

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Conceptual Review

Cases of religious conflict abound globally. In recent times there has been cases of religious crises the world over. This was reiterated by Juengensmeyer when he stated, “religious conflicts have destroyed infrastructures like houses, churches, mosques and factories as well as peoples’ lives” (Juengensmeter, 2000). More to this also, is the damage on non material things like lack of community cohesion, trust and confidence. It is significant to note that religious conflict perpetrators have both motivation and justification to do what they do. This probably explain why religious conflicts occurred with much frequency. In Nigeria the act of violence has been dimensional, as it has economic, social, and political dimensions. Of all these the ethno-religious conflict seem to be more frequent and devastating in nature. This has resulted in serious religious intolerance among the Nigerian populace. Most if not all conflicts in Nigeria that have political, social, and economic origin end in religious conflicts. Religion has become so sensitive that it has polarize the pattern of living in Nigeria and has laid hold on every sphere of life in the country.

The broadcast media has a social responsibility to not only give timely information but entertain, educate, and change the negative perception of foreigners concerning Nigeria which is should be carried out within the laws of the country (Iheanacho, Jumbo, & Etumnu, 2021). It is the job of the media to call the government’s attention to areas of religious conflict in the country. Arise TV (2022), reported that the State Governor of Bauchi State condemned religious violence which erupted because a woman in her 40s made a social media post denouncing Islam, which resulted in several houses and shops being burnt down and people being killed, and the police teams was called to restore order. But the damage had been done. According to Pauline Mark Lere(2009),It is important to remember that during moments of religious crisis, electronic media is used for programs that can aid in reducing tension and encouraging religious tolerance. In a report by Arise TV (2022), The Vice President of CAN in the 19 Northern State spoke called the attention of the public over the

false allegation of blasphemy used to blackmail Christians, and well-mannered Christian young girls who refuse the sexual advances of opposite religion and gender. The media is expected to highlight the existing law on religious conflict to protect the lives and properties of citizens. Especially when there are lives of citizens are being threaten.

In 2022, according to a report by Bennett Oghifo on Arise TV, the US Senators demanded that Nigeria be listed on the Religious Freedom list for violence against Christians. With the religious crisis increasing over the years, it not only got the attention of external countries but still shows Nigeria in a bad review and it questions the ability of Security agencies and the credibility of the media in tackling religious violence in Nigeria. The media performing its job by helping in the fight against religious conflicts and not being used to insight conflict.

2.1.1 Religion

Religion provides people with the sense of identity. Religion is as old as man. Religion, and though a benefactor to man, it has caused great damage to man. This happens when each religious organisation tries to enforce her on the other religions or each of the religions does same. This began with the Christian crusades by the westerners in the middle East, and the jihads by the Muslim jihadists and such other religious wars perpetrated by religionists. Religion on the other hand was initially considered by sociologists as a private and personal affair and so has nothing to do with any human endeavors (Clark, 2007). However, the story of religion became something else as religion was discovered to have a grip on human endeavors. It is on record that since the time of slavery and slave trade, when lives and properties were destroyed and wasted, was considered less devastating compared to the losses incurred from the ethno-religious conflicts so far recorded. In Nigeria, religion as earlier stated,, has become so sensitive that it has resulted in crises situations creating fear, distrust and suspicion among the two dominant religions –Christianity and Islam. As a pluralistic society, Nigeria's religious crises began as cold war, which busted in 1980 to 2004. below is the list of the several religious crises experienced in the country. Although the

study is focused on the Mohammed Riots of 2005, there is need to briefly highlight on other similar cases of the escalation of religious crises in Nigeria

2.1.2 Historical Background Of Religions In Nigeria

Like any other country that faces the problems of ethnic and cultural diversity, Nigerias'recent history has been that of civil unrest, riots, violence and conflicts in the process of finding an answer to the national question of unity in diversity. Over twenty of these riots are religious in nature.(Enwerem,1995). The question here is, to what extend is religion significant in shaping the way Nigerians understand each other's religion by helping to shape their outlook. This I say because religion as man's benefactor should be a factor in the way Nigerians should understand themselves. Historically, Nigeria has three religions: African Traditional Religion, Christianity and The Influence of Media Coverage of Religious Crises in Nigeria 425 Islam. There is no accurate percentage to determine the exact population of the adherents of each of the religions. The available figures are that of the 1931 census which are not reliable as these figures have changed over the years. These figures gave 50% for pagan worshippers, 47% for Muslims and 34% for Christians. Nnyombi gives a total figure of 20% of the total population of Africans as pagans giving a total of 760 million people. He further said that this figure is on the decline despite the revival in African Traditional Religion in recent years (Nnyombi, 2008). More still, apart from these religions, Nigeria has experienced the influx of new religions which are of Eastern type like Eckankar, Rosicrucian, Grail Message, Guru Maharagi, Brotherhood of the Cross and the Star and Aestherius societies among many others (<http://wek.utk.edu/rhackett>, accessed March, 2008). Few other religions like Hinduism, Budhism, Jehova's Witness, Bahias, and Rastafarians have practitioners. Other categories of religions which are indigenous and fast spreading also exist. These include, Olumba olumba and the Aladura churches. Others are Bori Cult, Igbe Cult, Ijov and many other anti witcraft movements.(Danfulani, 1999). Islam and Christianity are foreign religions, but the most dynamic in spread, Islam emerged in the 7th century and became well established in Nigeria in the 15th and 16t.h centuries. Islam received a boost

during the reformist jihad that was declared by Shehu Uthman bin Fodiye (Sheikh Usman Danfodio), that was launched in North Western Nigeria from 1804. In the North East, the Mais (rulers) of Borno were converted to Islam a little bit ahead of the Habe (Hausa) rulers. By the 1805, the El-Kanemi had made Borno the most Islamized area in Nigeria. By the middle of the 19th century, Islam had virtually swept the Hausa and Fulani settlements in the extreme parts of northern Nigeria. This explain why the north was exaggeratedly tagged a "Muslim block" (Anene, 1967). Not every part of the north was influence by Islam, as the ethnic groups within the central part of Nigeria defended themselves against the intrusion of Islam and remain traditionalist. This later opened up the way for Christianity to flourish in the area. This exemplified why the religious practices of Islam in the northern part of Nigeria differ significantly from that of the southern area. While muslims in the north are more strict on some Islamic religious practices and could easily be aggressive, those in the south (particularly those in the western part of Nigeria where Islam had had hold as a result of the 1804 jihad), are more liberal. Since the founding of Islam in the seventh century and its attendant Islamic beliefs and practices, it has had far reaching effects on the development of Nigeria. This is seen in the developmental programs it has for its members and non members alike. Christianity came into Nigeria in the 15th Century, but failed and received a boost in the 19th Century when the ex-slaves from Sierra-Leone reestablished Christianity in the Coastal areas (Lere, 2001). These early missionaries included the Church Missionary Society, Methodist, Baptist, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and several other missionary societies. They initiated many aspects of what we now can consider as development, as they involved themselves in mass education, health care, and initiated movements that brought about social transformation to the socially and physically disadvantaged and the development of Nigerian nationalism. Thus, the elite produced in their numerous schools became self conscious and they began to nurse the ambition for self expression claiming some ability not just to express themselves but to manage their resources towards self actualization (Ajayi, 1965). This later led to the independence of the country in 1960.

2.1.3 Media And Its Role In curbing Or Igniting Religious crises

Media is simply communication. It is a powerful medium through which information are disseminated to the society or public in fairness and objective manner. It keeps the public inform and current on local, national and international issues .however there are both the good and bad sight of it. The benefits include information dissemination, when it is free from manipulation by groups, organisations and individuals. The media in focus for the purpose of this study include the radio, television, national dailies, and books published by others on the issue. The world of media in transmitting religious matter is fast changing. For example, the television has witness an unprecedented number of television series which directly or indirectly transmit religious programmes showing them internally on its programme. Apart from the regular programmes that are being run officially on the media particularly radio and television, these media placed religious jingles announcements and songs in between scheduled programmes. A scholar reiterated, “Therefore, religion either explicit or implicit was much more the feature of media” thus, media has become a significant means of transmitting religious programs. On the significance of media to the development of religion, one will admit that media has greatly help in the development of religion. At times of religious crises it is significant to note that the electronic media is used for programs that can help in curbing tension and promoting religious tolerance

2.2 Theoretical Framework

It is needless to say that both Nigeria and Ghana have different but similar legislation in place that regulate the operations and activities of legacy media – radio, television, newspaper and magazines, the two countries are not on the same page in terms of legislation to control their digital spaces. For instance, Ghana has two clearly stated laws that forbid misinformation sharing, the 1960 Criminal Offenses Act and the Electronic Communications Act 2008, whereas, in Nigeria, an attempt to regulate social media via legislation came up in 2019 when Senator Mohammed Sani Musa presented the Social Media Bill arguing that the bill seeks to protect the country from falling victim of cyber forces as did the US. effects of

the video and how it spur dissemination of misinformation about Buhari's fake wedding and it was a mere show of force that lacks appropriate legal framework to prosecute the suspect. The theory selected for this study is technology determinism. The term: technological determinism was first coined by Thorstein Veblen, though the etymology of determinism idea was traced to Karl Marx. However, considering the context of this study, the most appropriate dimension of technological determinism is one offered by Marshal McLuhan in 1964. To McLuhan, the "media is the message" and people create technologies that in turn shape and influence people's behaviours and actions. This idea seems to link the power of the media to exert influence on the psyche of the people that some theorists labelled as "Media Determinism".

Media determinism postulates that the invention of technologies, especially communication message producing and receiving technologies have turned the world into a "global village". Today, the coming of social networking sites gave impetus to bridge distance and promote global connectedness in a linked style, (Finnemann, 2002). The use of technology greatly altered the way people communicate, do business, school, behaviour, interact with families, pastimes and means of amusement, (Martin & Ericson, 2013).

This theory is premised on the basis that technology has the power to cause social change and that can be observed from peoples' way of life. Of particular interest here is technological influence on information consumption and the production behaviour of individuals. Today, technologies such as handsets, computers, social media, the internet and mobile network have become an indispensable part of people's lives that they cannot do without it. Here we argue that technology is the major instinctive factor motivating people to behave and act in a certain way

Media Intrusion theory

Media Intrusion theory emphasized the consistent intrusion of the mass media in the political system especially during elections. Although the 'Media intrusion theory' specifically focused on the role of the television media in influencing or framing public opinion in the issues of politics, the social media serves as the most influential media in channeling political issues in this present generation. The social media intrusion in the political system are motivated by Nigerian politicians for personal gains. The case of disseminating false information about political opponent further emphasizes how the political system continues to engage the most effective and influential media to attain political advantage. The social media platforms have encouraged 'many elitist leaders who do not necessarily hold political positions hold obvious political power, but may work behind the scene serving the interest of the social group they lead or represent' (Folarin 2005).

Thus, the social media platform has been taken advantage of as an anonymous medium to spread fake news usually to the advantage of the sender of these messages thereby disruption social order and activities alike Social media platforms have consistently been used by people hiding behind fake user-names and identity to manipulate the society, promote their ideologies and attract followers and get online recognition for diverse personal reasons, one of which is to make money. In the process, online users are desperate and spread false information, which tend to attract the attention of many. Such intrusion using the social media platform distort the peace of the society and leave audiences confused about what to believe and what to disregard.

Social Cognitive theory

Social Cognitive theory: Social cognitive theory provides an agentic conceptual framework within which to analyze the determinants and psychosocial mechanisms through which symbolic communication influences human thought, affect and action (Albert Bandura

2021). Communications systems operate through two pathways. In the direct pathway, they promote changes by informing, enabling, motivating, and guiding participants. In the socially mediated pathway, media influences link participants to social networks and community settings that provide natural incentives and continued personalized guidance, for desired change. Social cognitive theory analyses social diffusion of new styles of behaviour in terms of the psychosocial factors governing their acquisition and adoption and the social networks through which they spread and are supported. Structural interconnectedness provides potential diffusion paths; sociocognitive factors largely determine what diffuses through those paths. Researchers have recommended that the principles of social cognitive be used in analyzing media uses and effects. This means an increased emphasis on the cognitive dimension of media users. According to John Bargh (1988) a cognitive media uses researchers the nature of media users goals is critical in determining more than just what information they receive from media messages. According to him, the type of information one attends to, how much attention one pays to it, how one encodes and interprets it and consequently how one remembers it all are greatly influenced by one's processing goals while encouraging the information was developed mainly by Albert Bandura and his associates in the 1960s and it remains one of the most widely used theories of media effects (Bandura and Walters,1963).

Uses and gratification theory:

Uses and gratification theory: The use and gratification theory began under the other research considerations or categories, such functionalism in the 1940s and was one of the earliest social scientific areas of concern in mass communication Konkwo (2022). Black and Bryant (1995) note that one such serious limitation was the inability to determine whether the gratifications sought and those received were one. According to them, it was possible for researchers to tell who the heavy media users were, but not in determining what precise gratifications they were receiving from their consumption of media message. This theory is

also associated with the work of Elihu Katz (1970), Jay Blumler and Michael Gurevitch. The theory focuses on what people do with media content rather than the influence of the media. The theory focuses on three components: the motive for media use, the audience activity such as involvement, and result of the media use, such as satisfaction. The uses and gratification theory are key to understanding people's media consumption habit. For instance, Park and Goering (2016) used the uses and gratification theory to examine a relationship among motives for health-related YouTube, post-exposure online activity, cognitive involvement in health related YouTube use and others. Evidence has shown uses and gratification theory to be the dominant theoretical approach to understanding why and how people actively seek out specific media to satisfy particular needs (Ruggiero, 2000).

2.3 Empirical Review

Akpan, Olofu-Adeoye, and Ering (2013) sees mass media in general as a tool for communicating the language of peace and conflict. The media's coverage is essential for educating the people. However, news organizations take part in the creation, upkeep, and dissemination of specific narratives and discourses (Tenenboim-Weinblatt, Hanitzsch, & Nagar, 2016, pp. 152) in addition to disseminating information. Several studies were reviewed by this, an example is a study by Margaret Damola Jesuminure (2019) on "Media Coverage of Religion and Security: A Nigerian Case Study", she stated "that Nigeria is experiencing an increase in politics of identity based on religion and ethnicity, among other things, with an ongoing characteristic of a "we" against "them" mental map as a result of the state's failure to act as an economic or emancipatory actor". This is true because religious and ethnic conflict has been the base of conflict uprising since the inception of Nigeria.

In another study by (Celestine Verlumun Gever 2018) "Analysis of Foreign and Local Broadcast Media Coverage of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria", he cited Wilkinson (2002, p. 195) in Joogi, (n. d) stating that "there are some concrete ways that the broadcast media might monitor terrorist activity: Television channels can broadcast public warnings from the

authorities as well as advice on behave in perilous circumstances; responsible and accurate reporting of occurrences would improve public awareness of strange packages, suspicious people, and suspicious behavior; Broadcasting networks have been the best platforms for in-depth discussions of both the political and social effects of terrorist activity in addition to for the development of suitable strategies as well as defensive measures. Broadcast media outlets as well as their print counterpart can remind authorities that the response to terrorism should comply with the rule of law, basic rights, and requirements of social justice".This is true because it is the job of the media to work in favor of the people to ensure peace by reminding the government of what they should do in times of religious conflict.

According to (Pauline Mark Lere, 2009),It is important to note that the reports on religious conflicts paralyze the nation. Fearing a religious crisis, residents of the southern states who were previously residing in the north began to relocate south. The same applied to northerners who chose to remain in the South. Cases of relocation of religious has been reported and most cases affect the economic stability of the state as awhole. In a report by(Odo Emmanuel Nduka,Ogbonna Odinaka Doris, Ogwuche, Godwin Abu and Uzoka, Paul Ifeanyi, 2010) in a study on "Content Analytical Study of Ethno-Religious Crisis in Jos January to May (2010)" stated that religious conflict can lead to economic degradation, environmental degradation, loss of life, property, genocide, and torture, if not tackled by the government leads to bad governance which affects the image of the country.