles. The media as social institutions have the potentials to affect our religiousness.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to find out the perception of the audience on the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria. The data on Table 9 and 10 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 9 shows that 315 respondents (83%) perceived the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance as positive while 65 respondents (17%) were neutral. The data on Table 10 shows that 160 respondents (42%) rated the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria as excellent; 115 respondents (30%) rated it as good while 72 respondents (19%) rated it as moderate and 33 respondents (9%) rated it as poor.

Based on the above, the audience have a positive attitude towards the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria.

Research Question 3: What are the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

The objective of this study is to ascertain the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria. The data on Table 11 and 12 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 11 shows that 311 respondents (82%) strongly agree that there are some perceived factors militating against Christian half hour's contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria while 69 respondents (18%) agree. The data on Table 12 shows that 117 respondents (31%) noted that segmentation of the programme is a factor militating against Christian half hour's contribution to religious

tolerance in Nigeria while 106 respondents (28%) choosed subjectivity of the presenter and 157 respondents (41%) choosed inability of the programmes to give room for different views.

Based on the above, some of the problems militating against Christian half hour contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria include segmentation of the programme, subjectivity of the presenter and lack of the programmes to accommodate diverse views.

Research Question 4: What are the ways of improving Christian half hour for better contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to suggest ways of improving Christian half hour for better contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria. The data on Table 13 and 14 were used to answer this research question. The data on Table 13 shows that all the respondents answered in the affirmative that there are ways Christian half hour can be improved upon. The data on Table 14 shows that 114 respondents (30%) shows that one way Christian half hour can be improved upon in order to effectively contribute to the promotion of religious tolerance in Nigeria is for the programme to accommodate diverse views while 103 respondents (27%) noted that the programme should be objective and 163 respondents (43%) noted that the programme should involve all audience.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

Nigeria's religious conflicts caused by religious intolerance have been shaped by the developments in the country's recent and distant past. Lack of trust among various group as a result of deep rooted misconception, lack of religious tolerance, poverty and fear of economic and political domination, media reporting and government inability to take action in previous happening are the causes of religious conflicts.

Religious intolerance is the failure to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of other is one of the major sources of religious conflicts in Nigeria. Nigeria religious adherents, especially the Muslims and the Christians have demonstrated intolerant attitudes which have resulted to violent outburst that spill over the political and economic lives of the citizens.

The attitudes of the media in reporting conflicts is another source of ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria. The main objective of mass media is to inform, entertain and educate the society. In Nigeria, experience has shown that the mass media reports, news analysis and features are capable of a positive or negative role in the interaction between ethnic and religious depending on the journalist concerned. The actions or reactions of Muslims to Christians are determined by the mass media reports.

5.2. Conclusion

Religious issues are part of the most recurring issues in Nigeria's body politic. The issue has permeated the landscape since the colonial period and up till the present time, there seems to be no solution in sight to the accompanying conflicts of ethnic rivalry and religious intolerance. The dominant and minority ethnic groups treat each other with suspicion and the different religious worldview clash at the slightest provocation.

Institutional efforts which were made to satiate these tendencies since independence in 1960 has proved inadequate. The long years of military rule increased the gap of distrust as the elites deliberately employed state power to pursue primordial sentiments thereby increasing the gap of intolerance in Nigeria. The current political cum religious battles is fuelled by certain quarters and individuals who benefits at the expense of the state and citizens. Numerous actors have a stake in the promotion of ethno-religious conflicts because the associated arithmetic of numbers underpinning the conflicts translates into jobs, contracts,

the creation of local governments and states as well as representation in the National Assembly.

According to Nnoli (1978), conflict as an aspect of ethnicity is more pronounced in societies where the inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources is the rule, particularly when inequality is accepted as a given and wealth is greatly esteemed. In this typical scenario, no group wants to be consigned to the bottom of the ladder. Hence groups exploit every means in their bid to remain at the top. In a democratic society where the right to choose is a guiding principle, ethnic groups may show undue interest in who gets what, how and when. In other words, democratic traditions in ethnically plural societies may be influenced by keen competition, ethnic rivalries and jostling for power and resources. These societies, therefore, may witness social protest which often takes the form of ethnic conflicts. While the spirit of competition may be seen as healthy for democracy, anchoring this competition on ethnicity or ethnic factors may be counterproductive to the democratic process.

The literature reviewed so far has indicated that Nigerians have suffered a lot and still suffering from series of religious crises and riots. Bearing in mind the causes of those crises and the failure of the past attempts to bring them under control, it was discovered that this crisis, was complex and have generated negative effects on the well-being of Nigerians and on the quality assurance needed for rapid development in the 21st century in a country that is highly endowed with abundance human and material resources. Prominent among discoveries made in this paper includes: loss of human and material resources, socioeconomic and political instability, fear of insecurity, wasting of money and time meant for developmental projects on crisis management emanated from religious intolerance in the Nation. This paper suggested some ways through which religious crisis could be managed with the aim to see Nigeria emerge really as a free and democratic society, a society where respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals is accorded to all irrespective of their religious and cultural background. Others include emulation of indigenous worshippers in the areas of tolerance, mutual understanding and moral consciousness, unbiased attitude of government towards all religions and provision of job opportunity for youth, adopting dialogue in issues of crisis, for religious leaders to inculcate virtues and values such as live and let live, love, peace, forgiveness, unity, harmony and toleration of others, in order to restore the true nature of religion which is a normal circumstances remains cohesive and unified factor in any society. However, this is dependent on the implementation of the suggested solution given to avert the many problems of religious intolerance in our present socio-political Nigeria.

5.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- Nigerian government at the Federal, State and Local levels should adopt an open and uncompromising neutral attitude towards religious organizations in this country. This simply means anyone in the position of power in a country with various religious groups should not allow his own religious inclination to over-ride common interest of the nation. Neutrality demands that the present and future political leaders of Nigeria should guard against partisanship to any religious group in matters regarding proper governance of the nation; a leader who would recognize in practice the value of religious pluralism in a heterogeneous society of Nigeria.
- The government of Nigeria should administer strict disciplinary actions against those who perpetuate religious intolerance that results to riots, killings or destruction of lives and properties of Nigerians, (the culprits) the barons behind those waves of religious upheaval should be unmasked and severely punished. It is not enough for government to map out policies on paper against religious intolerance or even to condemn violence that gave rise to religious intolerance after much harm has been done to the Nigerian society.
- Application of the spirit of tolerance is essential in the lives of adherents of the three major religions in Nigeria namely: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islamic religions. As religious groups, there is need to tolerate one another. Tolerance as used in this context refers to ability of religious man, politician or men and women from different ethnic groups to give allowance for the opinions, beliefs and practices of others. It has been noticed that African Traditional religious adherents are the most tolerant of the three religious groups in the country, if adherents of both Islam and Christianity can emulate indigenous worshippers in the area of tolerance, then the issue of religious conflicts will soon become a forgotten issue. In the past before the emergence of modern religions, Nigeria accommodated and still accommodates innumerable number of religious sects.
- In order to be free from religious conflicts adherents must accept to dialogue as exchange of opinions between people with opposing interest or points of view.

Dialogue can be based on religion, culture, politics, or ethnic group. One of the major characteristics of dialogue is that it encourages those involved to respect all that is good in the other and also to respect others sincerity in the matters where they cannot agree. Dialogue therefore does not bury the conviction of people involved but openly admit them. Nigeria recognizes people and government should admit the plea of Vatican Council II with the view to forget the past and urges a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding for the benefit of all men and to let them, together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral value.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Department of Mass Communication,
School of Information and Communication Technology,
Auchi Polytechnic,
PMB 13,
Auchi

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi and I am currently carrying out a research on **“An Assessment of the Mass Media in Promoting Religious Tolerance in Nigeria (A Study of ‘Christian Half Hour’ Radio Programme on ITV Radio).”**

This study is in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Higher National Diploma in Mass Communication. Therefore, to accomplish this research work, you are expected to kindly help the researcher by responding to these questions. This is purely an academic exercise and the confidentiality of information you give is assured.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Yours Faithfully

**Festus Happiness
(Researcher)**

APPENDIX B

INSTRUCTION

Please tick appropriately in the space provided. The questionnaire is divided into two parts namely: Section A which consist of your personal data and Section B.

SECTION A: PERSONAL DATA

1. Gender of Respondents

- a) Male ()
- b) Female ()

2. Age Range

- a) 18-25 ()
- b) 26-35 ()

3. Marital Status

- a) Married ()
- b) Single ()

4. Educational Qualification

- a) FLSC/SSCE ()
- b) OND ()
- c) HND/BSC ()
- d) OTHERS ()

5. Occupation of Respondents

- a) Student ()
- b) Civil Servant ()
- c) Self Employed ()

SECTION B

6. How often do you watch or listen to religious programmes?

- a) Daily ()
- b) Weekly ()
- c) Fortnightly ()
- d) Monthly ()

7. Has the media been a veritable tool in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Strongly agree ()
- b) Agree ()
- c) Strongly disagree ()
- d) Disagree ()

8. How will you rate the effectiveness of the media in promoting religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Excellent ()
- b) Good ()
- c) Moderate ()
- d) Poor ()
- e) Very poor ()

9. How do you perceive the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Positive ()
- b) Negative ()
- c) Neutral ()

10. How will you rate the contributions of Christian half hour to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Excellent ()
- b) Good ()
- c) Moderate ()
- d) Poor ()
- e) Very poor ()

11. Are there perceived factors militating against Christian half hour's contributions to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Strongly agree ()
- b) Agree ()
- c) Strongly disagree ()
- d) Disagree ()

12. Which of the following factors is militating against Christian half hour's contribution to religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) Segmentation of the programme ()
- b) Subjectivity of the presenter ()
- c) Inability to give room for different views ()

13. Do you think that there are ways Christian half hour can be improved upon?

- a) Yes ()
- b) No ()

14. How can Christian half hour been improved upon in order to effectively contribute to the promotion of religious tolerance in Nigeria?

- a) The programme should accommodate diverse views ()
- b) The programme should be objective ()
- c) It should involve all audience ()