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Intra -Religious Relations and Social Media – Driven Conflicts among Selected Islamic Groups and Christian Denominations in Osun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigerians attach so much importance to religion. There is so much emotional and spiritual attachment to faith adherence. Paradoxically, despite the promises of religion, it is highly inflammable with destructive tendencies. Divergence in doctrinal and theological leanings is getting stronger by the day among same faith adherents. It is a commonplace knowledge in the social media recently for faithful of same religions to openly criticize certain doctrines and practices therein. This is not as much as doing it to other religions. Despite the avalanche of studies on religion, literature has been oblivious of intra-religious conflicts, rather focuses on inter faith disharmony. Apart from personal injuries suffered in the criticism by clergies, it is as well capable of disturbing social harmony and peace currently being enjoyed in religious atmosphere in the country. It robbed on the integrity of famous preachers. This study was anchored on conflict theory of Simmel. The research design was exploratory. Qualitative data were purposely generated from diverse social media platforms. This was backed up by Key informant interviews (KIIs) and In-depth interviews (IDIs) generated through both Islamic and Christian preachers and worshippers in Osogbo, Iwo and Ikirun in Osun State, locations reputed for preponderance of religious adherents. Fame seeking, misinterpretation and ignorance of the scripture were some of the reasons deduced. The study recommends the establishment of informal interdenominational regulatory system. Private ownership and commercialization of worship centres be discouraged. On the other hand, government should respect the secularity of Nigeria as enshrined in the constitution.

Keywords

Conflict,
Denominations,
Groups, Relations,
Religion

Introduction

Conflict is an essential component of human social relations. It is pervasive, indispensable and ubiquitous in social existence (Adam, 2025) Despite its retrogressive nature, it has progressive tendencies and harbinger of change. Adams further asserted that conflict is a critical factor of emergence and sustenance of modern societies. Religious practice in Nigeria remains conflictual and this is gaining momentum on daily basis. Ushe (2015) posited that religious conflict is borne out of disagreements and argument that ensued in the process of religious discussions, he described it as opposition in ideas, feelings, opinions and wishes. Otite and Olawale (1999) considered it as struggles over values and claims to scarce resources, status and power with the aim of neutralizing the thoughts and positions of opponents. Aliyu (2004) simply considered religious conflict as a process of social interaction involving a struggle for preference. The use of internet to create digital community of followers has powered free flow of interactions between religious leaders and observers. Campbell and Vitullo (2016) noted that virtual communities availed the creation of discussion platforms and web – based houses of worship in the face of digital

religion. Likewise, Bunt (2003) emphasized how digital platforms help to construct personal religious identity and solidarity. It is also a new space for evangelizing (Babin and Zukowski (2002). The social media in Nigeria daily witness Islamic and Christian religious leaders criticize and attack popular doctrines within and outside a religion (Alatise and Omobowale, 2019). They noted that the significance of conflict is to stimulate renewal or complete innovation of new religious doctrines and ideas. It is not just between religions but also among religions. Oyeshola (2006) believed that controversies, disagreements by two individuals, communities or religious groups constitute the ingredients of conflicts.

Emergence of televangelism or use of media has in no small way facilitated polemics and throwing of banter to the perceived competitors. Campaigns of calumny, hatred and intolerance are regular features of religious conflicts (Omotosho, 2004). In all these Simmel (1904) and Ogunbameru (2013) posited the tendency of domination of one group by the other as a result of competition for common interest. This study identified some of the basic conflictual issues within Islamic practice and denominational differences in Christianity, investigated the

use of social media as platforms to spread criticism and advance the need for peaceful group relation among diverse religious adherents.

Statement of Problem

Disharmony and rancor are getting prevalent among clerics of same faith lately. It is getting more problematic as it is laid bare in the traditional and social media. This has opened a floodgate of public and secret discussions and ridicule among observers and religious adherents. While some considered the contradictions as rational some see it as a way clerics market themselves to fame and high followership online and offline. Concerns are raised on fundamental doctrinal matters. Rayaana (2012) noted that Muslims appear united in their festivals and spiritual rites but in reality, Islam is full of wide range of philosophical differences. It is noted that there is a dichotomy between the Shiite and Sunni Muslims. Alatisse and Omobowale (2019) observed that Nigerian Muslims, especially those are that resident in Lagos were Sunni Muslims of Maliki school of thought. Despite this seeming united front, the unity is engrossed with so many sub – Sunni groups such as the Salafi, Sufis, Tablig, Quadriyya, Tijanniyat, Ahmadiyya and some other minority Islamic groups.

Although, Danmole (1987) posited that ideological differences among Muslims in Lagos started far back in 1875 when a certain Mallam Suleiman argued that Qur'an was sufficient and adequate as Islamic knowledge against the then belief in both Qur'an and Hadith (the examples of Prophet Muhammad). This led to a break and cracks in the once an indivisible unity of Lagos Muslims. The aftermath of this was the emergence of *Alalukurani* group from the existing *Jammah* group. Several other groups have emerged overtime.

Christianity was introduced to Nigeria as a multi denominational religion. The activities of the early missionaries were not concerted as a united front rather as fragmented religious groups with separate identities from across Europe and America. The two major blocks manifest in Catholic and Protestants. While the division in Catholicism is not pronounced, it is quite proliferating among protestants. Apart from Anglican Church that directly broke away from the Catholic on the ground of principle, there has been uncountable number of Churches, including Churches with some elements of African traditional practices. However, there is preponderance of studies on interfaith relations but literature has not been in good

grip of conflicts withing same religions and hence this study attempted to uncover this envelope.

Research Questions

This works sets out to answer three basic questions thus:

1. What are the causes of conflict among religious organizations in Osun Stater?
2. What are the implications of conflicts on the organizations in Osun State?
3. What are the consequences religious conflict?

Research Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the grey areas of conflict in popular religions in Osun state but specifically to:

- a. Examine the areas of conflict among selected Christian denominations in Osun State.
- b. Examine areas of conflict among Islamic groups in Osun State.
- c. Explore the causes of conflicts within same religion in Osun State.
- d. Explain the implications of conflict on religious bodies.

- e. Investigate implications of religious conflicts on the community.

Literature Review

Conflict

Conflict is historical with humanity. It is universal, an integral part of social interactions and engagements (Adams, 2025). Often, it is a product of mutual contradictions among people in the course of common goals. Coser (1968) viewed it as a struggle for scarce resources of value such as power and status. The objective of the struggle is to neutralize, eliminate or injure opponents or competitors. Musa and Abu – Ubaida (2019) described conflict as a situation of sharp disagreement or clash between divergent ideas. Conflict is multidimensional. Tsuwa (2005) identified intra – personal, interpersonal, intragroup, intergroup, intraorganizational, interorganizational, intranational and international. Conflict may be functional and dysfunctional (Aluko, 2014) Conflict is an instrument for balancing and rebalancing power in order to understand the differences between people (Aluko, 2014). It is functional when divergent means are used to attain positive goals and dysfunctional when it is counterproductive. Toncheva - Zlatkova

(2023) premised conflict on traditionalist, human relations and interactionist orientations. The traditionalists consider conflicts as bad and must be avoided. Human relations view it as natural, inevitable and unavoidable in any social setting. The interactionists view it as necessary recipe for efficiency, effectiveness, innovation, development and progress. Conflict is borne out of competition which often leads to confrontation as a result of incompatibility of values and interest (Godwin, 2009).

Intrareligious Conflict

Religion is a shared belief in certain principles, philosophies and orientation common to a group of people. It is weaved with myth and sacredness. Religion is ubiquitous and serve as codes of conduct to the adherents in everyday life and living. However, it is not without internal challenges. Despite sharing common values, principles and claims to common scriptures, there are still divergence in orientation and interpretations of tenets. Ideological differences are pervasive (Gofwen, 2004; Shehu, 2019).

Areas of Conflict Among Islamic Groups

Historically, the migration (*hijra*) of the prophet Muhammad (PBUH) from Makkah

to Madinah on the account of being persecuted by those opposed to his prophetic message created the first internal conflict among Muslims. The Muslim migrants (*Muhajirun*) from Makkah were reluctant to associate with the host Muslims of Madinah (*Ansar*). The intervention of Prophet Muhamad closed the initial artificial gap of interaction premised on superiority “contest”. The death of Prophet Muhammad, who is believed to be the guardian and promoter of the contemporary Islamic practice, created a big division in Islam. Upon his death, the need to fill the vacuum for leadership became a crucial matter. The emergence of Abubakar, a right-hand ally of the prophet, as the new leader did not go down well with a section of the followers. A section believed that the right person to be the *caliph* (successor) was Alli. who was a blood relation of the prophet. Conflict of succession still lingers till now. It manifests itself in two road divisions of *Sunni* and *Shiite* Muslims. Sunnis believe and practice the tradition and examples set by Prophet Muhammad on how he conducted his daily life through words and actions. The Shiites give primacy to Caliph Alli. This manifest in the holy pilgrimage and compulsory prayers. While the Sunni consider holy Kaaba in Makkah, the Mosque

of the Prophet in Madinah and *Masjidul Aksa* in Jerusalem as the three most sacred Mosques and holy sites, the Shiites consider the mausoleum of Caliph Ali in Iraq as another holy site. The *adhan* (call to prayer) and *Ikhama* (initiation to mandatory prayers) of Shiites

Allah is the Greatest
I bear witness that there is none worthy of worship except Allah.
I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah.
I testify Ali is Vicegerent of God
Come to Prayer
Come to success
Allah is the Greatest.
There is none worthy of worship except Allah.
In addition to this, Shiites add this:

Ash'hadu anna Aliyun Wali'allah
I testify Ali is a Vicegerent of God

Secondly, Shiites do not chant "Prayer is better than sleep" in the early dawn call to prayer. Beyond this major division, each block is further sub-divided in philosophical leanings and practice. Other variants of Sunni are Ahmadiya Muslim Movement and Ahmadiya Muslim Jamaah. Ahmadiya as a body believes in the coming of a messiah in the name of one Ghulan Ahmad, who is coming as a messiah. Internal conflict rages within the two variants of the sect. Quadriyah and Tijanniyah are two close sects but with

diverse orientations. Quadriya has deep (*torika*) orientation in sufism. It is famous for the use of special form of drum not just for entertainment but for *Askar* (prayers), while a number of Muslims consider drums and musical instruments as implements of evil. The practice of *wasifa* is a practice of *Torika* order in Tijaniya group but despised in Quadriya. It is a spiritual interaction with the Prophet by spreading a piece of white cloth while members chant praises for prayers in a circle. Other Islamic sects frown at this. Another conflict within the Sunni sect is the controversy of *solat'l Ibramiyya* and *solat'l fathii*. Some consider the prayer excesses praises of Prophet Muhammad at the expense of praises to Allah.

Areas of Conflict in Christianity

Christianity emerged Nigeria in 1840s divided, with Catholic from Italy, Anglica from England, Presbyterian from Scotland, Baptist and Methodist from America. The focus of all these Churches was conversion of Africans to Christianity. This was the basis of their unity. The competition for soul winning was intense. Domination of Europeans in Churches and relegation of African cultural practices led to series of protest by Africans. This culminated into establishment of African Churches. In 1891 United African

Church, the first indigenous Church was established in Lagos. Although African Baptist was established in 1888, it was only African in leadership, but western in doctrine. Omoyajowo (1982) posited that direct communication with holy spirit was a part of practicing Christianity from African perspectives. The influenza epidemic that defied western medicine in 1918 made government to shut down public facilities including worship centres. One Shadare and Sophia from Ijebu ode and Isonyin respectively (presently Ogun state in Nigeria) claimed to receive solutions to cure the disease through vision. This premised the establishment of Faith Tabernacle in 1923. Sharing similar doctrine was Cherubim and Seraphim that was established in 1923 by Moses Orimolade and Christianah Akinsowon. The resentment of European leadership of westernized Churches on the use of both African and western medicine compelled people like Joseph Ayo Baalola to start Christ Apostolic Church (CAC) in 1940 and Joseph Ositelu's Church of the Lord (Aladura) about the same time. What is common to all Africans that started their own churches was the claim of divine revelation. They all believe in efficacy of prayers and did

not condemn certain African practices such as polygyny.

Post – civil war development in Nigeria further encouraged dissent in Church orientation. More secondary schools and universities were established; there was free flow of Christian literature from America into the country and evangelism became fashionable among Churches. Exposure of youth to America and Britain was also a factor. Youths began to find their feet in Church activities. Top American gospel preachers visited Nigeria for crusades and evangelism. Revival and crusades became popular among youths and became avenues by which Pentecostalism was introduced. Youths were generally dissatisfied with the churches of their parents. This opened the gate for era of miracles and prosperity. All these culminated into the proliferation of Churches in Nigeria. Some observers however noted that most of the Churches are meant to enrich the founders and must embark on aggressive ‘marketing’ to do so. There may be elements of confusion too in order to attract unsuspected and innocent followership.

Theoretical Leaning

This study leaned on the theoretical position of George Simmel (1904). He was a conflict theorist who argued that society is structured based on the competing interest of groups who seek for dominance with the ambition to create social structure most beneficial to them. Simmel noted that conflict is a general form of social relationship that is manifested in a variety of group or social contexts. Rise of conflict among groups in organized societies is inevitable and consequently have positive significance of strengthening group boundaries and uniting group members in a common cause. Ogunbameru (2013) reiterated that society is not best understood as a complex system striving for equilibrium but rather as a competition. In the like manner, various denominations and sects within same religion advocate certain positions to attract more patronage or discredit other competing groups, the essence of this is primarily to take dominance of the major group by attracting more population and consequently to win ‘‘converts.’’ This resultantly translates to more human and economic resources for the organization or the religious leader, as may be the case.

Methodology

The research design was exploratory. Qualitative data were purposely generated from print and electronic media (social and traditional). Excerpts of online participants were culled from X, Tik Toks and Facebook handles. The divergent or conflictual views were subjected to interrogation by physical participants. Ten Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were held with purposively selected Muslim and Christian religious leaders and preachers across ideological and denominational lines in Osogbo, Iwo and Ikirun, Osun state. These communities have preponderance of Christians and Muslims and have good representation of most of the groups and churches under study. Similarly, ten In-depth interviews (IDIs) were conducted in each of the three study areas to factor in the views and positions of both Islamic and Christian adherents. Data generated were analyzed through the content.

Findings

Matters of Conflict among Christian Denominations

Issues of Miracles

Miracles have been contentious issues among Muslims and Christians for some time now.

The crux lies in the inability of religion to establish rationality within the context of science to establish the efficacy of miracle. Sorensen (1983) considered miracle as a violation of law of nature. Lydia and Timothy (2009) consider miracles as events that would not have occurred in the natural order of things. To them they are inexplicable experiences. Issues of miracles are controversial in Nigeria. As some people believe in its reality, some consider it prearranged by the religious leaders. Recently, a social activist, Mr. Omoyele Sowore allegedly accused Pastor Johnson Suleiman of performing pre- arranged and fake miracles. Pastor Suleiman has opted to seek redress from the court on this matter that he considered as defamatory to his character. In the same token, Pastor Lamina of Abel Lamina Ministry openly debunked the idea of the existence of miracles. To him, he wondered why the miracle Pastors have personal medical physicians who manage their health locally and the rich ones seek medical help abroad, yet they subject their followers to believe that miracles can heal them through the blood of Jesus. He stressed further that rich pastors secure the services of security outfits including police protection in

their daily activities yet they encourage followers to rely on the blood of Jesus for protection. He specifically mentioned some pastors and religious leaders that use security convoys for protection. He considered these as double standards. Religious adherents are conditioned to have faith in the spirituality at the expense of the rationality and empiricism of science. They make them to rely on the powers of spirituality in health, security and business without questioning, even at the point of death. The sick relies on holy water, anointing oil, prayers and fasting to solve the challenges of social existence.

Prosperity¹

Prosperity has been one issue in the Church overtime, especially in Africa. Poverty is on the increase as unemployment rate snowball. Religious leaders tend to tap on the lack of the people to further impoverish them by making them to consider spirituality as shortcut to make financial success. However, the conditions to make it are attached to members financial commitment to the Church. In essence, members must sow seeds and bless the Church by donating to the Church. While some preachers believe that it is possible to be rich by miracles, some do

¹ Sowore on Facebook Reels, December 23, 2025

not. Dr Damina asserted in one of his teachings thus:

If you follow the Bible to be rich, you would be poor all your life. If you think that beliefs would make you rich, you would be poor all your life and that is the reason there are so many poor people in the Church. All the rich people in the Bible used secular means to make money. Abraham was a shrewd wicked business man, a very smart one at that. When he discovered that he was broke, he used his wife as collateral to ring money. Solomon was a king; no king was broke. God is not a reason why man suffers. Solomon did not beg God to give him money. By virtue of the perks of office of his office he was rich.

In the view of Pastor Bayo Oluwayemi, he asserted that some Christian religious leaders merely extort their followers to be rich. The prosperity they preach is for the leaders and not the followers. In his words:

You are in Church 24 hours 7 days. You don't do any other job other than Church. How many Pastors do that in Europe? I will not advise any servant of God to live on somebody's else remnant. If you are a pastor and you don't have your own work, anything they are giving you, even a million Naira, is still a remnant of somebody. It is only in Pentecostal Churches that a man of God gathers for himself, his wife and children

to go abroad and the church members cannot send their own children abroad, Church members cannot afford private schools (like the pastor). It is also in the Pentecostal / Charismatic Churches that pastors will mandate congregation to buy them jeeps to celebrate birthdays. Go to the orthodox churches, you don't see things like this. There are some of our lecturers that are excellent lecturers. How much money would be enough for those that rely on other people.

Pastor Bayo Oluwayemi on Facebook Reels

In another reel, Pastor Bayo Oluwayemi owned high rate of poverty among people of God to spending economic hours on religious activities. People attend night crusades, night vigils and early morning congregational services at a time they should be at work or engaging in economic activities. Sometimes, when highly religious – inclined Nigerians get to their offices and workshops, they start to sleep or being inactive at work on the account that when they are to sleep naturally, they keep themselves busy in churches. Little did they know that they are cheating on their employers. They are collecting wages they do not work for yet they claim to good Christians.

Festivals

Christmas

Celebration of Christmas has been a contentious and controversial matter among Christians and historians overtime. It is a

day marked as the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. However, Farman (2022) noted that Jesus Christ himself did not observe this festival in his life time, neither did his immediate disciples do. Bradt (2004) noted that December 25 celebrated in ancient Rome to mark the birth of sun god. When Roman emperor, Constatine, converted to Christianity, he changed the day to the celebration of the birth of Jesus. For a long time, a section of the protestant Christians opposed this festival, claiming it was the invention of the Catholic Church. The Protestants banned the celebration of Christmas in England in the 17th century. While Charles ii lifted the ban in England in 1660. In 1640, the parliament of Scotland banned the celebration until 1958 (Allan, 2008). According to ²Pastor Daniel Olukoya of Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministry (MFM), while speaking at the Wednesday Manner Water Service which coincided with the 2019 Christmas celebration at the Church's Headquarters in Lagos, Olukoya said:

² Pastor Olukoya
<https://pmnewsnigeria.com/2019/12/25/celebration-of-christmas-unbiblical-mfms-founder-olukoya/> Accessed September 2025

No book in the bible recorded the word 'Christmas' or that Jesus was born on Dec. 25. "If you really study the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, there is no word like Christmas. "The bible only recorded that the Shepherds were taking care of their flocks during a very cold season when they sighted the star that announced the birth of Jesus Christ. This cold period could be around April or May. Valentine, Christmas, and Easter Celebrations are pagan's festivals that crept in to Christianity that Christian supposes not to have anything to do with. But instead, Christians are busy celebrating them, these were not part of Christianity in the beginning.

PM News / December 25, 2019

Other notable Churches that do not celebrate Christmas in Nigeria include but not limited Deeper Christian Life Ministry, Jehovah Witnesses, Presbyterian Church, Seventh Day Adventist among others.

In converse, Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) Celebrate Christmas with joy, Love, and Worship. To the Church Christmas is an avenue for Christians to come together to honor the greatest gift the world has, Jesus Christ.

³(Pastor Mathew Ashimolowo / KICC/
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=31566>

³ Pastor Mathew Ashimolowo / KICC/
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3156650207808543>)

[50207808543](#)) Apart from the fact that Christmas is celebrated by so many Christian denominations, two – day public holidays are declared across nations to celebrate it

Tithe

Tithe is one of the critical means by which Churches raise money to maintain facilities and carry out administrative roles. Members are expected to contribute a tenth of their incomes for the purpose. Tithe is historical and dated back to the early Church and temples among Christians and Jews. However, this concept has received severe criticism overtime. A group of Christians asserted that tithe, according to history, was originally meant to be agricultural products and meant to be given to the Levites who served in the temple or Beith, in Jerusalem. The Levites were the people that kept the temple and serve the Lord. They must not own properties, nor goods. The argument in some Churches in the Church is that the leaders (Pastors and Church owners) do not suite the definition of Levites because quite a number of them are rich to the extent of having Churches of their own, they are professionals from outside the domain of

religion, they are rich and have other means of sustenance. Secondly, tithe is not meant to be based on compulsion. People of primitive faith hold that tithes and offerings are compulsory, this is wrong. It is freewill on voluntary of worshippers to donate and the minimum is 10% (Pastor Olukoya/ MFM) According to ⁴Pastor Olukoya:

There is nowhere in the Bible where God makes it compulsory for anyone to pay tithe, first fruit or offerings. It is not compulsory; it is a personal decision. If the Bible says if you do this, I would open the windows of heaven and you do not want the window open, so be it, but those that work and grow in the Lord, they pay more than 10 %; some pay 50% or more so that the ministry can progress. If you sow little, you reap little, if you sow much, you reap much. If you think that some pastors would steal your money (and I do not say that some pastors do not steal) Pastors that steal cannot place the hands they use to steal on the sick and the sick gets healed.

In another development, Pastor Enoch Adeboye declared that anyone who do not pay tax would not make heaven (He

³ Pastor Daniel Olukoya, MFM Glorious Sunday Service, Power of Primitive Faith

eventually apologized for this and claimed he was quoted out of context)

Intrareligious conflict Among Islamic

Groups

Burial Rites

Muslim scholars popularly called *Alfas* among Yoruba people have divergent views on burial rites. Some believe that when a Muslim dies, all that is important is to pray and bury the remains within twenty-four hours. Other school believes that there should be ceremonial prayers called *fidau* on the third or seventh day and even twenty-first day. This group also believes that the dead must be remembered every day and every year through prayers.

Use of Charms for cure

Some Muslim clerics engage in using Islamic prayers, divination and traditional African method to heal the sick and attend to what they call spiritual problems such as problems associated with marriage, relationship and business. They owe failure in these to spiritual challenges that need some metaphysical intervention. This is condemned by other scholars accusing the practitioners of unislamic practices. They tag them *Jalabi Alfas*. This gained traction recently when a top Islamic scholar accused another colleague of using charms on him to lose consciousness at an event in Ilorin,

Kwara state. A foremost scholar, Farouq Onikijipa once condemned fellow clerics on the divination in Islam thus:

Allah hates mischiefs, do not mislead people, saying divination, star gazing, drinking *hontu* (liquid Qur'anic potion) is bad is wrong, even God says those who do not know should ask those who know. Do not deceive the people

Causes of intra – faith conflicts

People of same faith often disagree on matters of doctrines, but more often than not, it is expression of superiority in order to weaken the opponent. According to a participant:

Religion is no longer about salvation or seeking the face of God but a real business where so much money is involved. Religious leaders are business people. You can never imagine the volume of money involved in the seeds sown in the churches, *fisabililai* in the Mosque. If there was no money in places of worship, young educated people would not be involved. Little did they start that they start to drive expensive cars, build houses and have complete overhaul of their lifestyles.

KII / adherent of Islam/ Osogbo/ 2025

To another participant:

There is high competition for worshippers and followers. The more worshippers come around, the more the revenue of the religious leaders. Taking a close look at the prayer houses, you note that community or organisational –

owned churches are fading away. What is on the rise now are prayer houses owned by private individuals. What does that say to you. They are purely sole proprietorship businesses. They also have branches. Returns from local branches must be remitted to the headquarters.

IDI / orthodox catechist / Osogbo/ 2025.

A strong cause of conflict is wrong interpretations of the scriptures. Some people are not anointed and do not understand the language of the spirit. Such people give their personal interpretation, which may be wrong. Preaching the word of God is a calling. Unfortunately, because of the problem of unemployment in the country anybody that can barely reads the Bible picks the microphone to preach the gospel without training. In good Churches, preachers are trained, despite ordination.

IDI/ Church clergy/ Iwo/ 2025

Implications of Conflicts on Religious bodies

Conflict is an essential and inevitable part of human social interaction. As it has its negative implications so it has its own advantages too. Some participant in this study expressed views such as:

Conflicts bring about varieties. Variety is the spice of life. With different opinions and positions on religious doctrines, one is able to have good convictions of religion. It is good for academic and general knowledge. I do not belong to any

Church. I worship in any one that appeals to me. A lot of times, I see religious preachers on *tik tok* and facebook and I like what they are doing. They do not usually mention names but if you are conversant with religions and active in the social media, there is no how you won't know the person been criticised.

KII / Christian worshipper/ Ikirun/ 2025

To another participant:

Conflict is damaging. It erodes the confidence in religions. It enables irreligiosity. It may lead to disaffection among members of the same faith. When there is open criticism, people are uncomfortable. This may lead to breakdown of law and order capable of bringing wanton destruction of lives and properties.

IDI/ worshipper. Iwo/ 2025

Implications of Religious conflict on communities

Religious conflict is quite devastating. It disintegrates the ties that bind members of communities. We have had bitter experiences of religious conflicts in Nigeria. This was borne out of intolerance of other people's faith. Rancor and bitterness are the end products of religious intolerance. Lives have been lost, properties destroyed and consequently the society is worse off for it. It reduces productivity.

Conclusion

Intra - religious conflicts in digital spaces has drawn the attention of the observers and the religious communities in Osun state to the diversity that exists among Christian denominations and Islamic groups. This study noted that such conflicts were intentional and for the purpose of driving followership, promoting fames and popularity and consequently for financial gains by religious promoters. These feature in the atmosphere of competition as firmly established by George Simmel (1904), Raji A.A (2022) and Ogunbameru (2013). It has also made available the shades of ideologies for the observers and digital communities to make choice.

Recommendations

Arising from the interactions with literature and participants for this study, the following are recommended:

1. To avert religious violence, conflicts must be well managed by religious bodies such as Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).
2. Periodic dialogues among various intra – religious groups should hold.

3. Government should regulate the use of social media through religious organisations.
4. Informal relations should be promoted among religious leaders and preachers.
5. Laws on slander and defamation should be strengthened.

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