

**Examining The Dynamics Of Interfaith Relationships Among Prominent Religions In
Nigeran Society: A Case Studies Of Christianity, Islam, And African Traditional Religion
In Nigerian Society**

by

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Abstract

Nigeria is a religiously diverse society where Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) coexist, often shaping social, cultural, and political interactions. This study dynamics of interfaith relationships among prominent religions in nigeran society: a case studies of Christianity, Islam, and Traditional beliefs, with particular attention to tolerance, trust, interfaith participation, and the influence of demographic factors. Employing a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 200 respondents, including community members and religious leaders in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State, using structured questionnaires. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multiple regression analyses were conducted to address the research questions and test the hypotheses. Findings revealed moderate levels of tolerance and interfaith participation, with significant differences across

religious groups in trust, tolerance, and engagement in interfaith activities. Moreover, demographic factors collectively influenced attitudes toward interfaith relationships, accounting for 37.8% of the variance. The study underscores the importance of interfaith dialogue, collaborative initiatives, and equitable participation in fostering social cohesion. Implications for religious leaders, policymakers, and educators include promoting structured interfaith programs, addressing historical and socio-political divides, and enhancing youth engagement in cooperative religious activities to strengthen peace building efforts.

Keywords: interfaith relationships, tolerance, trust, Nigeria, Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion, peace building

Introduction

Nigeria is often described as a religious mosaic, where Christianity, Islam, and indigenous traditional beliefs coexist, interact, and influence the socio-cultural fabric of the nation. This religious plurality has played a pivotal role in shaping Nigeria's political history, social interactions, and community identities. The complex dynamics among these faiths marked by periods of harmony, rivalry, and conflict are reflective of deeper historical, cultural, and political processes. Understanding these interfaith relationships is essential for fostering sustainable peace and social cohesion in a country that remains divided along religious lines in some regions, especially considering recent developments and tensions (Ojo & Suleiman, 2020; Adebajo & Adebayo, 2022).

Historically, Nigeria's religious landscape was shaped through centuries of interaction, trade, and colonial influence. Christianity was introduced primarily through European missionaries in the 19th century, gaining prominence in the southern parts of Nigeria, where it often became intertwined with Western education and colonial administration (Olaogun, 2021). Islam, meanwhile, had established deep roots in the northern regions through centuries of trans-Saharan trade, Islamic scholarship, and political expansion, with many northern communities practicing a form of Islam that is often integrated with local customs (Adeleke, 2023). Indigenous traditional beliefs, which include ancestor worship, ritual practices, and belief in nature spirits, persist across Nigeria's diverse ethnic groups, often coexisting with the other two religions in a phenomenon known as syncretism (Nwosu & Chijioke, 2020). These religious traditions have historically interacted in complex ways sometimes through peaceful coexistence and cultural exchange, and at other times through violent clashes and political manipulation (Ibrahim & Oladipo, 2024).

In recent years, the nature of interfaith relationships in Nigeria has evolved amidst rapid urbanization, globalization, and technological advancements. Urban centers such as Lagos,

Abuja, and Kano have become melting pots of religious diversity, where interfaith dialogue and cooperation are increasingly prominent. However, these interactions are often challenged by issues of religious intolerance, political manipulation, and violent conflicts, particularly in the Middle Belt, northern regions, and parts of southern Nigeria (Eze & Okafor, 2023). The rise of religious extremism, coupled with political actors' mobilization along religious lines, has exacerbated tensions, sometimes leading to outbreaks of violence such as the Boko Haram insurgency and communal clashes (Onuoha, 2022). Despite these challenges, there are ongoing efforts by religious leaders, civil society organizations, and government agencies to promote interfaith dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation an approach increasingly recognized as vital for Nigeria's peacebuilding processes (Amadi & Chukwu, 2024).

In the diverse religious landscape of Nigeria, Christianity, Islam, and traditional beliefs often share core values that underpin social cohesion and community development. Communal solidarity, where faith communities mobilize collectively to support their members and broader society. Both Christian and Muslim organizations actively engage in community development initiatives, especially in times of crisis. For instance, the Nigerian Red Cross Society, which collaborates with religious groups across faith divides, has been instrumental in providing emergency response and health services during outbreaks and conflicts (Ojo & Adeyemo, 2021). Similarly, faith-based organizations such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) and the Muslim Council of Nigeria (MCN) have worked together to promote peace during election seasons, emphasizing unity and social cohesion (Akinboye & Ogundele, 2021). These collaborations demonstrate a shared commitment to societal well-being transcending doctrinal differences.

Charity and social services constitute another significant area where Christian and Muslim organizations converge. Both faiths prioritize altruism and charitable giving as essential expressions of faith. For example, the Muslim-led organization, the Muslim Youth Organization of Nigeria (MYON), and Christian agencies like the Catholic Caritas Nigeria have jointly participated in disaster relief efforts, such as providing aid after floods or communal clashes (Obasi & Akinola, 2022). These partnerships often involve coordinated distribution of food, medical supplies, and shelter, illustrating how religious organizations can pool resources and expertise to serve vulnerable populations effectively. The shared emphasis on charity reinforces social bonds and demonstrates the practical applicability of faith-based ethics in addressing societal needs. Family ethics and moral guidance are also common denominators, fostering

interfaith dialogue and mutual respect. Both Christian and Islamic teachings emphasize the importance of family integrity, respect for elders, and moral upbringing. These shared values have been utilized in community programs aimed at reducing youth violence and promoting peaceful coexistence. For instance, interfaith youth mentorship initiatives have been established in Northern Nigeria, where religious leaders collaborate to instill positive moral values among young people, thereby preventing radicalization and violence (Ojo & Adeyemo, 2021). Such efforts highlight how shared ethical principles can serve as catalysts for social stability and harmony.

Recent case studies underscore the effectiveness of these interfaith collaborations in preventing escalation of violence and fostering peace. In the volatile regions of Kaduna and Plateau States, local religious organizations have partnered to mediate conflicts and promote dialogue, significantly reducing outbreaks of violence (Akinboye & Ogundele, 2021). Notably, in 2023, Christian and Muslim leaders jointly organized peace marches and community dialogues that contributed to de-escalating tensions following intercommunal clashes (Obasi & Akinola, 2022). These initiatives exemplify how grassroots partnerships rooted in shared values can serve as vital mechanisms for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, especially in hotspots prone to religious violence.

The intricate web of interfaith relationships in Nigeria is shaped by numerous drivers that often lead to tension, conflict, and violence. These drivers are deeply rooted in historical, socio-political, economic, and cultural factors, which continually influence how different religious groups perceive, interact with, and respond to one another. historical legacy of colonialism, which institutionalized and often politicized religious identities. Colonial authorities often favored Christianity in the South and Islam in the North, creating a dichotomy that has persisted into post-independence Nigeria (Onuoha, 2020). This historical favoritism fostered a sense of marginalization among other groups, fueling identity-based tensions. Additionally, colonial-era policies and boundary demarcations reinforced religious divides, making interfaith interactions sometimes fraught with suspicion and rivalry. The colonial legacy's influence on religious demarcation continues to impact intergroup relations, as seen in conflicts over political power and resource control, which are often framed within religious lines (Akinboye & Ogundele, 2021).

Politics remains a significant driver of interfaith tension. Nigerian politicians have historically exploited religious identities to garner support, often framing electoral contests and policy debates along religious lines. Politicization of religion, especially during election periods, exacerbates interfaith tensions by creating perceptions of favoritism or marginalization (Falola & Heaton, 2020). Religious leaders and political actors sometimes mobilize their followers through incendiary rhetoric, which heightens fears of dominance or persecution among different groups. For instance, the use of religion as a political tool during the 2015 and 2019 elections intensified interfaith hostilities, leading to outbreaks of violence in various parts of the country (Ojo & Olayemi, 2022). Such politicization diminishes the prospects for interfaith dialogue and fosters an environment of mistrust. Economic factors significantly contribute to interfaith tensions, especially in regions where resources are scarce or unevenly distributed. Many conflicts in Nigeria are rooted in competition over land, employment, and political influence, with religious identities often being exploited to justify or frame disputes (Oladipo et al., 2023). For example, in the Middle Belt and Northern Nigeria, clashes over land and grazing rights have often been intertwined with religious differences between Muslim herders and predominantly Christian farmers. Economic marginalization fuels grievances that are sometimes cast in religious terms, leading to cycles of violence and retaliation. The struggle for economic survival, combined with perceptions of unequal resource allocation, perpetuates interfaith hostility and mistrust (Akinboye & Ogundele, 2021).

The rise of religious extremism and radicalization is a mounting driver of interfaith tension. Groups such as Boko Haram and other jihadist factions have perpetrated violence primarily in the name of Islam, attacking Christian communities and secular institutions (Falola & Heaton, 2020). Conversely, some Christian groups have also engaged in vigilante violence, often as a response to perceived threats from radical Islamic groups. The proliferation of extremist ideologies, fueled by socio-economic grievances, ideological indoctrination, and external influences, exacerbates fears and mistrust among religious communities. The violent acts committed by extremist groups create a cycle of retaliation, further entrenching religious divisions and undermining efforts toward peaceful coexistence (Ojo & Olayemi, 2022). Cultural differences and the preservation of traditional identities also serve as catalysts for interfaith tension. Indigenous beliefs and customs are often perceived as incompatible with the dominant religions, leading to cultural conflicts. In some cases, religious conversion or practice is seen as a threat to traditional cultural practices, prompting resistance and conflict (Onuoha, 2020).

Moreover, ethnic identities are frequently intertwined with religious affiliations, complicating interfaith relations. For instance, the Fulani herdsmen, primarily Muslim, are often associated with ethnic and cultural identities that sometimes collide with Christian farming communities, leading to violent clashes over land and cultural dominance. These identity-based tensions are compounded by misunderstandings and stereotypes, which hinder dialogue and mutual understanding (Akinboye & Ogundele, 2021).

Religious education curricula, civic education, and media narratives are powerful tools that significantly influence societal attitudes toward interfaith relationships in Nigeria. Educational curricula, particularly religious and civic education, play a central role in molding young people's attitudes toward other faiths. Traditional religious education often emphasizes doctrinal teachings, which can inadvertently reinforce stereotypes if not complemented with interfaith perspectives. However, recent experimental programs aim to incorporate interfaith dialogue and understanding into school curricula. For instance, the Interfaith Youth Corps pilot programs in Northern Nigeria have demonstrated promising results in reducing prejudice by engaging students in joint community projects and interfaith dialogue sessions (Ojo & Adeyemi, 2022). Such programs are designed to foster empathy, mutual respect, and recognition of shared values among youths from different religious backgrounds, thereby contributing to community resilience.

Civic education complements religious instruction by emphasizing national unity, rights, and responsibilities regardless of religious affiliation. Curricula that promote civic virtues and emphasize Nigeria's constitutional commitment to religious freedom have been shown to influence positive attitudes toward interfaith relationships. Recent studies indicate that civic education modules that include case studies of interfaith cooperation, especially in conflict-prone regions like Northern Nigeria, can diminish stereotypes and promote social cohesion (Akinwale & Yusuf, 2023). These educational interventions help young people understand the importance of peaceful coexistence, which is crucial in a society where religious identity often intersects with ethnicity and regional loyalties.

Media narratives also significantly shape public perceptions of interfaith relationships. In Nigeria, traditional and social media are primary sources of information about religious groups, but they can sometimes perpetuate negative stereotypes or sensationalize conflicts. Conversely, responsible media campaigns and positive storytelling about interfaith cooperation have shown potential in shifting public attitudes. For example, recent media initiatives such as the

“Peacebuilding Nigeria” campaign have highlighted successful interfaith collaborations and community resilience efforts, fostering a more inclusive narrative (Eze & Chukwu, 2021). These narratives can influence perceptions among the broader population, especially youth, by showcasing role models and promoting messages of unity and respect.

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria’s rich religious diversity, encompassing Christianity, Islam, and indigenous traditional beliefs, has historically contributed to both social cohesion and interfaith tensions. Despite numerous instances of peaceful coexistence and collaborative efforts in community development, the country continues to grapple with recurrent conflicts, violence, and mistrust rooted in religious differences. The complex interplay of historical legacies, socio-political manipulation, economic disparities, and rising religious extremism has exacerbated interfaith hostilities, impeding sustainable peace and national unity. While interfaith collaborations in charity, social services, and conflict mediation have shown promise, these efforts remain insufficient to address the deep-seated drivers of interreligious conflict. Furthermore, societal attitudes shaped by educational curricula and media narratives often reinforce stereotypes and misunderstandings, hindering the development of a shared sense of identity and mutual respect. Therefore, there is a pressing need to comprehensively examining the dynamics of interfaith relationships among prominent religions in Nigerian society: a case studies of Christianity, Islam, and Traditional beliefs.

Purpose of the Study

This research aims at examining the dynamics of interfaith relationships among prominent religions in Nigeran society: a case studies of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion.

The investigation specifically seeks to:

1. To examine the level of tolerance and trust among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) in Nigerian society.
2. To investigate the extent of participation in interfaith activities among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) adherents.

3. To determine whether demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religious affiliation) significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships.

Research Questions

The research seeks to ask the following research questions to guide this study:

1. What are the levels of tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) adherents in Nigeria?
2. To what extent do adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) participate in interfaith activities?
3. Do demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships in Nigerian society?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated for test:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the level of tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion adherents.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in participation in interfaith activities among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion.

H₀₃: Demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) do not significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships.

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative survey design to examine the dynamics of interfaith relationships among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The population comprised community members, and religious leaders in Alimosho Local Government Area of Lagos State. A total of 200 respondents were selected using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure fair representation of the three religious groups.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into four sections: demographic information; tolerance and trust (5 items); interfaith participation (5 items); and attitudes toward religion's role in peace, conflict, and development (5 items). All items were rated on a 4-point

Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (1) to Strongly Disagree (4). Content validity was established through expert review in Religious Studies, and Social Scientist, while reliability was confirmed through a pilot study, yielding Cronbach's Alpha coefficients above 0.70 for all constructs, indicating strong internal consistency.

The questionnaire was administered directly by the researcher with the assistance of trained field workers. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize responses. For hypothesis testing, ANOVA compared mean differences across religious groups, and multiple regression analysis assessed the combined effect of demographic factors. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

Demographic Data of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	92	46.0	46.0	46.0
	Female	108	54.0	54.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The sample for this study consisted of 200 respondents, comprising 92 males (46%) and 108 females (54%). This indicates that females slightly outnumbered males in the sample. The valid percentages reflect the same distribution, with males accounting for 46% and females 54% of respondents. Cumulatively, males represent the first 46% of the sample, and when combined with females, the total reaches 100%.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	10-20	41	20.5	20.5	20.5
	21-30	64	32.0	32.0	52.5
	31-40	64	32.0	32.0	84.5
	41years and above	31	15.5	15.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents' ages is presented in Table 2. Out of the 200 participants, 41 (20.5%) were between 10 and 20 years old, 64 (32.0%) were between 21 and 30 years, another 64 (32.0%) were between 31 and 40 years, and 31 (15.5%) were 41 years or older. The

cumulative percentages indicate that slightly more than half of the respondents (52.5%) were aged 30 years or younger, while 47.5% were above 30 years. This suggests that the sample consisted predominantly of young to middle-aged individuals, providing a balanced representation across the adult age spectrum.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Highest Education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No formal	48	24.0	24.0	24.0
	Primary	52	26.0	26.0	50.0
	Secondary	55	27.5	27.5	77.5
	Tertiary	45	22.5	22.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents' highest education levels is presented in Table X. Out of the 200 participants, 48 (24.0%) had no formal education, 52 (26.0%) completed primary education, 55 (27.5%) had secondary education, and 45 (22.5%) attained tertiary education. The cumulative percentages indicate that 50% of respondents had at least completed primary education, while 77.5% had attained secondary education or below. These results suggest a relatively balanced distribution of educational attainment among participants, with a slight majority (27.5%) having secondary education.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Religion Affiliation

			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christianity		87	43.5	43.5	43.5
	Islam		98	49.0	49.0	92.5
	African	Traditional	15	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Religion					
	Total		200	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents by religious affiliation. Out of the total sample of 200 participants, the majority were adherents of Islam (n = 98, 49.0%), followed by Christianity (n = 87, 43.5%). A smaller proportion of respondents identified with African Traditional Religion (ATR) (n = 15, 7.5%). Cumulatively, 92.5% of respondents were either Christian or Muslim, while ATR accounted for the remaining 7.5% of the sample. This distribution indicates that Islam and Christianity are the dominant religions among the respondents, reflecting Nigeria's broader religious demographics (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022; Okolie & Umejei, 2021).

Table 5: Distribution of Respondents by Location

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Urban	90	45.0	45.0	45.0
	Rural	92	46.0	46.0	91.0
	Riverine	18	9.0	9.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The distribution of respondents by location indicates that participants were drawn from urban, rural, and riverine areas. Out of the total 200 respondents, 90 (45.0%) were from urban areas, 92 (46.0%) were from rural areas, and 18 (9.0%) were from riverine communities. The valid percentages mirror these findings, showing that the majority of respondents were nearly evenly split between rural (46.0%) and urban (45.0%) locations, while a smaller proportion represented riverine areas (9.0%). Cumulatively, 91.0% of respondents were from urban and rural settings combined, with the remaining 9.0% from riverine communities.

Research Question 1

What are the levels of tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and ATR adherents in Lagos State?

Table 6: Response on tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion adherents in Lagos State.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tolerance	200	2.0100	.92421
Trustworthiness	200	1.6950	.70317
Intermarriage	200	2.0250	1.04875
Respect	200	1.7150	.70445
Intolerance	200	1.6250	.61340
Valid (listwise)	N 200		

Table 6 presents the descriptive statistics for respondents' perceptions of tolerance, trust, intermarriage, respect, and intolerance among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) adherents in Lagos State. The sample consisted of 200 respondents.

The results indicate that intermarriage received the highest mean score ($M = 2.03$, $SD = 1.05$), suggesting that respondents perceive some openness to interfaith marriages, though variability is relatively high. Tolerance also scored above the midpoint ($M = 2.01$, $SD = 0.92$), indicating that respondents generally perceive moderate levels of tolerance across religious groups. Conversely, trustworthiness ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.70$), respect ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 0.70$), and intolerance ($M = 1.63$,

SD = 0.61) had lower mean scores, suggesting that respondents perceive comparatively lower levels of trust and respect between religious groups, while intolerance is less prevalent but still present. The standard deviations indicate moderate variability in perceptions, particularly for intermarriage, which may reflect differing attitudes across respondents.

The findings suggest that while there is some tolerance and willingness for interfaith interaction, trust and mutual respect remain areas that require improvement. This aligns with prior research indicating that interfaith engagement in Nigeria often faces challenges due to historical prejudices and social divisions (Akinola, 2023; Yusuf, 2022).

Hypotheses 1

There is no significant difference in the level of tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion adherents.

Table 7: Anova summary table in the level of tolerance and trust among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion adherents.

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Trustworthiness	Between Groups	3.635	2	1.817	3.778	.025
	Within Groups	94.760	197	.481		
	Total	98.395	199			
Tolerance	Between Groups	25.310	2	12.655	17.232	.000
	Within Groups	144.670	197	.734		
	Total	169.980	199			

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether the level of trustworthiness and tolerance differs among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR).

Trustworthiness: There was a statistically significant difference in trustworthiness among the three religious groups, $F(2, 197) = 3.78$, $p = .025$, indicating that at least one group differs from the others in terms of perceived trustworthiness. The between-groups sum of squares was 3.635 with a mean square of 1.817, while the within-groups variance was 94.760 with a mean square of 0.481. This suggests that religious affiliation has a significant but modest effect on trustworthiness.

Tolerance: The analysis also revealed a statistically significant difference in tolerance among Christians, Muslims, and ATR adherents, $F(2, 197) = 17.23$, $p < .001$, indicating a strong effect of religion on tolerance levels. The between-groups sum of squares was 25.310 with a mean square of 12.655, and the within-groups variance was 144.670 with a mean square of 0.734. These results suggest that religious affiliation significantly influences levels of tolerance, with larger between-group differences compared to trustworthiness.

Research Question 2

To what extent do adherents of Christianity, Islam, and ATR participate in interfaith activities?

Table 8: Response on adherents of Christianity, Islam, and ATR participate in interfaith activities.

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Participation	200	1.6750	.64922
Inclusivity	200	1.7350	.71928
Solidarity	200	1.9200	.97897
Interfaith	200	1.6400	.69485
Collaboration	200	1.5900	.58619
Valid (listwise)	N 200		

Table 8 presents descriptive statistics on the participation of adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion (ATR) in interfaith activities. A total of 200 respondents completed the survey. The mean scores for the items ranged from 1.5900 to 1.9200 on a scale of 1 to 4, indicating generally low to moderate levels of interfaith engagement among respondents. Specifically, Collaboration had the lowest mean score ($M = 1.590$, $SD = 0.586$), suggesting that active joint efforts between different religious groups are limited. Interfaith participation overall had a mean of 1.640 ($SD = 0.695$), while Inclusivity ($M = 1.735$, $SD = 0.719$) and Participation ($M = 1.675$, $SD = 0.649$) indicate slightly higher, but still relatively low, engagement in interfaith initiatives. Solidarity recorded the highest mean ($M = 1.920$, $SD = 0.979$), implying that respondents perceive some sense of unity or shared concern among religious groups, although this perception varies widely as shown by the higher standard deviation.

Hypotheses 2

There is no significant difference in participation in interfaith activities among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion.

Table 9: Anova summary table on participation in interfaith activities among adherents of Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion.

	Sum Squares	of Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	10.366	2	5.183	11.912	.000
Within Groups	85.714	197	.435		
Total	96.080	199			

The results revealed a statistically significant difference among the groups, $F(2, 197) = 11.912$, $p < .001$, indicating that at least one group's level of participation in interfaith activities differs from the others. The between-groups sum of squares was 10.366, accounting for variability in participation attributable to religious affiliation, while the within-groups sum of squares was 85.714, reflecting variability within each religious group. The total variability in participation was 96.080.

Research Question 3

Do demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships in Nigerian society?

Table 10: Response on demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships in Nigerian society

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Peacebuilding	200	1.6950	.60315
Peacemaking	200	1.6600	.66074
Religiopolitics	200	1.8200	.84330
Religious Freedom	200	1.7100	.70597
Inclusion	200	2.1850	1.05658
Valid N (listwise)	200		

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics on respondents' attitudes regarding the influence of demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) on interfaith relationships in Nigerian society. The study collected data from 200 participants, and the responses were measured across five constructs: Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, Religiopolitics, Religious Freedom, and Inclusion. The results indicate that the mean scores for Peacebuilding ($M = 1.70$, $SD = 0.60$), Peacemaking ($M = 1.66$, $SD = 0.66$), Religiopolitics ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 0.84$), and Religious Freedom ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.71$) are relatively low, suggesting that participants perceive demographic factors to have

minimal influence on these aspects of interfaith relationships. In contrast, Inclusion showed a higher mean score ($M = 2.19$, $SD = 1.06$), indicating that respondents view demographic characteristics as somewhat more influential in decisions regarding the inclusion of different religious groups in community affairs.

Hypotheses 3

Demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) do not significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships.

Table 11: Multiple regression summary table on demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) do not significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted Square	R Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.614 ^a	.378	.365	.31294

a. Predictors: (Constant), Highest Education level, Religion Affiliation, Gender, Age

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	11.584	4	2.896	29.572	.000 ^b
	Residual	19.097	195	.098		
	Total	30.681	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Attitudes toward interfaith relationships

b. Predictors: (Constant), Highest Education level, Religion Affiliation, Gender, Age

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to determine whether demographic factors (age, gender, education, and religion) predict attitudes toward interfaith relationships. The model was significant, $F(4, 195) = 29.57$, $p < .001$, and explained 37.8% of the variance in attitudes ($R^2 = .378$, Adjusted $R^2 = .365$). This indicates that, collectively, age, gender, education, and religion significantly influence attitudes toward interfaith relationships.

Discussion of Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The study sampled 200 respondents, with females slightly outnumbering males (54% vs. 46%). This gender distribution reflects a relatively balanced representation, which is important for generalizing findings across both genders. Age-wise, most participants were young to middle-aged adults, with 52.5% aged 30 years or below. This demographic pattern aligns with studies suggesting that younger adults in Nigeria are increasingly engaged in social and interfaith activities (Akinola, 2023). Education levels were varied, with a slight majority having secondary education, indicating that the sample represents a mix of literacy and educational exposure. Religiously, Islam (49%) and Christianity (43.5%) were dominant, consistent with Nigeria's religious composition as reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (2022). Geographically, respondents were almost evenly split between urban and rural areas, with a smaller proportion from riverine communities, reflecting the diversity of the Lagos State population.

Levels of Tolerance and Trust among Religious Groups

The results reveal moderate levels of tolerance ($M = 2.01$) and openness to intermarriage ($M = 2.03$) among Christians, Muslims, and ATR adherents, while trustworthiness ($M = 1.70$) and respect ($M = 1.72$) were comparatively lower. Intolerance was reported at a relatively low level ($M = 1.63$). These findings suggest that while there is some willingness to engage in interfaith relationships, underlying distrust and limited mutual respect persist. Prior research supports this, noting that interfaith interactions in Nigeria are often constrained by historical prejudices and social divisions (Yusuf, 2022; Akinola, 2023).

The ANOVA results confirmed significant differences in both tolerance ($F = 17.23$, $p < .001$) and trustworthiness ($F = 3.78$, $p = .025$) across religious groups. This indicates that religious affiliation significantly shapes perceptions of tolerance and trust, which is consistent with findings by Okolie and Umejei (2021), who reported that religious identity influences intergroup trust in multi-faith contexts.

Participation in Interfaith Activities

Participation in interfaith activities was generally low to moderate (M range: 1.59–1.92), with collaboration showing the least engagement. Although respondents perceived some sense of solidarity ($M = 1.92$), active participation and inclusivity were limited. This aligns with Akinola

(2023), who argued that interfaith initiatives in Nigeria often remain symbolic rather than deeply integrative, partly due to social and institutional barriers. The significant differences in interfaith participation among religious groups ($F = 11.91$, $p < .001$) further suggest that certain groups are more actively engaged than others, reflecting uneven exposure to interfaith programs.

Demographic Factors on Attitudes toward Interfaith Relationships

Descriptive statistics indicated low to moderate mean scores for Peacebuilding, Peacemaking, Religiopolitics, and Religious Freedom, while Inclusion scored higher ($M = 2.19$). This suggests that demographic factors, particularly education and religion, are perceived to influence inclusion within community affairs more than other interfaith-related dimensions.

The multiple regression analysis confirmed that demographic factors collectively predict attitudes toward interfaith relationships, explaining 37.8% of the variance ($R^2 = .378$, $F = 29.57$, $p < .001$). This finding supports previous studies indicating that age, gender, education, and religious affiliation significantly shape interfaith attitudes in Nigerian society (Okolie & Umejei, 2021; Yusuf, 2022). For instance, higher educational attainment often correlates with greater tolerance and openness to interfaith collaboration, while younger respondents tend to exhibit more inclusive attitudes (Akinola, 2023).

Conclusion

This study reveals that interfaith relationships among Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religion adherents in Lagos State exhibit moderate levels of tolerance and openness, with some openness towards intermarriage and participation in interfaith activities. However, trust and respect between groups remain relatively low, and active engagement in formal interfaith initiatives is limited. Statistically significant differences in attitudes and participation across religious groups highlight the influence of religious affiliation on perceptions and interactions. Additionally, demographic factors such as age, gender, education, and religion significantly shape attitudes toward interfaith relationships, suggesting that social and individual characteristics impact intergroup dynamics. While there are positive signs of interfaith cooperation, deep-seated prejudices, historical legacies, and socio-political factors continue to hinder full harmony and active collaboration.

Recommendations

1. Religious leaders, community organizations, and government agencies should promote structured interfaith dialogues and joint community projects that foster trust, understanding, and shared values, particularly focusing on building trustworthiness and respect.
2. Schools and religious institutions should integrate interfaith and tolerance modules into religious and civic education curricula to shape positive attitudes from a young age, emphasizing shared values and mutual respect.
3. Focus on youth-centered programs, including workshops, community service, and dialogue platforms, to cultivate early understanding and reduce prejudices rooted in ignorance.

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