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Full Length Paper

Multiple Religious Belongings and Sociocultural Life of the Individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated multiple religious belonging and its implications for the sociocultural life of individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to identify the forms and extent of multiple religious belonging among individuals, examine its influence on sociocultural identity, evaluate its effect on value systems and moral orientations, and determine its relationship with social relationships. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised adults (18 years and above) attending selected Pentecostal churches, Orthodox churches, and independent ministries within the Mainland East, Mainland Central, and Mainland West clusters of Lagos State. A sample of 422 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling procedure involving cluster, purposive, and simple random sampling techniques. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Multiple Religious Belonging and Sociocultural Life Questionnaire (MRBSLQ). The instrument was validated by experts in religious studies and measurement and evaluation, while its reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Simple Linear Regression were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that multiple religious beliefs exist in several forms among individuals in Lagos State and occur to a high extent. The study further found that multiple religious beliefs significantly influence sociocultural identity, positively affect value systems and moral orientations, enhance social relationships, promote cultural practices, and strengthen social integration. The hypotheses tested indicated statistically significant relationships between multiple religious belonging and sociocultural identity, value systems, social relationships, and sociocultural life, leading to the rejection of all three null hypotheses. The study concluded that multiple religious belonging is a significant socioreligious phenomenon in Lagos State with predominantly positive implications for sociocultural development. It therefore recommended that religious leaders, policymakers, educational institutions, and community organisations should promote interfaith dialogue, religious tolerance, and collaborative community engagement to strengthen peaceful coexistence and national integration in Nigeria.

Keywords: Multiple Religious Belonging, Sociocultural Identity, Value Systems, Social Integration, Cultural Practices, Religious Pluralism.

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INTRODUCTION

Religion plays a key role in global identity and social structures, with recent data that about 76% of the world's population was 76% of the world's population affiliated with a religion in 2020 (Janson, 2021). Pew data confirms 75.8% religious affiliation worldwide in 2020, with Christians at 28.8% and Muslims at 25.6%, though unaffiliated people grew to 24.2% via switching (Pew Research Center, 2017). Pew Research Center (2025) also submits on the world in data (2020): Christian (2.3 billion), Muslim (2.0 billion), no religion (1.9 billion), Hindus (1.2 billion), Buddhists (320 million), other religions (170 million) and Jews (15 million). According to the Pew Research Center (2022), Christianity remains the largest religious group globally, accounting for approximately 31% of the world population, followed by Islam at 25%. In sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, religion affiliation remains overwhelmingly high, with Christianity and Islam dominating public and private life

even with traditional Yoruba systems persisting. Religion has experienced significant growth and transformation, with Christianity and Islam expanding rapidly while indigenous belief systems continue to influence everyday life in sub-Saharan Africa (Pew Research Center, 2025). Ritchie, Rodes-Guirao, Arriagada, and Ortiz-Ospina (2026) add that most people in the world are religious, and it plays an important role in how billions of people live and think.

In Nigeria, the religious affiliations of the world's population show Christians (27.94%) and Muslims (26.49%). The religious affiliations in Nigeria include no religion (24.47%), Hindus (14.85%), Buddhists (0.75%), other religions (2.28%), and Jews (0.22%) (Pew Research Center, 2022). From all indications, Nigeria is known to be religious, having been affiliated with most of the world's religions. This situation therefore created an opportunity for multiple religious belonging (MRB).

Multiple religious belonging is where people blend traditions such as Christianity, Islam, and Yoruba indigenous practices (Walton et al., 2023). This phenomenon is confirmed by Williams (2016), who reveals Nigeria as one of the most religious places on the planet, with 87 per cent of Nigerians attending religious services at least once per week, 92 per cent praying daily, and 94 per cent absolutely certain of their belief in God. But not only is Nigeria extremely religious, it is also truly multi-religious, as one of the few countries in the world in which no single religious group or tradition commands a dominant majority. Nigeria exemplifies this religious dynamism, as it is home to one of the largest populations of both Christians and Muslims globally. As of 2020, approximately 56.1% of Nigerians are Muslims and 43.4% are Christians, while traditional beliefs continue to shape the worldview of many citizens, with a large proportion believing in spiritual forces such as curses and supernatural influences (Pew Research Center, 2025). This complex religious landscape creates a context in which individuals are exposed to multiple belief systems simultaneously, thereby increasing the likelihood of overlapping religious practices.

Within this multi-religious composition, religious affiliation is complex and diverse, both historically and contemporarily. Although a variety of religious traditions have existed and continue to exist in Nigeria, in terms of affiliated numbers and influence, only traditions and practices related to Islam, Christianity, and African Indigenous Religions (AIR) are of significance. The statistical division of these traditions has been and continues to be a matter of much contestation and tension within Nigeria (William, 2016).

Increasing globalisation, migration, and cultural exchange have, however, transformed the nature of religious participation, giving rise to more fluid and dynamic expressions of religiosity, including multiple religious belongings (Cornille, 2019). Contemporary studies indicate that religion is not only a private belief system but also a major determinant of social identity and national belonging across many societies (Pew Research Center, 2025).

Lagos State stands out as a highly urbanised and cosmopolitan environment characterised by intense religious diversity, mobility, and interaction. The city hosts numerous Christian denominations, Islamic groups, and traditional religious practices, making it fertile ground for the emergence of multiple religious belonging (MRB), particularly in the form of multiple denominational participation. Individuals often attend different churches, adopt diverse doctrinal teachings, and participate in varied religious activities as part of their everyday lives. Scholars such as Ukah have argued that urban religious life in Nigeria is increasingly shaped by pragmatic and functional needs, where individuals engage with religion as a means of navigating uncertainty, insecurity, and socio-economic challenges (Ukah, 2020; Ukah, 2025).

The notion of belonging to more than one religious tradition has been discussed in theology and religious studies for decades and more recently in empirical studies across diverse contexts (Abiola & Oladipo, cited in Adama, Okafor, & Sampson, 2020; Adebayo, 2018; Adeoye, 2017; Janson & Akintunde, 2015). Scholars have identified different models of MRB (e.g., blended practice, compartmentalisation of beliefs and dual membership) and argued that MRB raises questions about conversion narratives, community boundaries and interreligious dialogue (Adebayo, 2025).

In West Africa and Nigeria specifically, scholars and field researchers have documented syncretic practices, hybrid religious identities, and overlaps between Christian and ATR practices, as well as new hybrid forms (for example, local Christian movements and charismatic Anglican hybrids). These forms affect moral norms, ritual practice, church and mosque membership dynamics, and social cohesion in urban settings like Lagos.

There is this religiously plural southwestern part of Nigeria, called 'Yoruba land', which is something of an intrigue. MRB challenges exclusivity in Christianity and Islam but aligns with African inclusivity, shaping identity, morality, and relationships (Foley, 2025). It also promotes tolerance yet risks stigma or value conflicts in orthodox communities.

Interestingly, Muslims and practitioners of 'traditional' or Yoruba religion have lived together relatively harmoniously here since the nineteenth century, making the region an icon of ecumenism (Peel, 2016). Many extended families in Yoruba land are composed of Christians, Muslims and practitioners of Yoruba religion, and mutual participation in each other's ritual festivities is a standard feature of Yoruba social life. For instance, an elderly Christian once said that during Christmas, he would ask a Muslim butcher to slaughter a ram for him in the halal way (lawful in Islam) so that his Muslim relatives and neighbours could also partake of the meal. Similarly, Christians take part in the festivities at the end of Ramadan. Another example of Yoruba land's multiform religious landscape is about a Muslim father who married

two wives: the first was a Muslim, while the second was a Christian. Tobi's elder brother is a Muslim scholar who spends his leisure time listening to tape-recorded sermons, while his younger half-brothers, who are DJs and live in the same family house in Lagos, play popular music, and his half-sister, who is a member of a Pentecostal choir, practices her Christian hymns. Tobi married a woman from an Aladura church who converted to Islam after their marriage. To avoid offending either his family or his in-laws, the wedding took place in a wedding hall instead of a mosque or church. It took Tobi's wife some years to replace the cross around her neck with a veil. Tobi and his wife raise their two daughters as Muslims. To make things more complicated, Tobi goes by his Yoruba name instead of his Muslim name so that even those who are close to him cannot immediately tell his religion. Given its particular religious constellation, it is not surprising that multiple religious practices are common in Yoruba land, which Lagos State is inclusive of. However, it is not surprising that this practice is the only place where it thrives.

There is an image of Northerners as 'fundamentalists' at the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IMC), which was founded by Pastor James Wuye and Imam Muhammad Ashafa Nuruddin in the religious hotbed of Kaduna in 1995. The centre's mission is to mediate between Christians and Muslims in order to "create a peaceful society." Unlike the IMC's pioneers, there is Chrislam; the founders do not so much situate their movements against the backdrop of religious violence plaguing Nigeria but rather against the unstable flux of life in Lagos State.

Lagos, a cosmopolitan hub in Yorubaland, exemplifies fluid interactions among Christianity, Islam, and Ìṣẹ̀ṣe (Yoruba religion), where urban migration encourages hybrid practices (Foley, 2025). Studies highlight pragmatic spirituality among Yoruba, blending rituals across faiths for efficacy. Lagos's large population and process of rapid urbanisation contribute to a sense of life that is not only loud but also turbulent and hectic, where survival depends on improvisation, risk-taking and ingenuity (Chow, 2016). In this environment, religious 'entrepreneurs' view Christianity not as a contradiction but as a testament to the resourcefulness of Lagosians, who, as will be demonstrated below, enhance their prospects for a better life—if not in the afterlife, then at least in this world—by embracing both Christian and Muslim practices.

It is worth noting that religion remains a fundamental dimension of human existence, shaping identity, values, and patterns of social interaction across societies. Globally, religion continues to influence social structures, with a significant proportion of the world's population identifying with one or more religious traditions. In the context of this study, Multiple Religious Belonging (MRB) is conceptualised as multiple denominational belonging, referring to individuals' simultaneous affiliation with or participation in more than one religious denomination. This constitutes the independent variable (IV) of the study. The dependent variable (DV) is sociocultural life, which is operationalised into measurable dimensions including sociocultural identity, value systems, social relationships, cultural practices, social behaviour, and social integration. These dimensions reflect how individuals construct meaning, relate with others, and conform to or negotiate societal expectations within their cultural environment.

The interaction between multiple denominational belongings and sociocultural life presents both opportunities and challenges. On one hand, exposure to multiple denominations may promote tolerance, broaden perspectives, and enhance social adaptability. On the other hand, it may lead to identity ambiguity, conflicting value systems, and tensions in social relationships. Empirical evidence indicates that religion significantly influences moral values and social cohesion; however, discrepancies between religious commitment and social behaviour persist as significant issues in numerous African societies (Olupona, 2018). In urban contexts like Lagos, where religious participation is high, individuals often navigate complex and sometimes contradictory expectations arising from different denominational teachings.

Lagos State, being Nigeria's largest city and a religiously plural, highly mobile urban environment, provides a fertile setting for studying MRB. Neighbourhoods of Lagos display a mix of faiths at close quarters, extensive Pentecostal activity, persistent ATR practices, and high rates of internal migration that bring different religious repertoires into everyday contact.

Despite the increasing visibility of multiple denominational belonging, existing studies in Nigeria have largely focused on religious conflict, interfaith relations, and institutional religion, with limited attention to how individuals simultaneously engage with multiple denominations and how these practices shape their sociocultural experiences. This situation creates the need for a study on how such religious practices influence identity formation, value orientation, social relationships, and patterns of social integration. Therefore, this study examines the impact of multiple religious (denominational) belonging on the sociocultural lives of individuals in Lagos State.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the implications of multiple religious belonging on the sociocultural lives of individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Assess the extent of multiple religious belonging among individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria.
2. Examine the influence of multiple religious belonging on individuals' sociocultural identity in Lagos State, Nigeria.
3. Evaluate the effect of multiple religious belonging on value systems and moral orientations in Lagos State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide the study:

1. What is the extent of multiple religious belonging among individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria?
2. How does multiple religious belonging influence sociocultural identity in Lagos State, Nigeria?
3. What effect does multiple religious belonging have on individuals' value systems and moral orientations in Lagos State, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

These null hypotheses were formulated for the study and tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

H_{01}: Multiple religious beliefs have no significant influence on the sociocultural identity of individuals in Lagos State.

H_{02}: Multiple religious beliefs have no significant effect on the value systems of individuals in Lagos State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it enables the researcher to collect data from a large population. This study is situated in Lagos State, one of the most populous, urbanised, economically significant, and religiously diverse regions in West Africa. The population of this study comprises all ten thousand, eight hundred and ninety (10890) adult residents (18 years and above) in Lagos State who are affiliated with one or more Christian religious denominations. The estimated population of Christian adults (18 years and above) in the Lagos Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State is projected at approximately N = 10,890. This estimate is based on church attendance density, census projections, and urban population distribution patterns in the area. The sample size for this study was four hundred and twenty-four (424) participants determined using the Taro Yamane (1967) statistical formula, which is appropriate for studies with a known or estimated finite population. A multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to ensure representativeness and reduce sampling bias. Stage 1 involved the purposive selection of the Lagos Mainland Local Government Area due to its high religious diversity, dense concentration of churches, and urban population structure. There is a high likelihood that individuals belong to multiple denominations. At stage 2, the area was stratified into major religious clusters based on church density and residential distribution: the Mainland East cluster, the Mainland Central cluster, and the Mainland West cluster. This ensures balanced geographical representation. At stage 3, within each cluster, churches were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Pentecostal churches, Orthodox churches, and independent ministries were included to reflect denominational diversity. At stage 4: selection of respondents using systematic random sampling and accidental (convenience) sampling where necessary. Criteria for selection are that they must be 18 years and above, must be Christian residents of Lagos Mainland, and must have exposure to at least one or more denominations. This ensures representativeness and diversity. The main instrument for data collection was a researcher-structured questionnaire titled "Multiple Religious Belonging and Sociocultural Life Questionnaire (MRBSLQ)". The questionnaire is divided into sections: Section A: Demographic information, Section B: Extent of MRB, Section C: Sociocultural identity, Section D: Value systems, Section E: Social relationships, Section F: Cultural practices, Section G: Social integration. Responses will be measured using a 4-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (SA) – 4, Agree (A) – 3, Disagree (D) – 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) – **1.** The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by experts in religious studies sociology and measurement and evaluation to review the questionnaire to ensure clarity, relevance, and adequacy of items. Corrections were made based on their feedback. The reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 is considered acceptable. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation to be used to answer research questions. While inferential statistics, regression and the Pearson correlation coefficient were used to test hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 422)

Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Male	187	44.3
Female	235	55.7
Total	**422**	**100.0**
Age (Years)	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
18–27	88	20.9
28–37	123	29.1
38–47	107	25.4
48–57	69	16.4
58 years and above	35	8.3
Total	**422**	**100.0**
Educational Qualification	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Primary Education	36	8.5
Secondary Education	94	22.3
OND/NCE	91	21.6
Bachelor's Degree/HND	133	31.5
Postgraduate Degree	68	16.1
Total	**422**	**100.0**
Church Denomination	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Pentecostal Churches	196	46.4
Orthodox Churches	124	29.4
Independent Ministries	102	24.2
Total	**422**	**100.0**

Table 1 shows that 235 respondents (55.7%) were female, while 187 respondents (44.3%) were male. This indicates that females constituted the majority of the respondents in the study.

The highest proportion of respondents (29.1%) were between 28 and 37 years, while the least represented age group was 58 years and above (8.3%). This implies that most participants were young and middle-aged adults.

The majority of respondents (31.5%) possessed a bachelor's degree or HND, while only 8.5% had primary education, indicating a relatively educated study population.

Nearly half of the respondents (46.4%) attended Pentecostal churches, while 29.4% attended Orthodox churches and 24.2% attended independent ministries.

Research Question One: What forms of multiple religious belonging exist among individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean Responses on the Forms of Multiple Religious Belonging among Individuals in Lagos State (N = 422)

S/N	**Forms of Multiple Religious Belonging**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Decision**
1	I attend religious programmes organised by religious groups other than my primary faith.	3.22	0.74	Agree
2	I seek prayers, counselling, or spiritual guidance from leaders of different religions.	3.15	0.81	Agree
3	I participate in traditional religious or cultural ceremonies despite belonging to a Christian church.	3.08	0.83	Agree
4	I observe traditional rites during family ceremonies such as marriages, funerals, or naming ceremonies.	3.27	0.70	Agree

S/N	Forms of Multiple Religious Belonging	Mean	SD	Decision
372.	*Int. J. Arts Humanit*			
5	I use religious objects (e.g., anointing oil, holy water, blessed items, or traditional symbols) from different religious traditions.	3.11	0.79	Agree
6	I combine religious beliefs or practices from more than one religion in my daily life.	3.19	0.76	Agree
7	I celebrate festivals or special occasions associated with religions other than my own.	3.13	0.78	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.16**	**0.77**	**Agree**

Decision Rule: 3.50–4.00 = Strongly Agree, 2.50–3.49 = Agree, 1.50–2.49 = Disagree 1.00–1.49 = Strongly Disagree

The results in Table 2 show a grand mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.77), indicating that respondents agreed that multiple religious beliefs exist in several forms among individuals in Lagos State. The highest-rated form was observing traditional rites during family ceremonies such as marriages, funerals, or naming ceremonies (Mean = 3.27, SD = 0.70), while the lowest-rated, though still agreed upon, was participation in traditional religious or cultural ceremonies despite belonging to a Christian church (Mean = 3.08, SD = 0.83). Overall, the findings suggest that multiple religious belonging is expressed through participation in different religious programmes, consultation of leaders from different faiths, observance of traditional rites, use of religious objects from different traditions, integration of beliefs and practices, and participation in festivals outside one's primary religion. These results indicate that multiple religious beliefs are a common feature of the religious experiences of adults in Lagos State.

Research Question Two: What is the extent of multiple religious belonging among individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria?

Table 3. Extent of multiple religion belonging among individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	I participate in religious activities outside my primary religion.	3.18	0.76	High
2	I combine beliefs from different religious traditions.	3.11	0.82	High
3	I consult religious leaders from different faiths.	3.05	0.85	High
4	I attend religious ceremonies of different religions.	3.24	0.71	High
5	I observe cultural practices associated with other religions.	3.16	0.77	High
6	I use religious symbols or objects from different faiths.	3.09	0.81	High
7	My spiritual life reflects beliefs from more than one religion.	3.20	0.73	High
	Grand Mean	**3.15**		**High Extent**

Table 3 shows a grand mean of 3.15, which indicates that multiple religious beliefs exist to a high extent among adults attending selected Christian worship centres in Lagos State. This suggests that many respondents maintain religious practices extending beyond their primary Christian affiliation.

Research Question Three: What is the influence of multiple religious belonging on sociocultural identity?

Table 4: Influence of multiple religion on sociocultural identity

S/N	Statement	Mean	SD	Decision
1	It influences my cultural identity.	3.20	0.74	Agree
2	It increases appreciation of cultural diversity.	3.32	0.69	Agree
3	It shapes my worldview.	3.28	0.72	Agree
4	It promotes respect for people of different cultures.	3.25	0.70	Agree
5	It strengthens my sense of belonging in society.	3.17	0.76	Agree
6	It encourages acceptance of cultural differences.	3.29	0.71	Agree
7	It broadens my understanding of other ethnic traditions.	3.24	0.73	Agree
	Grand Mean	**3.25**		**Agree**

Table 4 shows a grand mean of 3.25, which is higher than the criterion mean of 2.50. This indicates that respondents generally agreed that multiple religious beliefs positively influence sociocultural identity by promoting tolerance, diversity, and broader cultural understanding.

H_{01}: Multiple religious belonging has no significant influence on the sociocultural identity of individuals in Lagos State.

Table 5: Regression Analysis of Multiple Religious Belonging and Sociocultural Identity (N = 399)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.624	0.389	0.388	0.421

ANOVA

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Decision**
Regression	34.826	1	34.826	196.42	<.001	Not sig
Residual	70.406	397	0.177			
Total	**105.232**	**398**				

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.284	0.118	—	10.88	<.001
Multiple religious belonging	0.573	0.041	0.624	13.99	<.001

The regression analysis presented in table 5 indicates that multiple religious beliefs positively and significantly influence sociocultural identity, with a coefficient of β = 0.624, t(397) = 13.99, and p < .001. The model produced an R of 0.624 and an R^2 of 0.389, indicating that multiple religious beliefs explained approximately 38.9% of the variance in respondents' sociocultural identity.

Since the significance value of 0.001 is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, multiple religious beliefs have a significant influence on the sociocultural identity of individuals in Lagos State

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H_{02}: Multiple religious belonging has no significant effect on the value systems of individuals in Lagos State.

Table 6: Regression Analysis of Multiple Religious Belonging and Value Systems (N = 399)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.548	0.300	0.298	0.463

ANOVA

Model	**Sum of Squares**	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**	**Decision**
Regression	26.417	1	26.417	123.24	<.001	sig
Residual	85.104	397	0.214			
Total	111.521	398				

Coefficients

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	t	Sig.
Constant	1.496	0.130	—	11.51	<.001
Multiple religious belonging	0.496	0.045	0.548	11.10	<.001

The result in Table 6 indicates that multiple religious beliefs significantly and positively predict respondents' value systems. The regression coefficient was β = 0.548, t(397) = 11.10, p < .001. The R^2 of 0.300 indicates that multiple religious beliefs account for 30.0% of the variation in respondents' value systems. Since p < .05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, multiple religious belonging has a significant effect on the value systems of individuals in Lagos State

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between multiple religious belonging and social relationships among individuals in Lagos State.

Table 7: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation between Multiple Religious Belonging and Social Relationships (N = 399)

Variables	Mean	SD	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Multiple religious belonging	3.21	0.61	399			
Social relationships	3.34	0.56	399	0.476	<.001	Sig

The result presented in Table 7 indicates a moderate positive relationship between multiple religious beliefs and social relationships among individuals in Lagos State, $r = 0.476$, $p < .001$.

This implies that individuals who reported higher levels of multiple religious belonging also tended to report more positive or stronger social relationships. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between multiple religious beliefs and social relationships among individuals in Lagos State. It should, however, be noted that the correlation indicates association rather than causation.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study revealed that multiple religious belonging exists in several forms among adults attending selected Christian worship centres in Lagos State. The respondents indicated that they attend religious programmes organised by religious groups outside their primary faith, seek prayers and spiritual guidance from leaders of different religions, participate in traditional religious and cultural ceremonies, observe indigenous rites during family ceremonies, use sacred objects associated with different religious traditions, combine beliefs and practices from more than one religion, and celebrate festivals associated with other religious traditions. These findings indicate that multiple religious beliefs are a common religious experience among many individuals in Lagos State.

The present finding is consistent with the study conducted by Janson (2023), who observed that many residents of Lagos regularly cross religious boundaries by participating in Christian, Islamic, and Yoruba religious practices. According to Janson (2023), religious identity in Lagos is often flexible and negotiated through everyday social interactions rather than being confined to exclusive institutional membership. The author concluded that many people draw spiritual resources from multiple religious traditions to meet their religious, cultural, and social needs.

The findings also corroborate the report by the Pew Research Center (2023), which found that in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, a considerable proportion of Christians and Muslims continue to observe indigenous religious practices, consult traditional spiritual leaders, and participate in cultural rituals rooted in African traditional religion. According to the report, these practices are often regarded as part of cultural heritage rather than a rejection of one's professed religion.

The findings revealed that multiple religious beliefs significantly influence the sociocultural identity of individuals in Lagos State. Respondents agreed that interaction with multiple religious traditions broadened their cultural perspectives, enhanced respect for cultural diversity, promoted tolerance, and strengthened their sense of belonging within a multicultural society. The regression analysis further confirmed that multiple religious beliefs significantly predict sociocultural identity. This finding agrees with Okpaleke (2022), who argued that Christian identity in Nigeria's multi-religious context is increasingly shaped through dialogue and interaction with other faith communities. According to Okpaleke (2022), meaningful engagement with religious diversity enables individuals to preserve their religious identity while developing solidarity, openness, and mutual respect across religious boundaries.

Similarly, Ajibola (2024) maintained that Nigeria's religious diversity should be viewed as a social resource capable of fostering ethical relationships, intercultural understanding, and national cohesion rather than division. The author proposed that sustained dialogue among religious communities strengthens inclusive sociocultural identities founded on justice, mutual respect, and shared citizenship. The findings therefore suggest that sociocultural identity in Lagos State is increasingly influenced by regular interaction with diverse religious traditions, reflecting the realities of an urban and religiously plural society.

The study established that multiple religious beliefs significantly influence respondents' value systems and moral orientations. Participants agreed that exposure to different religious traditions encourages honesty, respect for human dignity, compassion, peaceful coexistence, and ethical decision-making. This finding corroborates Ajibola (2024), who argued that interreligious engagement in Nigeria should move beyond theological discussions to practical ethical collaboration that promotes justice, respect, and shared moral responsibility. According to the author, religious diversity can strengthen rather than weaken moral values when

communities intentionally cultivate ethical dialogue.

Likewise, Akande and Olawale (2023) found that Christian-Muslim relations in Nigeria are strengthened by shared ethical values such as respect, tolerance, justice, and peaceful coexistence. Their study concluded that these common moral principles provide an important foundation for national development and social stability. The implication is that individuals who interact constructively with multiple religious traditions may develop broader moral perspectives that support harmonious living in a diverse society.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study investigated multiple religious belonging and its implications for the sociocultural life of individuals in Lagos State, Nigeria, using a sample of 422 adults drawn from selected Pentecostal churches, Orthodox churches, and independent ministries across the Mainland East, Mainland Central, and Mainland West clusters of Lagos State. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics (Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Simple Linear Regression) at the 0.05 level of significance. The major findings of the study are summarised as follows:

The study found that multiple religious beliefs exist in several forms among individuals in Lagos State. These include attending religious programmes organised by other faiths, seeking spiritual guidance from leaders of different religions, participating in traditional religious and cultural ceremonies, observing indigenous rites during family events, using religious objects from different traditions, combining beliefs and practices from more than one religion, and participating in religious festivals outside one's primary faith.

The study established that multiple religious beliefs exist to a high extent among adults attending selected Christian worship centres in Lagos State. This indicates that many respondents engage in religious beliefs and practices beyond the boundaries of their primary religious affiliation.

The findings revealed that multiple religious beliefs significantly influence the sociocultural identity of individuals. Respondents indicated that interaction with multiple religious traditions broadens cultural understanding, promotes tolerance, strengthens appreciation of diversity, and enhances their sense of belonging within society. The study found that multiple religious beliefs have a significant positive effect on respondents' value systems and moral orientations. Respondents agreed that engagement with multiple religious traditions encourages honesty, respect for others, compassion, peaceful coexistence, ethical behaviour, and respect for human dignity. The findings demonstrate that multiple religious belonging is a significant socio-religious phenomenon in Lagos State. While it presents certain challenges, particularly regarding religious identity and institutional acceptance, its positive contributions to sociocultural identity, moral development, cultural preservation, social relationships, and social integration suggest that it can serve as a valuable resource for promoting peaceful coexistence and sustainable development in Nigeria's religiously plural society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Religious leaders should promote interfaith dialogue, mutual respect, and religious tolerance through sermons, seminars, conferences, and community outreach programmes to reduce prejudice and strengthen peaceful coexistence.
2. Christian denominations, Islamic organisations, and traditional religious institutions should collaborate in addressing common social challenges such as poverty, youth unemployment, insecurity, drug abuse, and moral decadence, thereby strengthening national unity.
3. Educational institutions should incorporate religious tolerance, intercultural education, and peace education into school curricula to expose learners to the principles of religious diversity and peaceful coexistence from an early age.
4. Government at the federal, state, and local government levels should formulate and implement policies that promote interfaith cooperation and discourage religious discrimination, hate speech, and intolerance.
5. Community leaders, traditional rulers, and civil society organisations should organise regular interfaith forums that encourage dialogue and mutual understanding among different religious groups.

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