



AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE STUDY OF CHRISTIAN NOTION ON THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN INSTIGATING RELIGIOUS CRISES IN KADUNA METROPOLIS

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Abstract

The study investigates Christian notion of the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The specific objective is to ascertain the Christian notion on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The study was guided with two research questions and two hypotheses. The descriptive survey design of correlational type was used in the study. The population is made up of the four local governments of Kaduna metropolis while the sample size for the study comprised three hundred and eight (308) residents/respondents drawn from the local government areas using simple random and purposive sampling techniques.

Cronbach Alpha Statistical analysis used for the reliability coefficient of CNSM has 0.76, SMSS has 0.74 and RSS has 0.83; the average score of 0.78. Pearson Product Moment correlation was used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis one and two were rejected as shown on the table. The study concluded that there is comparative relationship between the Christian notion on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. It



was recommended that social media users in their reportage of any ethnic and religious crises should avoid the use of gory pictures, sensational headlines, inflammatory and derogatory language, especially when reporting religious crises in Kaduna metropolis among others.

Keywords: Christian, Social Media, Religious Crise

Introduction

Christians all over the world have been leaving peacefully over the years until recently where the introduction of social media plays a significance role in determining where the society swings. It has become a phenomenon in christiandom discuss in our society today due to its wide acceptance in Nigeria. It is an instrument that has come to stay in our society, used by all strata in Nigeria and Kaduna State in particular. Suffice it to say that social media could bring cohesion or crises due to it spread, speed and acceptance, across all strata of the society and particularly among the youths.

According to Ossai (2024), he opines that Christian relates at interpersonal and intergroup levels are at times marked by competition, suspicion, disagreement, violence, and various unpleasant conditions. With a population of more than 200 million and almost equal numbers of Christian, Nigeria has experienced violent conflicts between Christian and Muslim. Some factors which enabled previous conflicts include ethnic rivalries and the overlap of ethnic and religious identities, controversies over the implementation of Islamic law, settler indigene differentiation and contestation, religious exclusivism, competition for political and other kinds of superiority, respected leaders' divisive speeches and actions, the elitist instruments of grievances and ethno-religious identity for political gain, poor state response to inter-group tensions, and grievances and retaliation (Adamu & Ben, 2015), following previous attacks. These were the major causes of the hydra headed nature of crises in Kaduna metrooolis.

Christian are the followers of Jesus Christ who belief in his teachings, death and resurrection for the salvation of their souls. In the words of Olojo, (2022) Christian are the people that believes in One God. This God has three persons (The Trinity) named the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Christianity is focused on the life and ministry (work) of Jesus Christ. The life and teaching of Jesus Christ are told in the sacred book called the Bible. Christian also believes that the story and message of the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) foretell and lead up to the incarnation of Jesus in the world.

A Christian is defined in the Bible as someone who is saved by receiving Jesus Christ, exhibits a changed life through the Holy Spirit, and shares the gospel and teaches others to live like Christ. The common definition of a Christian is someone who believes in Jesus, but the biblical definition provided in Acts 11 involves salvation through faith in Christ and demonstrating that faith through good works, walking by faith, and helping others grow as disciples (Noll, 2015).

Casey and Evans (2018), see social media as important tools for integration among people where everybody can share, exchange, comment, discuss and create information and knowledge in a collaborative way. Some social media such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, tik-tok, e-mail, telegram, google classroom, Instagram among others are rapidly changing communication landscape. Their emergence has impacted people significantly on how people learn and the way information is passed.



Social media is the application that allows users to converse and interact with each other to create, edit and share new forms of textual, visual and audio contents and to categories, label and recommend existing forms of content.

The role of social media in contemporary society is multifaceted, offering both significant benefits and risks. Among the challenges it presents, the role of social media in instigating religious crises has become a central concern. Christian, as part of a global faith community, views this issue through the lens of biblical teachings on love, peace, and social justice. While some perceive social media as a tool that exacerbates ethnic and religious tensions, others see it as an opportunity for dialogue, reconciliation, and the promotion of shared values. Advancements in technology have resulted in people being able to access a wealth of information and participate in virtual opportunities not previously available (Ossai, 2024). Through the use of computers and cell phones, society has moved from engaging in face-to-face interaction while performing these activities, to endeavors that do not require in-person interaction with others. Information sent through text, visual and audio contents of the glory incidences to viewers who could not control their emotions or people who are beclouded by religious and cultural bigotry will quickly move to action, particularly the youth to carry out the so called reprisal attack on innocent citizens which further snow balled into major crisis. Religious and cultural crises triggered among many other factors by social media users (Kutson, 2018). The type of social media commonly use to fuel these crises are; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok Google docs, and many more which usually spread like wild fire to trigger crisis. This clearly shows the danger of exaggerated reportage. The study aimed to contribute to the existence literature gap and relevant knowledge gaps. Hence, this paper investigates the study of Christian notion on the role of social media in instigating religions crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Christian Notion on Social Media

Samantha (2023), relays a story of Christian perspectives on social media emphasize using online platforms for positive purposes, such as sharing faith, building community, and spreading the gospel, while also being mindful of potential pitfalls like negativity, cyber-bullying, and addiction. The overarching goal is to reflect Christ's love and values in the digital world, promoting a Christ-centered mindset and encouraging spiritual growth.

Positive Uses of Social Media for Christians: Sharing faith and promoting the gospel: Christians can use social media to share their personal testimonies, encourage others, and spread the message of Jesus. Building community and fostering unity. Social media can be used to connect with fellow believers, build friendships, and support each other in their faith journey. Reaching out to those outside the faith, social media can be a powerful tool for evangelism, allowing Christians to share their faith with people who may not have access to traditional church services (Salawu, 2023).

Kuston (2018) corroborated the above when he says that promoting positive messages- Christians can use social media to share inspiring quotes, uplifting stories, and positive content that build others up. Discipline others, Social media can be used to share biblical teachings, provide resources for spiritual growth, and encourage others to follow Christ. **Potential Challenges and Concerns,** Negative language and negativity: Social media can be a breeding ground for negativity, gossip, and cyber-bullying. Addiction and time consumption, Social media can be addictive,



leading to excessive use and a neglect of other important aspects of life. Distractions and comparisons-Social media can be a source of distraction and comparison, leading to feelings of inadequacy and discontent. Cyber-bullying and online harassment: Christians, like everyone else, can be targets of cyber-bullying and online harassment. Spiritual distortion: Social media can create a distorted view of reality, leading to unrealistic expectations and a focus on superficial matters.

Role of Social Media among the Christian

Ossai (2024), gave detail explanations on the followings as a good principle for social media conduct is written in 1 Corinthians 10:31: “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.” Social media should be used to glorify God and spread messages of hope to others, not for picking arguments and spreading negativity.

Social media presents both opportunities and challenges for Christianity. It can be a powerful tool for sharing the gospel, connecting with others, and fostering spiritual growth, but it also poses risks like misinformation, cyber-bullying, and potential for over sharing. Christians should use social media wisely, focusing on building relationships, sharing positive content, and engaging in meaningful conversations while also being aware of potential pitfalls.

Opportunities- Sharing the Gospel, social media allows Christians to reach a wide audience with the message of Jesus, share personal testimonies, and engage in evangelism. Connecting with Others, Social media can foster a sense of community and connection, both within local churches and with Christians globally.

Spiritual Growth- Social media can be a source of encouragement, inspiration, and theological reflection through positive content, uplifting quotes, and prayer requests. Ministry Support-Churches can utilize social media to announce events, share news, and connect with members and potential attendees. Discipleship Resources- Online platforms can provide resources for Bible study, theological reflection, and spiritual growth (Wolf, et al 2018).

Religious crises in Kaduna metropolis

Nwaomah (2017), give their view on the Sharia Crises of 2000 In Kaduna State Sharia was introduced by Governor Mohammed Ahmed Makarfi on February 3, 2000 against the background of so many peculiar antecedents. Unlike other states of the Northern part of Nigeria, Kaduna State is made up of predominantly Muslim community in the Northern part of the state, while Christian dominates the south. Similarly, the Northern part of the State is made of the Hausa/Fulani, a major ethnic group in Nigeria, as against the minority ethnic groups in the South. This sharp divide of the population of Kaduna State between Muslim and Christian has been the source of conflict between both sides before 2000. The mutual suspicion was further aggravated by the introduction of the Sharia that was expressed in the open confrontations between the two groups in February and May, 2000.

The Sharia violence in Kaduna State took place in two main phases, which Paden referred to as “Sharia 1” and “Sharia 2” (Okpanachi, 2020). The first phase took place in the Kaduna metropolis from February 21 to 25 of 2000. This was followed by another round of killings in the following month of March. The second phase was from May 22 to 23. On Wednesday, 23 March, 2000, the



crisis spilled over to the surrounding Local Government Areas (LGAs), particularly Kachia and Birnin-Gwari. In Kachia LGA, Muslim were attacked, their residential houses, shops, clinics, courts, filling stations and the markets were destroyed.

Statement of the Research Problem

It is clearly known that Christian cordially related and collaborate in peace and mutual understanding as one united entity, sharing love and unity in a community. In Nigeria that religious crises have been the bane of our progress, growth and development in Kaduna metropolis in particular. But what is the notion of Christian on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. With the advent of colonialism, these religious crises were brought under the colonial administration as the Northern and Southern protectorates. These brought in inter-religious misunderstanding which degenerated into crises situation. The study of Wolf, et al (2018) opines that “during the pre-colonial era, what came to be known as Nigeria comprised of several ethnic groups, kingdom and empires.

The media have been always been neutral in reporting the crises during the period of radio broadcast before the advent of social media platform. Christians may have been using social media negatively or positively in their daily usage but what are their notions on the use of social media in instigating religious crises. Most religious adherent does not know that some of the messages posted are incisive due to their ignorance in the opposite religion. Therefore, this brought in grouches, tention and anger that causes religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

In order to gain direction on this research, the researcher put forward the following objectives:

- i. To find out the Christian’s notion of the role of social media in instigating ethno-religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.
- ii. To examine the role of social media of ethno-religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Research Hypotheses

For a research topic of this nature to be grounded and meaningful, hypotheses need to be tested. Therefore, the following hypotheses were formulated and tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between the Christian’s notion on the role of social media in instigating ethno-religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship in the role of social media on ethno-religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Methodology

The research design for this study is descriptive survey design. The study adopts the correlational type of descriptive design to deal with a very systematic collection of data or information from population or a sample of the population through the use of personal interview, opinion scale, and questionnaires to determine the relationship between variables. The population of the research constitutes Christian clerics, laity, women and youths in Kaduna metropolis with a large number of people.



The sample size of this study was three hundred and eight (308) which comprises of 173 male and 135 female respondents for the study. The researcher used purposive sampling techniques to select the respondents for research study. This sampling technique is restricted for use in situation where the researcher is interested in having targeted respondents and smattering ideas of a phenomenon of interests (Nnamdi, 2009). The data for this study was collected through questionnaire. Purposive random sampling technique was used to select the four Local Government Areas of Kaduna South, North, Chikun and Igabi local governments of Kaduna metropolis. Eight churches, and some selected political gladiators within the area of studies were randomly selected from the four local governments in the study. The instruments for this study are questionnaire, structured in the five likert scale model.

The researcher adapted the Christian Notion on Social Media (CNSM), Social Media Sensitivity Scale (SMSS), and Religious Sensitivity Scale (RSS), designed by Holm, Nokleinen and Kumar (2017). Social Media Sensitivity Scale was developed by the researcher. They have 5 points Likert modified scale Strongly Agree (SA) - 5, Agree (A) - 4, Disagree (D) - 3, Undecided-2 and Strongly Disagree (SD). The reliability of the instrument is obtained after the pilot testing; using Cronbach Alpha Statistical analysis. The Alpha coefficients values obtain from the instruments are as following: Christian a Notion on Social Media (CNSM) has 0.76, Social Media Sensitivity Scale.

(SMSS) has 0.74 and Religious Sensitivity Scale (RSS) has 0.83; the average score of 0.78 Alpha Co-efficient values was generated for all instruments. These reliability correlation coefficients of these values imply that the instrument is internally consistent and reliable for study. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) analysis was used to analyze all the hypotheses.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant relationship between the Christian's notions on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Table 7: r-value of Christian's notion on Social Media and Religious crises

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Christian's notions	150	30.49	9.86	298	.283*	.000	Rejected
Religious crises	150	71.02	10.87				

*Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 7 indicated the relationship between Christian's notions on social media and ethno-religious crises. The finding revealed that the r-value is 283 and the p-value is .000 which is less than .05 level of significant with 298 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship between the Christian's notion on the role of social media in instigating ethno-religious crises in Kaduna metropolis is thereby rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship between Christian's notion on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant relationship in the role of social media on religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

**Table 9: r-value of Role of Social Media and Religious Crises**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	Df	r-value	p-value	Decision
Role of Social media	300	31.08	4.58	298	.894*	.000	Rejected
Religious crises	300	70.90	10.95				

*Correlation not significant at 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 9 indicated the relationship in the role of social media on religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The finding revealed that the r-value is .894 and the p-value is .000 which is less than .05 level of significant with 298 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant relationship in the role of social media on religious crises in Kaduna metropolis is thereby rejected. This implies that, there is significant relationship in the role of social media on religious crises in Kaduna metropolis.

Discussion

In the analysis of hypotheses, the finding shows that, there is significant relationship between the Christian's notions on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The findings of this study is in support with the findings of Targema (2022) revealed that spread of misinformation and false teachings can be a serious challenge on social media, requiring discernment and careful engagement, anonymity of the internet can embolden cyber-bullying and online harassment, creating a hostile environment for some Christians. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Samantha (2023) revealed that these defects stem basically from the porous nature of the social media platforms allow unfiltered contents to float freely online which have lead to religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. In addition, the findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Lawal, (2020) revealed that the origin of these crises lie in the fact that Christians justifies the rise of ethnicity among their people and see it as an instrument using social media platform not only of expressing group identity, but also of pursuing common interest and power in a plural society such as Nigeria. The findings of Targema (2022) is in contrast with the finding when promoting positive messages, Christians can use social media to share inspiring quotes, uplifting stories, and positive content that build others up. The finding is in line with the theory of intercultural theory, reviewed by Adebembe, et'al (2022) which focuses on how the social categorization of people into groups affects interactions between people of different social identities, that is, national or ethnic culture. In contrary, the findings of this study is contradicts with the study of Kutson (2018) revealed that social media platforms usually increase the volume of information to the masses during conflict situations. In addition, the findings of this study is in oppose with the findings of Samantha (2023) revealed that the notion of Christian perspectives on social media emphasize using online platforms for positive purposes, such as sharing faith, building community, and spreading the gospel, while also being mindful of potential pitfalls like negativity, cyber-bullying, and addiction.

From hypothesis two, it state that, there is significant relationship in the role of social media on religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The findings of this study is in support with the findings of Adabembe, et al (2022) revealed that press plays a crucial role in informing the populace; it can also contribute to the escalation of crises through inadequate and unbalanced coverage, adding that there is significant findings highlighted the need for responsible use of social media in northern Nigeria and propose measures to promote it. The findings of this study is in line with the findings of Olojo (2022) revealed that, the frequency of violent death incidents involving Islamic groups



against Christian groups or Churches due to non-religious issues is higher due to social media in disseminate fake information. In addition, the findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Okpanachi (2020) he observed that, in spite of the positive feats which social media are renowned for, participants also decry the negative traits which they harbour in terms of conflict management. The study of Abubakar, et al (2018) revealed that, social media users would take pictures, videos and audios and send it to the public which may eventually trigger interreligious crises among Christian. The inter religious theory reviewed by Lawal (2020) is in line with the finding, which shown that the greater the individual's in-group identification, the more likely these individuals are to discriminate in favor of the in-group. In other words, people give more rewards to their in-group members than the out-group members for the same level of work. In contrary, the findings of this study is contradicts with the findings of Adabembe, et al (2022) revealed that religion which is supposed to be a unifying factor have contributed immensely to division, acrimony and all sorts of evil that permeates our contemporary Nigeria. In addition, the findings of this study opposed the findings of Olojo, (2022) revealed that, the insufficient publications of the subject of the perseverance of intra-religious identities and conflicts in Nigeria as one of the main contributions of lack of knowledge on the ethnic conflicts in Nigeria.

Summary

The results of the research revealed that there was significant relationship between the Christian's notions on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The use of social media should be on spiritual behaviours of persons and communities in surroundings characterized by values to the faiths, but contrary to this will be more instigating religious crises reflective by intolerance and insincerity. The outcome of the research revealed that there is significant relationship between the Christian notion on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. The utilization of social media is common disagreement is that social media has the prospective to change people's religiosity and doing of goodness which is broadly well-linked with Christian preachers against the ethic of Christian injunctions. There many crises that are considered to be religious crises due to role of social media played in dissemination of information that is not true about religious activities which generate violence in Kaduna metropolis.

Conclusion

The major conclusion is that there is comparative relationship between the Christian's notions on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis. It has been established from the findings of the study, which revealed that there is relationship between the Christian's notions on the role of social media in instigating religious crises in Kaduna metropolis, with its resultant the role of social media such as whatsapp, facebook, twitter, instagram tik-talk, e-mail, telegram, google, among others are rapidly changing communication landscape are fueled ethno-religious crises thrives in Kaduna metropolis in recent times.

Recommendations

The study made the following recommendations:

1. The social media users in their reportage of any religious crises should avoid the use of gory pictures, sensational headlines, inflammatory and derogatory language, especially when reporting ethnic and religious crises.



2. Social media users should take caution on what they find to be injurious to the public and restrain from it particularly when it going to cause religious crises in the society. The users should avoid any reports that are religiously insensitive and capable of catalyzing and escalating crisis in any medium, and anyone caught should death with.
3. There is need for the creation of interfaith conferences and dialogue to protect the rights of all citizens, also that government should create awareness of the implication of crises in the society as well as bring those that are perpetrating religious crises to justice.

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