

## Religious Diversity and Socio-Economic Development in Southwest Nigeria

**ACHUGO, Eusebius**

Department of Management and Entrepreneurial Studies  
Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti.  
Email: [achugo\\_e@yahoo.com](mailto:achugo_e@yahoo.com)

**ADETAYO, Hezekiah O.**

Department of Business Administration,  
Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti.  
Email: [oluwafemi.adetayo@eksu.edu.ng](mailto:oluwafemi.adetayo@eksu.edu.ng)

**ONASANYA, Opeyemi O.**

Department of Management and Entrepreneurial Studies  
Afe Babalola University Ado-Ekiti.  
Corresponding author: [opeyemionasanya@gmail.com](mailto:opeyemionasanya@gmail.com)

DOI: [10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no11.2023.pg38.66](https://doi.org/10.56201/ijssmr.v9.no11.2023.pg38.66)

---

### **Abstract**

*Diversity management shares an important link with Socio-economic development. Religious diversity as a type of diversity also has a link with socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria. The study investigated the effect of religious diversity on the socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria. Regression analytical method was used to measure the effect of the parameters (religious diversity) which is the independent variable on the dependent variable (socio-economic development) which was measured with indicators like foreign and local investments, employment opportunities, quality education, good social amenities, higher life expectancy and personal safety using SPSS version 20.*

*The reliability coefficient of research instrument was obtained using Cronbach-alpha. Cross-sectional/descriptive research design was adopted. The primary data was collected from five (5) MDAs of 1,571 population using a structured questionnaire from which a sample size of 400 was determined using Taro Yamane 1967. Result shows that religious diversity has a significantly positive effect on socio-economic development of southwest Nigeria. The study recommended that Religious tolerance should be propagated among all Nigerians.*

---

**Keywords:** *Diversity, Diversity Management, Religious Diversity, Socio-economic development*

---

## **1.1 Background**

Nigeria is a multi-religious nation as she harbours several faiths and beliefs in her environment. Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion are the three major faiths in Nigeria. Both Islam and Christianity claim to be the universal faiths for humankind irrespective of their race, culture and language while African Traditional Religion are the total sum of faith attached to a particular family in an African milieu. As a result of this development, both Islam and Christianity have survived, pushing, in many cases, the African Traditional Religious groups to the defensive position and thereby reducing their membership to minority (Adegoke 2008). However, Nigerians are naturally religious from the initial stage of their existence, before the advent of Christianity and Islam. They had their own form of indigenous African Traditional Religion (ATR) through which they worshipped and adored the God in line with their cultural background. When Islam and Christianity came to them from Arabian and European countries in the tenth and nineteenth centuries respectively, some of them embraced either of these faiths. This religion has now become a tool used by the political class in Nigeria to manipulate the people to their own advantage.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The controversial debate about how to explain religious plurality and its impacts has spanned more than three decades. For a long time a common assumption was that religious diversity decreases vitality. This supposition was exemplified by Peter L. Berger's (1967) argument that religious plurality would increase uncertainty or even indifference because it undermines the 'plausibility' of religion. This would consequently lead to a loss of belief and decreasing participation rates. According to Amara and Kanayo (2015), the level of religious unrest in Nigeria is so intense that the seemingly efforts toward tackling socio-economic and political challenges in Nigeria appear illusive. A lot of religious divides have bedevilled Nigeria and to a considerable extent shake its bounds of unity and development. However, it is glaringly clear that most of the conflicts in Nigeria have religious undertone. At different levels, people have experienced religious discrimination; people complain of past and present religious marginalization, people demand for religious or rights in their states. Worst of all, states use religion in political discourse and action". Little wonder therefore, that Nigeria has not been able to produce right leaders who operate above religious sentiments and interests. Previous elections have been characterized by religious inclination rather than the impeccability and credibility of the candidates.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

The objective of the study is to examine the effect of religious diversity on socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria.

## **1.4 Hypothesis of the study**

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Religious Diversity has no significant effect on socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcome of this research has provide information to the citizens of Nigeria on how to value and respect our differences. Also, the study has provided information to the Government and citizens of Nigeria on the importance of religious diversity management on the socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria and by extension Nigeria. It has pointed out areas where personal interest has been used to jeopardize the socio-economic development of our nation. And on the long run will translate into a better life, better life expectancy, personal safety and higher gross domestic product with its positive impact on the social status and wellbeing of the citizen.

**Policy Makers:** This study will help the Government, agencies of government and the parliament at the helms of affairs to make laws that will help in managing our differences and enhancing religious tolerance among citizens.

## 1.6 Operational Definition of Terms

**Diversity:** Diversity refers to the unique qualities that make a person, community or society different from another which may include religion, culture and language, etc.

**Religious Diversity:** This is a chosen way of worship by a group of people who tend to believe in the same god and doctrine which differs from other people's belief and mode of worship.

**Gross Domestic Product:** This is the monetary value/worth of a Country's economy over a period of time. The gross domestic product of a country is one of the yardsticks used to measure the economic development of a country.

**Managing Diversity:** This is making use of differences in religion, culture, language, social class etc. to achieve a positive outcome, controlling these differences to achieve growth and development.

**Management:** This is a coordinating process intentionally put in place in other to achieve a set goal or target.

**Socio-economic Development:** This is having a better social life and better economic situation within a country. Citizens enjoying good health facility, good road, good education and improvement in the Gross Domestic Product of the country. A country is said to enjoy economic growth when a better percentage of her citizens are living above poverty level, which is their ability to meet their basic needs.

## 2.0 Conceptual Clarification

### 2.1 Diversity Management

Diversity is a term used to describe a trait of a group or organization. It reveals the extent to which individuals within the group differ from one another either objectively or subjectively (Knippenberg, Homan, Van Kleef & Schippers, 2007). Diversity is conceptualized in terms of group characteristics rather than personal traits, focusing on how group members' differences influence group performance rather than how being unique has an impact on an individual's functioning (Chattopadhyay, George, & Lawrence, 2004). Castania (2003) proposed the

definition of diversity as including distinctions in age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental capabilities, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practice, and other aspects of human nature that makes them unique or differ from others. Diversity, according to the Office of Equity and Inclusion Oregon Health Authority (2020), is the recognition of individual differences, including those related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other ideologies. This implies that diversity has the capacity to make or mar the socio-economic development of a group of people. Thus, the diverse ethnic groups' cohabiting in south-west, Nigeria need to be properly managed and harnessed in order to enhance the socio-economic development of the area.

Moreover, Seliverstova (2021) who systematically reviewed several literatures on diversity management in the workplace was able to extract four major definitions of diversity management from the volume of literatures she examined. One of which is, diversity management is seen as the management of the individual differences among personnel so as to ameliorate the performance of an organisation. Secondly, it can be seen as the respect or consideration of the characteristics of an individual in terms of workplace equality and discrimination. This second definition means that diversity management is considered being the ability to respect the different inherent attributes of individuals in a workplace which is exemplified in non-discrimination, fairness and justice. The third definition is that diversity management alludes to taking into account individual variations in order to establish favourable working circumstances and improve organisational performance. This definition implies that when working conditions, structures and processes are put in a way that people's differences are taken into consideration for better organisational performance, diversity management is said to occur. Finally, the fourth definition simply states that diversity management is the individual variations existing in a workforce.

In the view of Yadav and Lenka (2020), diversity management is a way of thinking about how to increase the effectiveness of a diverse workforce while fostering growth among people of various gender, races, nationalities, cultures, educational levels and backgrounds to grow together. According to Uzochukwu, Uzoamaka, and Robert (2021), diversity management does not imply restricting, suppressing, or suffocating the differences of individuals; rather, it entails the recognition of the value of every facet of the individual differences and capitalising on its potential. It can also be defined as voluntary or wilful actions of an organisation aimed at forming a wider inclusion of personnel from different backgrounds into formal and informal organisational structures through purposeful policies and programs.

Consequent upon the foregoing definitions, diversity management can therefore be defined as the recognition and consideration of individual differences when formulating policies, enacting structures and designing work processes in a way that encourages or promotes equity, justice and fairness amongst all so as to ensure improved organisational performance. In other words, it can be seen as the structures put in place to ensure people of different ages, sexual orientation, religion, culture, etc. feel equally, fairly and justly treated so as to improve the performance of an organisation

## **2.2 Religious Diversity**

The relationship between people and their Creator is shaped or in some way determined by religion, according to Kuna's 2005 analysis. Religion gives meaning to universal events like life, sorrow, despair, and death. It also gives people and organizations a place to belong or a "root" in the vast array of phenomena that surround them. As a result, it addresses worship in

the same way as it does morality, ideology, and institutional action frameworks. The sum of these components calls attention to the concept of membership or community, a group of believers who share an institutionally objectified and ideologically justified worldview. This is true, as well as the fact that it is a coherent set of ideals that provides a "anchor to human life and religion serves as a significant identification, a framework for identity, a foundation for membership, and a powerful tool for mobilization in human life.

The ease with which the political class in Nigeria exploits any type of identity to seize state power or public office is one of its most intriguing features. The usage of ethnicity was once prevalent, and where ethnicity doesn't seem to be taking off, religious sentiments are exploited (Omilusi, 2015). Nigeria is more divided now than it has ever been along sectarian and religious lines as historically recorded. However, in this study, Religious diversity will be discussed with respect to the south-west people of Nigeria.

### **Religious Diversity in Southwest, Nigeria**

There are three major religion in south-west, Nigeria. They are Christianity, Islam and Traditional religion. In the past, before colonization, the Yoruba people of the south-west are majorly traditionalists, worshipping ifa, ogun, sango, oya, obatala, etc. (Bascom, 1969). But today, a sizable number of Yoruba ethnic group/people have converted to both Islam and Christianity. In south-west Nigeria, the last census that captured religious affiliation was conducted in 1963 and which was the last till date shows that there are approximately equal numbers of Christians and Muslim in the south-west Nigeria. States like Oyo and Osun and Ogun states having the higher population of the Muslim and Lagos, Ekiti, and Ondo having the larger concentration of the Christians (Ostien, 2012)

Other than the three major religions in Nigeria, travellers have brought in some other religions and it has been accepted by some Nigerians. There are many thousands of Hindus in Nigeria. This religion was introduced by immigrants from India. (religion.fandom.com). The majority of followers are in Lagos, which was formerly the nation's capital and is still a significant financial hub in Africa. Others follow the Grail Message. (2013) Kitause and Achunike.

### **2.3 Socio-Economic Development**

Development, according to Fritz (2002), is a planned and complete economic, social, cultural, and political process that is founded on rights and attempts to continuously improve the wellbeing of the entire community and all of its members in a given geographical area. Development in the socioeconomic sense refers to the enhancement of people's standards of living through increased access to jobs, money, education, and other resources. Based on cultural and environmental elements, it is the process of economic and social transformation. (Contemporary India: Issues and goals). Social development is a process that changes social structures in a way that makes society more capable of achieving its goals. According to Kapur (2018), economic development is the process of enhancing a country or region's economic resources and riches for the benefit of its citizens. How well and how long a person lives can be greatly influenced by social and economic factors, such as money, education, work, neighbourhood safety, and social supports. These elements have an impact on our capacity to make healthy decisions, pay for housing and healthcare, control stress, and other things. Long and healthy lives are largely dependent on the social and economic chances that are present in a given economy, such as top-notch educational institutions, steady employment,

and robust social networks. Employment, for instance, generates cash that influences decisions regarding housing, schooling, child care, food, medical care, and other things. Contrarily, unemployment restricts these options as well as the capacity to build up savings and assets that can serve as a safety net during difficult economic times (Newman, 2006). Although social and economic elements are not frequently taken into account when discussing health, measures to enhance these aspects can, over time, have an even bigger influence on health than those typically linked to health improvement, such as strategies to promote health behaviours. One important illustration of how socioeconomic disadvantages, especially poverty, can drive insecurity is the Nigerian context (Newman, 2006). However, a number of academics have highlighted crucial indicators of poverty, such as social inequality, low GDP, low levels of education and literacy, population growth, unemployment, and inflation. (Pedahzur, Perliger, & Weinberg, 2003; Gunaratna, 2004, Akhmat, Zaman, & Shukui, 2014).

All the above named factors have in all wise contributed to the threat experienced in the south-west presently, and by extension Nigeria, the political class getting richer, wealth kept revolving within the same cycle, even as the poor keeps getting poorer, making them vulnerable to be introduced to anything that can fetch them money. Socio-economic development can be measured with the following parameters and indicators: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is the major indicator of socio-economic development, life expectancy, personal safety, good social amenities which include quality education, good schools, and good health facilities, and lastly availability of employment opportunities.

### **2.3.1. Gross Domestic Product**

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is the measure of national income and output for a specified country's economy. It is the measure of total expenditure for all final value of services and goods that have been manufactured in a country within a stipulated time frame. GDP targets to best capture the monetary value of a country's economy. To accelerate economic growth to eliminate poverty and unemployment and ensure environmental sustainability and quality of life. (Raju, Rehaman & Manjunath, 2018). GDP is important because it gives information about the size of the economy and how an economy is performing. The growth rate of real GDP is often used as an indicator of the general health of the economy. In broad terms, an increase in real GDP is interpreted as a sign that the economy is doing well. When real GDP is growing strongly, employment is likely to be increasing as companies hire more workers for their factories and people have more money in their pockets.

The GDP of the entire nation of Nigeria, the largest economy by far in Africa, currently is about N130 trillion naira (about \$594 billion US dollars) (Wikipedia). The Southwest geopolitical regions of Nigeria, has an estimated GDP of about N67 trillion naira (about \$305 billion US dollars), out of the 130 trillion naira recorded for the entire country, which is more than half of the GDP of the nation, meaning that the southwest is the highest contributor to the nation's GDP. Though, southwest region of Nigeria has been identified with lesser level of unemployment and poverty, compared with other regions in the country, despite that, majority of citizens are living in abject poverty as the Gross Domestic Product figures does not impact on the general wellbeing of the people (Areo, 2020). Reiter and Kevin (2010) describe that GDP growth is result of sacrifice in other important factors that may have important role in human development, for example health and education. The importance of development is to improve and supply people with what is required to be able to achieve the objective with their life. A professor of Economics at Godfrey Okoye University in Enugu State, Felix

Onah, explained that the insecurity in the country is affecting the level of investment in the country and also the Gross Domestic Product. When companies leave the country, their production in the country is taken away and this would negatively affect the GDP of the country. Domestic investment is also adversely affected by the insecurity of the country, for example, farmers cannot go to the farm and even manufacturers cannot plan for the future. This would then lead to the reduction in agricultural and manufacturing output that would cause an adverse economic effect on the GDP. (Thisday 2022)

### **2.3.2. Local and Foreign Investment**

Investments, both local and foreign has a way of impacting an economy. Local and foreign investments gives room for job vacancies and employment opportunities for the host community. Because not enough resources are being committed to the establishment of new employment opportunities, high rates of unemployment, particularly among young people, have weakened the socioeconomic system of the nation. A challenging business climate (Nigeria was placed 169th out of 189 nations in the Ease of Doing Business Index in 2015) and a lack of infrastructure, which discourages domestic investment and encourages capital flight, exacerbate this issue. For instance, due to unfavourable operating conditions, approximately 800 enterprises were closed between 2009 and 2011 which include but not limited to insurgency, insecurity, unfavourable laws, pandemic and many more. With a capacity utilization of between 30 and 45%, more than half of the surviving businesses had been deemed ill. There have reportedly been 130 industrial closures in the toiletries and cosmetics (T&C) Group of the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) since 2001. Over 6,000 jobs were lost in the banking industry in a series of employment losses in 2014. As of the fourth quarter of 2015, there were 22.4 million people still without jobs, and it is anticipated that the banking industry will lose 500,000 jobs in the first three months of 2016. In this context, there are around 80 million young people in Nigeria, or 48% of the total population. At least 1.8 million young people in Nigeria enter the labour force annually. Nevertheless, Independent 72 sources reported a 21.5% youth unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2016 against the Nigeria Bureau of Statistics' 12.1% estimate for the same period. (Oxfam 2017). In addition to the slowdown in investment flow, figures reveal that a number of global corporations are leaving Nigeria due to security-related concerns. For instance, data from the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC) in the first quarter of 2022 revealed Nigeria (NIPC) is losing its appeal to proponents of foreign direct investment. According to NIPC, investment announcements totalled \$8.41 billion in the first three months of 2022. This is \$2.58 billion, or 69%, less than what was initially announced for the first quarter of 2021.

According to the 2019 World Bank annual rankings on the ease of doing business, Nigeria was placed 131 out of 190 nations, reflecting the impact that increased insecurity has on the nation. Similar data was recently made public by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS 2021), which revealed that in 2021, Nigeria received FDI of \$698.7 million (321 billion naira). According to an examination of the data, FDI fluctuated between 2012 and 2022. However, FDI production in 2021 was the lowest the nation had seen in the previous ten years. According to the NBS's most recent capital importation data, FDI decreased by \$332 million (152 billion naira), falling to \$698.7 million (321 billion naira) in 2021 from \$1.028 billion (473 Billion naira) in 2020. On daily basis, it has been recorded the rate at which Nigerian youth relocate to other nations of the world in search of greener pastures and safety of life. All of these will not translate into a better economic and social condition for a country, because it is often said that the youth are

the strength of a nation. Foreign investments have been relocated by their owners for fear of losing their investment and also their lives. Countries open for international investments are known to have more probability of experiencing increased impact from foreign investment on economic growth which result on better life expectancy and can conclude that there is a strong relationship between foreign investment and social-economic development (Spinova & Kiyaa 2017). It has been acknowledged that foreign investment can have significant positive effects on the host nation. These positive effects include technology spillovers, support for the development of human capital, improvement of a competitive business environment, support for international trade integration, and improved enterprise development (Kastrati, 2013).

### **2.3.3. Life Expectancy**

According to the year of birth, present age, and other demographic parameters, such as gender, a living organism can be predicted to live an average number of years. This figure is known as life expectancy. The amount of time a person is projected to live after birth is called life expectancy. The average number of years that a person can anticipate to live in "full health" after accounting for years spent living in less-than-full health as a result of illness or injury, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Life expectancy mostly is determined by the social amenities available. According to the most recent data from the 2019 World Population Review, the average Nigerian is not anticipated to live past the age of 55. According to the most recent research, Nigerians can expect to live an average of 54.4 years. However, a breakdown revealed that women are anticipated to live longer than males, at 55.4 years as opposed to 53.6 years for men. Causes of this low life expectancy are various diseases, sicknesses and inability to access good health facility even when they fall sick, threat to life by kidnapping, armed banditry and other criminal activities, (Muanya, 2019) road accident, which is due to poor social infrastructure. Nigeria has been identified as a country with the least possibility of going out and returning home each day, this is due to the level of insecurity amidst other social maladies.

### **2.3.4 Personal Safety**

Personal safety relates to the actual and perceived risk of coming to harm, and to the fear of being harmed, which have common determinants but are constructed in different ways. Actual safety is an objective measure of the risk while perceived safety is concerned with our judgement or assessment of the risk, while fear is based upon an emotional reaction to how you feel in a given situation (Waters, Neale, Hutson & Mears, 2004). Waters *et al* opined that personal safety on the other hand can be an intentionally motivated harm against an individual, their property or their personal effects. Safety therefore is an atmosphere of wellness, living without the fear of criminal attack. In recent time, the people of southwest region of Nigeria and even the whole of Nigerian citizen have been under a siege of fear. Fear of the unknown, fear of what will happen next, fear of who the next victim will be. Criminal activities ranging from Kidnap, Rape, Molestation, even some citizens have been killed by stray bullets right in their own houses, some abducted from their own houses and not from the street. This has made everyone to continue believing only in their creator for safety. Personal Safety of citizen is one of the factors that brings about socio-economic development of a nation, if the labour force of an economy are living under fear that is, personal safety is not guaranteed, there will be fear of going out to work, fear of travelling to work places, how then can there be production and



productivity for the economy to boom, investors will also look away from such economy for the fear of losing their investment or even their lives.

### **2.3.5 Quality Social Amenities**

Social Amenities are the basic resources that makes life comfortable and easier for the people of a community, state or nation. Availability of social amenities in some states in the southwest region of Nigeria is the reason why there are influx of people in that state (rural to urban migration), rendering the social amenities to 'over use' because they were not made to take care of such large users (Lohrmann 1996). As earlier stated, the life expectancy of people in a particular society depends on the availability of social amenities which obviously, accounts for the quality of life of the citizens. Social amenities such as good roads, portable and safe-drinking water, recreational facilities for wellness, functional electricity, affordable and sustainable healthcare, functional and affordable educational system etc. forms the fulcrum around which quality of life revolves (Liebenow, 1986). A community with tarred roads and controlled erosions will have less accident occurrence that can lead to loss of life and property. It will also help the economy when traders and business persons are able to move in and out in terms of human movement and transportation of goods and services from one location to another. This will surely enhance socioeconomic activities at the grassroots. Likewise, the availability of safe water, recreational facilities and functional and sustainable healthcare, quality and affordable education and effective security can help save the people from diseases, obesity due to lack of exercise, illiteracy respectively and protection of life and property. Money ought to be expended on medical bills will be used for other beneficial purposes, a sick person cannot boost the economy, but a person with perfect health will work to the best of his ability to boost his finances, and by extension the GDP. Besides, functional electricity and employment opportunity will certainly strengthen economic activities. Social amenities do have the ability of ensuring multiple positive socio-economic realities by reducing poverty in the nation, especially with the provision of portable water, which definitely reduces water-borne diseases that will ultimately reduce the rate at which the people seek hospital attention (Edumadze, 2004).

Lagos State, one of the states in the south-western Nigeria has experienced an outburst of residence because of the social amenities available. The state has become spectacles of multifarious problems such as overcrowding, congestion, inadequate housing, high rates of unemployment and underemployment, crime and other forms of delinquency. The social amenities in the state now cannot take care of her residents because they were not initially made for such capacity. No wonder half of the GDP generated by the southwest states comes from Lagos State alone.

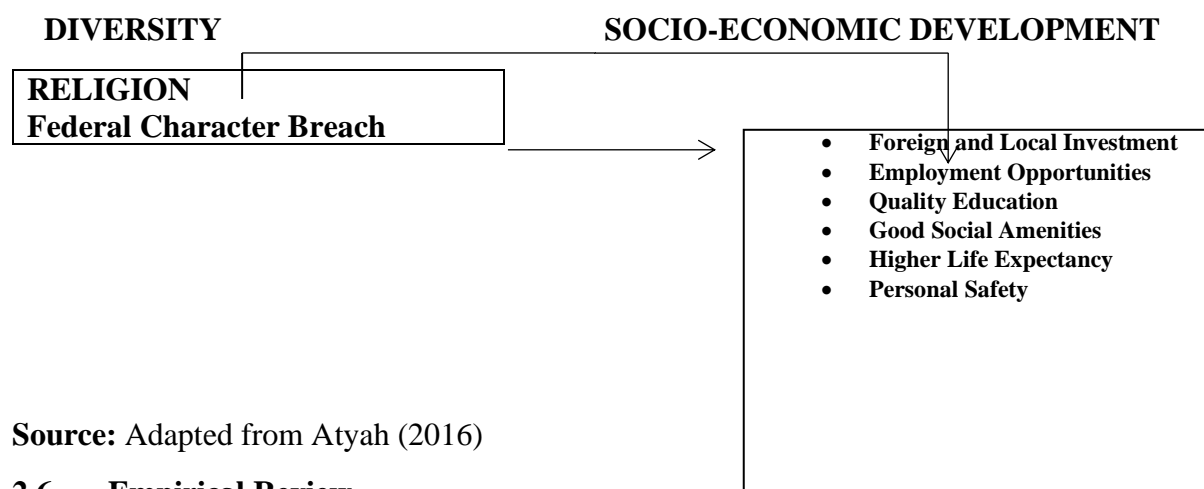
### **2.3.6 Employment Opportunities**

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO 2001), an employed person is a person aged 15 years or older who have worked (for pay or profit for at least one hour during a given week or having a job from which being absent under conditions on the reason of absence (holidays, sick leave, maternity leave, etc.) or duration. According to the Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization adopted in 2013 by the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), the standard definition of Unemployment refers to all those persons of working age who are without work, seeking work and had carried out activities to seek employment during a recent past period, and currently

available for work. On this note, it will be factual to say that, the percentage of unemployed in the southwest region of Nigeria is far higher than the employed percentage. Of the employed percentage, only few can be categorised under descent labour. The International Labour Organization (ILO) established decent work as “productive work for women and men in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity”. Work can then be considered as decent when: a fair income is paid, a secured form of employment and safe working conditions is guaranteed, it ensures equal opportunities and treatment for all employees, there is social protection for the workers and their families, it offers prospects for personal development and encourages social integration, workers are free to express their concerns and to organise and join unions. Most of these qualities even lacking in employed category in Nigeria. Insecurity and other criminal activities have scared investors away from establishing industries, farms, schools, hospitals etc. that can provide employment opportunities for citizens and the people of the state or communities where they are been established to benefit from. These and many more are the factors crippling the socio-economic development of the southwest and by extension Nigeria.

## 2.5 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study showing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.



**Source:** Adapted from Atyah (2016)

## 2.6 Empirical Review

Byrd (2022) looked at the organizational status and policy execution of three public colleges in the United States to examine how diversity fails. In this study, the impact of campus social status on diversity practice in relation to a state-wide policy was investigated using Bourdieu's theory of practice, specifically institutional habitus as an analytical lens. 54 interviewees, organizational and archival records, as well as campus observations, were used in the study to examine diversity practices on three campuses with varying standing within a single public university system in the United States. The research showed that each campus has its own institutional habitus, or status-related sense of campus identity, possibilities, and restrictions, which predicted and, on most campuses, derailed diversity practice in response to the policy. Only the campus with a moderate status achieved

any significant advancements. The analysis shows through the comparison of these results that diversity practice is inextricably influenced, restrained, or supported by the institutional habits of the organizational environment rather than existing in a *campus vacuum*. The study's conclusion makes the case that efforts to modify organizational structures that acknowledge diversity work as a situated organizational practice that reflects broader power relations will be better able to challenge injustices and spark revolutionary change in a variety of contexts and educational levels.

Gross-Golacka, Kupczyk and Wroclaw (2022) aimed at evaluating the benefits of implementing diversity management concept in the Visegrad (V4) Group countries published in Poland. These countries include: Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary. The study adopted a quantitative approach and made use of a sample of 401 representatives of organisations located in Visegrad Group countries. Data obtained were analysed using multi-criteria decision making methods. The study's findings revealed that diversity management is beneficial for competitive advantage of organisations located within the geographical scope of the Visegrad Group countries. The study therefore concluded that the implementation of diversity management is crucial to the improvement of organisational performance.

Amin, Yasin and Rutkowska-Ziarko (2022) aimed their study on diversity-inclusion nexus by assessing the role of ethnic and religious diversity in financial inclusion; a global perspective published in United Kingdom. This study used a dataset of 187 nations from around the world to experimentally explore the relationship between ethnic and religious diversity and financial inclusion. Regression analysis was used as the study's approach. The results from both cross-sectional and panel data regressions were constructed using the index of financial inclusion (FI), which was measured through mixture activities of usages dimension (account, saving, loans), access dimension (number of ATMs), and barriers dimension (trust, affordability, distance, documents), in that order. Information collected from the World Bank's Global Financial Development Database (GFDD). Findings indicate that ethnic or religious diversity, or both, and financial inclusion have a strong beneficial association. Results for countries with high, moderate, and low incomes are also consistent. According to this study, cohesiveness is the only way to guarantee an egalitarian and peaceful society while yet achieving the positive consequences of a diverse population.

Anthony and Sterkens (2020) undertook an empirical investigation into the relationship between religion and socioeconomic rights in Tamil Nadu, India's pluralistic and democratic environment. In the Indian context, the dialectics between the socialist and capitalist economies, while giving way to the latter since 1991, have gradually increased the size of the middle class while widening the wealth gap. A circumstance like this emphasizes how crucial socioeconomic rights are to ensuring human wellbeing. The question that was raised was whether religions, given their unique perspectives on human life and its socioeconomic aspects, such as employment, money, leisure, health, and education, can significantly contribute to promoting these human rights. In other words, can one's religious socialization and personal and environmental attitudes influence socioeconomic wellbeing? With the aid of a questionnaire, the empirical study project aims to confirm among 1215 Christian, Muslim, and Hindu students the influence of religion on their attitude toward socioeconomic rights. Regression and correlation analysis were employed to determine the importance of the independent and dependent variables, as opposed to descriptive and factor analysis. The first findings show that several elements of religious beliefs and socialization, notably in the case

of Christians and Muslims, have a substantial influence on students' agreement with socioeconomic rights.

Beyer and Beaman (2019) assessed dimensions of variety: Toward a More Complex Conceptualization, a seven-year project centred at the University of Ottawa in Canada between 2010 and 2017 that examined religious variety, evaluated the complexity of religious diversity through the presenting of findings. Using descriptive analysis, the study examined five aspects of diversity: the dimensions of religions, lived experiences, power, institutional structures, and forms. It showed how the project's findings corroborated the claim that religious diversity is evolving in all these ways, growing more complicated, and intricately intersecting with other categories of variety like sex and gender. The article's conclusion emphasizes the importance of broadening studies on religious diversity to also take into account the expanding nonreligious variety in Canadian and other communities.

Salleh, Mahmud, Harun, Mohd, Azlan and Yusoff (2021) Protocols for religious diversity in Malaysia's corporate and public sectors were empirically examined. The study looked at Malaysia's public and private sectors' policies on religious diversity. The factors taken into consideration are workplace policy, dress code, religious artefacts or symbols, hiring, promotion, and training practices, as well as facilities. To accomplish the research goal, a quantitative data collection strategy was used, along with a descriptive and factor analysis approach. 759 personnel from the public and private sectors in total were polled. Based on statistical analyses conducted for this study, results revealed that Malaysia, with its multicultural and multireligious culture, allows religious freedom in the majority of public and private sector jobs. The findings of this study may suggest that there were no difficulties with religious discrimination among Malaysian employees in the public and commercial sectors. There is always need for additional research on the same topic from the point of view of the employers because this research was done from the standpoint of the workers.

Sarumi, Faluyi and Obianuju (2019) examined how to make decisions that cut across racial and religious lines: the example of a Muslim women's civil organization in Nigeria. In this essay, we tried to throw some light on how civic groups may help women in Nigeria participate more actively in politics and decision-making. Using substantiated research materials, the study analysed methods used by a Muslim women's civil organization to influence decisions that affected women generally in society as well as potential barriers to women's active engagement in this political era. The study's conclusions demonstrate the importance of women's intellectual and political qualities in every society, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Jones, Taiyari, and Giovanni (2016) investigated 'Exploring survey data for historical and anthropological research: Muslim-Christian relationship in Southwest Nigeria. The study was carried out on southwest Nigeria but by researchers from University of Birmingham in the United States. Survey descriptive research was used SPSS and STATA data analysis packages were used for data collected. Findings shows that there is a dramatic shift from Islam towards Christianity among those who are 60 years and younger, most Muslim-Christian converts are women.

Clyde, Nolte, and Jones (2016) studied Inter-religious relations in Yorubaland, Nigeria by using corpus methods and anthropological survey data. The paper was published at University of Birmingham, United Kingdom. Keyness analysis, collocation analysis and concordance analysis were the analytical technique used. The paper explores how the Yoruba ethnic group of south-west region of Nigeria, particularly Muslims and Christians, practice religious tolerance. Findings has suggested that a closer examination of gender and inter-generational

relations are crucial for an understanding of the overall peaceful nature of relationships between Yoruba Muslims, Christians and traditionalists therefore constitute a promising topic for future research. Moreover, the contrast between the widely shared norms of ‘respect’ and ‘submission’ at the level of social encounters and the assertion of personal religious preference through withdrawal point to the need to explore inter-religious relations through a focus on social identity and individuation. Traditional leaders cannot practice a particular religion, they must practice and support all religious groups in their domain to avoid discrimination.

### 3.0 Methodology

The study made use of explanatory/descriptive research design in the southwest. Descriptive research design was considered for this study because of the need to identify characteristics, frequency and trends of events in the southwest Nigeria, and that survey gives an opportunity for large volume of data.

This study made use of a population of 1571 employees of federal ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs) in Ekiti, Ogun, and Osun States, in the south-western part of Nigeria. The federal ministries, departments and agencies are considered because people from diverse ethnic groups are employed in federal MDAs. Therefore, the various or diverse differences available in these MDAs make them a suitable population for this study. Federal Character Commission (FCC), Public Complaints Commission (PCC), Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB). These MDAs were selected because the researcher had easy access to the information of the total population of staff employed in these MDAs in the selected states and also the fact that some of the heads of these establishments are being selected on Federal Character basis.

**Table 3.1: Presentation of the Study Population in Tabular Form**

	Source	Ekiti	Ogun	Osun	Total
<b>FCC</b>	HR Directorate (2022)	14	20	15	<b>49</b>
<b>PCC</b>	HR Directorate (2022)	62	67	58	<b>187</b>
<b>INEC</b>	HR Directorate (2022)	333	378	510	<b>1221</b>
<b>JAMB</b>	HR Directorate (2022)	31	43	40	<b>114</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>440</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>1571</b>

Source: Author’s Computation (2022)

### Proportionate Sampling

MDAs	States	Population	Sample Size ( $n_i N_i / N$ )
FCC	Ekiti	14	4
	Ogun	20	5
	Osun	15	4
PCC	Ekiti	62	16
	Ogun	67	17
	Osun	58	15
INEC	Ekiti	333	85
	Ogun	378	96
	Osun	510	129
JAMB	Ekiti	31	8
	Ogun	43	11
	Osun	40	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>1571</b>	<b>400</b>

Source: Author’s Computation (2022)

### Research Instruments

For a comprehensive and reliable information, strictly structured questionnaire was administered to employees of federal MDAs in Ekiti, Ogun, and Osun States in south-western, Nigeria.

### Tabular Representation of the Research Instrument’s Reliability

S/No.	Scale	Cronbach’s Alpha	No. of Items
1	Religious Diversity	0.788	5
2	Socio-Economic Development	0.791	7

Source: Researcher’s computation (2022)

### Data Analysis Techniques.

Data collected were analysed by both descriptive and inferential statistics, quantitative data and narrative analysis was used for qualitative data. In making use of descriptive statistics, frequencies and percentages was used to analyse data related to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. With regards to achieving the objectives of the study, multiple regression analytical method was used to measure the effect of the parameters on the independent variable (religious diversity, cultural diversity, ethnic diversity and social diversity) on the dependent variable (socio-economic development) using SPSS version 20.

From the foregoing statement, the multiple regression can be mathematically expressed as:  
 $SED = f(RD, CD, ED, SD)$  ..... 3.1

### Model Specification

It is imperative to state that this study’s model was adapted from International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2008) where it was revealed that:

$SED = f(DV)$ .....3.2

Where SED = Socio-economic Development

DV = Diversity

Hence, equation 3.1 was derived from equation 3.2.

From Model 3.1, the proposed model for the study shall be given as:

$$SED = \alpha + \beta_1 RD + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.3$$

Where:

SED = Socio-economic Development (Dependent Variable)

RD = Religious Diversity

$\alpha$  = constant

$\beta$  = beta coefficients

$\varepsilon$  = error term

Note that Socioeconomic Development (SED) used in this study comprises foreign and local investment, employment opportunities, quality education, good social amenities, higher life expectancy, and personal safety.

$$SED = FLI + EO + QE + GSA + HLE + PS \dots\dots\dots 3.4$$

Where:

SED = Socioeconomic Development

FLI = Foreign and Local Investment

EO = Employment Opportunities

QE = Quality Education

GSA = Good Social Amenities

HLE = Higher Life Expectancy

PS = Personal Safety

### Objective

In expressing the objective of the study, the regression model for objective 1 would be given as:

$$SED = \alpha + \beta_1 RDV + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5$$

Where: SED = Socioeconomic Development

RDV = Religious Diversity

Note, that RDV = FCB. Hence,

$$FLI = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.1$$

$$EO = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.2$$

$$QE = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.3$$

$$GSA = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.4$$

$$HLE = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.5$$

$$PS = \alpha + \beta_1 FCB + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots 3.5.6$$

## 4.0 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Questionnaire was distributed to 400 respondents. Out of the 400 respondents, only 360 was returned, which indicated that the study had a response rate of 90%. In analysing collected data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. By using descriptive statistics, frequencies, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to describe the data. On the other hand, for inferential statistics, multiple regression was used to achieve the objective of the study.

### Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	230	63.9
Female	130	36.1
<b>Age in Years</b>		
Below 18 years	0	0.0
18-25	13	3.6
26-32	36	10.0
33-40	155	43.1
41 and above	156	43.3
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Single	58	16.1
Married	294	81.7
Divorced	1	.3
Widow	7	1.9
Widower	0	0.0
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
'O' Level	4	1.1
NCE/OND	2	.6
B.Sc./ HND	189	52.5
M.Sc./MBA	155	43.1
PhD	10	2.8
<b>Religion</b>		
Christianity	290	80.6
Islam	65	18.1
Tradition	5	1.4
<b>Ethnicity</b>		
Yoruba	311	86.4
Igbo	15	4.2
Hausa	12	3.3
Others	22	6.1
<b>For how long have you stayed in Southwest?</b>		
1-3	15	4.2
4-6	14	3.9
7-9	20	5.6
10 years	6	1.7
Above 10 years	305	84.7

Source: Researcher's Field work, 2022

### Perception of Respondents on the variable of Diversity Management and its influence on Socio-Economic Development

The relevance of diversity management on socio-economic development of a region could not be underestimated. Diversity management through effective diversity tolerance could improve the level of socio and economic development a region might attract. This according to Richardson (2020) was because diversity tolerance enhanced peaceful coexistence of all economic agents, thus, allowing each agent both individuals, corporate entities and government to contribute meaningfully to economic and socio development through increasing investment that leveraged on existing infrastructural opportunities for the betterment of the society. Thus,



religious diversity as vital components of diversity management must be allowed to thrive in order to enhance socio-economic development. Therefore, this section discussed the perception of respondents as related to the variable diversity management and how it influences socio-economic development particularly of the Southwest, Nigeria.

### Perception of Respondents on Religious Diversity Scale

Religion had continued to be one of the elements of diversity that influenced greatly the socio and economic development in a country as it has been a tool in the hands of the political class used against the people at any time they desire for their selfish interest. Inadequate management of this diversity component might spell doom for a nation and could cause untold economic and socio wastage that might take time to recover. Therefore, organization, Ministries and Agencies where religion does not matter, a major example are private organizations that desires output more than who you are, where you originated from. Such organization move forward, develop faster and are able to contribute immensely to socio economic development of the organization which will rub off on the society. Thus, this section discussed the perception of respondents as it related to the variable of religious diversity in Southwest Nigeria.

**Table 4.2: Mean and Standard Deviation Computed for the variable of Religious Diversity**

S/No	Variable	Code	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	STD	Remark
1.	Position are given in government parastatals on the basis of religion	RDFCB1	1.00	6.00	360	3.77	1.66	Existent
2.	Ministerial appointments are given to people based on religious sentiments	RDFCB2	1.00	6.00	360	3.89	1.59	Existent
3.	Promotions are given in government parastatals on the basis of religion	RDFCB3	1.00	6.00	360	4.64	1.45	Existent
4.	I am denied some benefits in my workplace because of my religion	RDFCB4	1.00	6.00	360	4.86	1.48	Existent

S/No	Variable	Code	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	STD	Remark
5.	I am not hostile to other religious groups	RDFCB5	1.00	6.00	360	1.76	1.43	Inexistent

**Source: Field Survey (2022)**

\*\* Acceptable Mean = 3.50 on a 6 point likert scale

\*\* STD = Standard Deviation

\*\* RDFCB = Religious Diversity Federal Character Breach

\*\* A test item was said to be inexistent if mean calculated < 3.50 or otherwise existed

Table 4.2 is a tabular representation of mean and standard deviation computed for the variable of religious diversity. As shown in the table above, it was seen that a sufficient number of respondents agreed that positions are given in government parastatals on the basis of religion. This inference was based on the fact that the mean value computed for the test item of 3.77 was greater than the acceptable mean of 3.50 with a standard deviation of 1.66. This therefore means that in terms of promotion, religious consideration did exist.

With regards to the second questionnaire item, it was seen that ministerial appointments are given to people based on religious sentiments. This inference was made based on the fact that the mean calculated for this item generated a value of 3.89 which is greater than the acceptable mean of 3.50, and a standard deviation of 1.59. This result shows that religious sentiments with regards to ministerial appointments and selection of heads to Government Agencies and parastatals are actually in existence. Adeogun (2018) opined that sacrificing competence on the basis of religious sentiment is detrimental to an organization and society when results were needed.

Concerning the third item in the scale, “promotions are given in government parastatals on the basis of religion”, the mean score generated for this item is 4.64 with a standard deviation of 1.45. Due to the fact that the mean of this item is greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.50, it therefore implies that the awarding of promotions in government parastatals based on religion is actually existent. With regards to the fourth item in the scale, “I am denied some benefits in my workplace because of my religion”, the mean value for this item was shown to be 4.86 with a standard deviation of 1.48. Due to the fact that the mean value is higher than the acceptable mean of 3.50, it can therefore be inferred that respondents in Government MDAs are denied some benefits due to their religious inclination.

Finally for this scale, concerning the item, “I am not hostile to other religious groups”, Table 4.2 showed the mean value for this item to be 1.76 with a standard deviation of 1.43. With the mean value being lesser than the acceptable mean value of 3.50, it can therefore be implied that the non-hostility of respondents to other religious groups are inexistent. This means that the respondents are hostile to other religious groups in one way or the other.

**Perception of Respondents on the variable of Socio-Economic Development**

Socio-economic development is made possible and achievable in every economy through adequate inflow of both domestic and foreign investments one of the parameters on which

growth and development of a region and nation could be accessed and measured. Other parameters include quality education, better social amenities, employment opportunity, regular power supply, good roads and conducive environment for farming and carrying out other businesses, all of which are expected to translate into a better life expectancy on which socio and economic development were measured could only be possible in an atmosphere devoid of ranchor, killing, maiming, kidnapping and other social vices. This section looked at the respondents' perception regarding the variable of socio-economic development.

**Table 4.6: Mean and Standard Deviation Computed for the variable of Socio-Economic Development**

S/No	Variable	Code	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	STD	Remark
1.	There had been increase in foreign and local investments in my state despite security challenge.	SEDFLI	1.00	6.00	360	4.48	1.51	Inexistent
2.	I have access to good education from the government.	SEDQE	1.00	6.00	360	4.54	1.52	Inexistent
3.	There is an increased availability of employment opportunities.	SEDEO	1.00	6.00	360	5.07	1.36	Inexistent
4.	We have access to good roads in my state and community.	SEDGS A1	1.00	6.00	360	4.83	1.34	Inexistent
5.	We have access to	SEDGS A2	1.00	6.00	360	4.93	1.43	Inexistent

S/No	Variable	Code	Minimum	Maximum	N	Mean	STD	Remark
	regular power supply in my state and community.							
6.	We have access to good medical facilities.	SEDGS A3	1.00	6.00	360	4.74	1.40	Inexistent
7.	Our environment is very conducive for business and farming irrespective of the security situation.	SEDPS	1.00	6.00	360	4.75	1.45	Inexistent

Source: Field Survey (2022)

\*\* Acceptable Mean = 3.50 on a 6 point likert scale

\*\* STD = Standard Deviation

\*\* SEDFLI = Socio-Economic Development Foreign and Local Investment

\*\* SEDQE = Socio-Economic Development Quality Education

\*\* SEDEO = Socio-Economic Development Employment Opportunities

\*\* SEDGSA = Socio-Economic Development Good Social Amenities

\*\* SEDPS = Socio-Economic Development Personal Security

\*\* A test item was said to be inexistent if mean calculated  $< 3.50$  or otherwise existed

Table 4.6 is a tabular representation of the mean and standard deviation computed for the variable, socio-economic development. In the table above, with regards to the first test item in the socio-economic development scale, it was observed that a sufficient number of respondents disagreed that there had been increase in foreign and local investments in their states despite security challenge. This inference was made based upon the fact that mean value being 4.48 of the test item was higher than the acceptable mean value of 3.50, with the standard deviation being 1.51. One of the major determinants of socio-economic economic development is the number of domestic and foreign investments a region could attract. With adequate domestic and foreign investment, the capacity of South-West region to be able to provide meaningful employment opportunity for the youth indigene and non-indigene might be enhanced. More so, the inflow of these investments might result in infrastructural development which will bring about a better life for the people of that locality, because according to federal character rule,

any organization recruiting both Government and Private must recruit the lower level cadre from the locality as a way of giving back to the community. Also, there is a percentage of their profit that is given to corporate social responsibility. With regards to the second item on the scale which states 'I have access to good education from the government', a large number of respondents disagreed with the statement. This was based on the fact the mean value of the test item which is 4.54, having a standard deviation of 1.52, is greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.50. The reason behind these responses cannot be overemphasized. This is because most parents now send their wards to private schools both at secondary and tertiary level, because most government owned institutions lack resources for learning, even when they can't afford it. An example is the case of the Academic Staff of Nigeria Universities (ASUU) strike that lingered for over nine (9) months. Only a month into resumption, the student were made to write examinations (Monogbe & Monogbe 2019). How possible will work load of three months be covered within a month, and we expect quality. During the strike some students had turned into nuisance in the society, remember an idle hand is an instrument for evil and crime. Many of these students due to their engagement in social vices had been imprisoned for one offence or the other while some had been exposed to characters they will not be able to escape from for the rest of their lives.

Also, as regards to 'there have being an increased availability of employment opportunities', the mean value for the test item is seen to be 5.07 with a standard deviation of 1.36. From this observation, it can be implied that sufficient number of the respondents disagreed with the statement. This implied that employment opportunities had been difficult to come by in South-West region. A lot of graduates in the region are still underemployed and not having tangible means of livelihood to depend upon. Many had graduated for years and still searching for employment. Those that decided to take the bull by the horns and venture into farming has met with disappointment when their sweat and resources are eaten up by cattle and some had even lost their lives in the process during attacks by herdsmen. Some daily risk their lives on the high sea of Pacific Ocean just to get out of the country through illegal mean for greener pasture abroad. The Federal Government's effort towards the creation of employment through the National Directorate of Employment, N-Power, Trader Money and Small Medium Scale Enterprises Development Funds and other schemes had not yielded meaningful result due to the fact that the programmes had been hijacked by politicians and cronies of the government to satisfy their loved ones and party faithful.

Moreover, concerning having access to good roads in the state and community, the mean value of the item was observed to be 4.83 while its standard deviation was seen to be 1.37. This therefore means that access to good roads in the state and community of the respondents is actually inexistent due to the mean value of the test item being greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.50. Good road and access link roads is one of the facility required by farmers to move their goods and harvests to the market where people can access them. But when this is not available, the cost of transporting these goods to the market will be more, which will have a ripple effect on the amount the goods will be sold, this will also have an effect on the final consumer whose income has been stagnant and food prices had been skyrocketing. This has a major effect on the economy of any nation.

With regards to having access to regular power supply in the state and community, it was observed that a large number of respondents disagreed with the statement. This inference was made due to the fact that the mean value of the test item being 4.93 was seen to be greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.5 and with a standard deviation of 1.43. Substantial numbers of

the manufacturing companies which are located in Lagos and Ogun states and other upcoming entrepreneurs in other southwest states run their business on generators, which has increased their operational cost and will eventually affect their bottom-line which is their profit at the end of production or at the end of the financial year because of unavailability of power supply. Furthermore, pertaining to having access to good medical facilities, it was observed that sufficient number of respondents disagreed with the statement. This inference was made based on the fact that the mean value of the item being 4.74 is seen to be greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.50. The health sector is another keg of gunpowder we are sitting on in Nigeria. Due to lack of equipment and machine and not recruiting enough health personnel, even the recruited ones are not well paid given enough welfare, Doctors, Nurses and other health workers are exiting the country in their thousands. So many ailments also cannot be treated in Nigerian hospitals because our experts are fleeing to other countries where they are valued every day, except for hospitals like Afe Babalola Multi System Hospital that has equipment that are not owned in any hospital in Nigeria and also experts and professionals. This is not a plus to the country when it comes to manpower, resources and economic value. Taking our resources and mastery to another country has a negative effect on our socio-economic development as a nation.

Finally, concerning the statement of the environment being very conducive for business and farming irrespective of the security situation, it was also observed that a large number of respondents disagreed with the statement. This inference was based on the fact that the mean value of the item or statement being 4.75 with a standard deviation of 1.45 is seen to be greater than the acceptable mean value of 3.50. This therefore showed that the item is inexistent. In a society or community where peace is not enjoyed, everyone goes about their businesses with fear of not knowing what is going to happen in the next minute, fear of who is to be kidnapped next, fear of been killed or robbed, people cannot put in their best into whatever they do, no one will be willing to go an extra mile to achieve even when you have the traits and capability of doing such. This will not bring a positive turn to the socio-economic development of such society or community.

### Test of Variables

#### Normality Test

**Table Descriptive Statistics**

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis		
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Religious Diversity	360	5.00	30.00	18.9222	4.99242	-.358	.129	-.376	.256
SED	360	7.00	42.00	33.3444	7.85263	-1.387	.129	1.737	.256
Valid N (listwise)	360								

**Source:** Researcher's Computation (2022)

The table above provides a tabular representation for ascertaining the normality of the study's sample. In evaluating the normality of the data set, due to the fact the sample is larger than 300,

the absolute skewness values and absolute kurtosis values would be adopted (Mishra *et al.*, 2019). To determine whether the sample is normal or not, if the absolute skewness value  $\leq 2$  or the absolute kurtosis value  $\leq 4$ , the sample or data set is said to follow a normal distribution (Mishra *et al.*, 2019).

### Tests of Normality

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Religious Diversity	.090	360	.000	.975	360	.000
SED	.186	360	.000	.863	360	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Source: Researcher's Computation (2022)

From the above table, it is seen that Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for normality is significant. This is against the assumption of normality which states that the null hypothesis is accepted if the p-value  $> 0.05$ . The null hypothesis states that the data set is normally distributed. The information provided from Table therefore shows that dataset does not follow a normal distribution due to the fact that the p-values for the data are lesser than 0.05. However, the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests are unreliable and therefore would not be used because the sample size for this study is above 300 (Statistics & Theory, 2020). Mishra *et al.* (2019) corroborated the preceding by asserting that for sample size greater than 300, normality of data is dependent on the absolute values of skewness and kurtosis. This therefore means that the results of this Table is inconsequential to this study.

### Multicollinearity Test

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Religious Diversity	0.900	1.111

Source: Researcher's Computation (2022)

This table is a tabular representation of the multicollinearity test for the independent variable of the study. As revealed in the table, the study's data is seen to pass the multicollinearity test, implying the absence of multicollinearity in the data. This conclusion was made because, the tolerance values for the independent variable, religious diversity was seen to be 0.900. The Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for these variables were also seen to be 1.111. With the tolerance values for the variable being greater than 0.1 and the VIF being lesser than 10, it therefore means that there is an absence of multicollinearity in the data. Using the assertion of Pallant (2011), a data is said to be free from any disturbance and as a result reliable, if the Tolerance and VIF values are at least 0.10 and at most 10.0 respectively. This also shows that the data is free from any disturbance and the statistical inferences made from it can be relied upon.

### Test of Hypotheses

This hypothesis states that religious diversity has no significant effect on socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria. That is,

$H_{01}$ : Religious Diversity has no significant effect on socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria.

**Objective:** Determine the effect of religious diversity on socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria.

### Hypothesis

#### Multiple linear Regression (Ordinary Least Square)

Variable	Coefficient	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	25.045	1.562	16.032	0.000
RDV	0.439	0.080	5.494	0.000
R-square	0.078			
Adjusted R-squared	0.075			
F-statistic	30.185			
Prob (F-statistic)	0.000			

**Source:** Field Survey (2022)

- a. Dependent Variable: SED
  - b. Predictors: (Constant), RDV
- \*\*\* RDV = Religious Diversity  
 \*\*\* SED = Socio-Economic Development

As shown in the tables above, it showed that the R square has a value of 0.078. This implies that 7.8% of the variation in socio-economic development can be predicted by religious diversity. Also, the model was revealed to be significant in explaining the causal relationship between religious diversity and socio-economic development. This inference was made because the p-value is lesser than the significance level of 0.05. The model can therefore be given as  $F(1, 359) = 30.185$ ,  $p = 0.000$ . Moreover, concerning the coefficients, religious diversity coefficient was seen to be 0.439 and having a p-value of 0.000 ( $\beta = 0.439$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Due to the fact that the regression coefficient is seen to be 0.439, it therefore means that a 1 unit increase in religious diversity will cause about 43.9 unit increase in socio-economic development. As a result of the p-value being lesser than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis would therefore be rejected while the alternative hypothesis would be accepted. This therefore shows that religious diversity has a significant effect on the socio-economic development.

Taking a cue from the model 3.5 above, the regression equation for this objective will be given as:

$$SED = 25.045 + 0.439RDV + 1.562 \dots\dots\dots (4.1)$$

### Summary of Hypothesis Testing



Hypothesis	Dimension of Diversity Management	P-Value	Remarks	Coefficient	Type of Relationship
H <sub>01</sub>	Religious Diversity	0.000	Significant	0.439	Positive

### Discussion of Findings

Religious diversity was seen to have a significantly positive effect on socio-economic development. This implies that as religious diversity increases, socio-economic development also increases in the southwest region of the country. This also showed that religious diversity was in tandem with the *a priori* expectation. A reason for this could be due to the fact that people of southwest origin are evenly distributed amongst the three major religions in the country (Igwe & Ubi, 2019) and as a result, their religious diversity does not negatively affect the socio-economic development of their region.

This finding aligns with that of Ajaegbu (2012) who asserted that religion is complementary to the development of a political entity given that such religious beliefs promote moderation rather than extremes. The outcome of this research also corroborates the conclusion given by the Religious freedom and business foundation in a study titled ‘Socioeconomic impact of religious freedom’ that religious freedom contributes to better economic and business outcomes and especially sustainable development advances in religious freedom are in the self-interest of businesses, governments and societies. However, this finding contradicts the popular notion in the Nigerian state that religious diversity is one of the factors responsible for poor development in the country. Although this study does not focus on the entire scope of Nigeria, it has been able to show that religious diversity in the southwest region of the country does not deprive socio-economic development, rather it encourages it.

### Conclusions

The result of the study obtained revealed that religious diversity had significant positive effect on socio-economic development. This inference was based on the fact that the regression coefficient obtained for the variable of religion diversity of 0.28 was positive with significant t-statistics value of 3.61 and p-value of 0.0003 that was less than the critical value of 5%. Religious diversity does not negatively affect the socio-economic development of southwest, Nigeria.

### Recommendation

From the study, it is recommended that Religious tolerance should be propagated among all Nigerians. Nigerians should understand the fact that they are ‘Nigerians’ before being a religious being. The mentality or ideology of seeing every other person that is not of the same religious belief with you as an infidel should be eliminated. To experience the desired development, everyone should be made to jettison their religious identity and identify themselves as a Nigerians first. Once this is achieved, there will be oneness, and the best leaders will be selected, religion will no longer be used by the political class against the innocent citizens, federal character rule will be adhered to, there will be oneness and the strength of each group will be harnessed to the socio-economic development of Nigeria.

### Suggestion for Further Study

This study cannot be used as a representation for the whole country, in this regard, it is suggested that this study should be conducted on the whole Nigeria, it is believed that this same result of positive significance will not be achieved.

### References

- Adegoke, K. A. 2008. Religious Insurrections in Nigeria. *Journal of Issues in the Development of Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1:242.
- Ajaegbu, O. (2012). Religion and national development in Nigeria. *American Academic & Scholarly Research Journal*, 4(4), 1-6.
- Akhmat, G., Zaman, K., & Shukui, T. e. a. (2014). Exploring the root causes of terrorism in South Asia: everybody should be concerned. 48(6), 3065–3079.
- Amara, M. U., & Kanayo, L. N. (2015) Towards Bridging Ethnic and Religious Divides In Nigeria: Exegetico-Hermeneutical Application of Gal.3:26-29. Retrieved from <https://www.ajol.info>
- Anthony, F. V., & Sterkens, C. (2020) Religion and Socioeconomic Wellbeing. Empirical Study of the Impact of Religion on Socioeconomic Rights in the Pluralistic and Democratic Context of Tamil Nadu, India. DOI:10.3390/rel11090454
- AREO 2020 Retrieved from <https://www.amro-asia.org/update-of-the-asean3-regional-economic-outlook-areo-august-2020>.
- Atyah, L.A. (2016). Workplace Diversity in organizations Conceptual Framework. *AL-Qadisiyah. Journal for Administrative and Economic sciences*, 18, 266-290.
- Bascom, W.R. (1969). *Iifa Divination: Communication between Gods and Men in West Africa*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Berger, P. L. (1967). *The sacred canopy: Elements of a sociological theory of religion*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Beyer, P. & Lori, G. Beaman. (2019) Dimensions of Diversity: Toward a More Complex Conceptualization Department of Classics & Religious Studies, University of Ottawa, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5, Canada. *Religions* 10, no. 10: 559. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel10100559>
- Byrd, D. (2022) How Diversity Fails: An Empirical Investigation of Organizational Status and Policy Implementation on Three Public Campuses. College of Education, Marquette University, Milwaukee, WI 53233, USA; [derria.byrd@marquette.edu](mailto:derria.byrd@marquette.edu).
- Castania, K. (2003). The Evolving Language of Diversity. University of Michigan. Retrieved from <http://www.isr.umich.edu/home/diversity/resources/diversitylanguage.pdf>.
- Chattopadhyay, P., George, E., & Lawrence, S. A. (2004). Why does dissimilarity matter? Exploring self-categorization, self-enhancement, and uncertainty reduction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89, 892–900. doi: 10.1037/0021-9010.89.5.892.

- Clyde, A., Insa, N., & Rebecca, J. (2016) Inter-religious relations in Yorubaland, Nigeria: corpus methods and anthropological survey data.' Published at University of Birmingham, United Kingdom.
- Edumadze, I. (2004). Provision of social amenities essential for poverty Retrieved from: <https://mobile.ghanaweb.com/ghanahomepage/NewsArabhive/Provision-of-social-amenities-essential-for-poverty-reduction-56274>.
- Gross-Golacka, E., Kupczyk, T., & Wroclaw (2022). Diversity management in organisations- the measuring of the benefits: Visegrad Group (V4) countries perspective. *Proceedings of the 55th Hawaii International Conference on System Sciences*, 5608-5617.
- Gunaratna, R. (2004). The Post-Madrid Face of Al Qaeda. *Washington Quarterly*, 27(91-100). International Labour Organization (ILO) 2001.
- Igwe, V.N., & Ubi, I. U. (2019). The role of religious and cultural diversity on SMEs in Cross River State, Nigeria: Implication from SMEs management perspective. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Research Methods*, 6(2), 13-22.
- Jones, K., Nolte, I., Taiyari, R. and G. Occhiali (2016). 'Exploring survey data for historical and anthropological research: Muslim-Christian relations in southwest Nigeria', *African Affairs* 115 (460), pp. 541-61.
- Kapur, R. (2018) Socio-Economic development and empowerment of disadvantaged groups. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323691483>.
- Kastrati, S. K (2013). The Effects of Foreign Direct Investments for Host Country's Economy, *European Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies*, 5(1).
- Knippenberg, D., Homan, A. C., Van Kleef, G. A., & De Dreu, C. K. W. (2007). Bridging faultlines by valuing diversity: The effects of diversity beliefs on information elaboration and performance in diverse work groups. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, 1189-1199.
- Kuna, M.J. (2005). Religion, Identity, and National Integration in Nigeria. Being a Paper Presented at a Round Table on National Integration in Nigeria Organized by the National Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies, Kuru, Jos on July 15th, 2005.
- Liebenow, J. G. (1986) *African Politics: Crises and Challenges*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.
- Lohrmann, R. (1996). Conference Report: Environmentally-Induced Population Displacement and Environmental Impacts from Mass Migration. *International Migration* 34 (2): 335-339.
- Monogbe, B. O.; Monogbe, T. G. (2019). ASUU Strike and Nigerian Educational System: An Empirical Investigation of the Nigerian Tertiary Institution. *American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1): 56-67.

- Muanya, C. (2019) The Guardian. Nigerians have fifth worst average life expectancy of fifty five years. Retrieved from: <https://guardian.ng/news/nigerians-have-fifth-worst-average-life-expectancy-of-55-years-says-report/>
- Newman, E. (2006). Exploring the “Root Causes” of Terrorism. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29(8), 749-772. doi:10.1080/10576100600704069.
- Omilusi, M. (2015). Diagnosing the Interplay of Religious Identity, Elite Hypocrisy and Political Leadership Ascendancy in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic. *International Journal of Politics and Good Governance*. 6(6.1): 976-1195.
- Ostien, P. (2012). ‘Percentages By Religion of the 1952 and 1963 Populations of Nigeria's Present 36 States’, Nigerian Research Network Background Paper No. 1. Oxford: Queen Elizabeth House.
- Pallant, J. (2011). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS* (4th ed.). Crows Nest: National Library of Australia.
- Pedahzur, A., Perliger, A., & Weinberg, L. (2003). Altruism and fatalism: the characteristics of Palestinian suicide terrorists. *Deviant Behaviour*, 24(4), 405-423. doi:10.1080/713840227.
- Raju, J.K., Manjunath, B.R., & Rehaman, M. (2018) an empirical study on the effect of gross domestic product on inflation: evidence Indian data. *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal* · December 2018. Volume 22, Issue 6.
- Reiter, S. L., Steensma, H. K., 2010. Human Development and Foreign Direct Investment in Developing Countries: The Influence of FDI Policy and Corruption. *World development*, [ejournal] 38 (12), pp. 1678-1691. doi: 10.1016/j.worlddev.2010.04.005.
- Salleh, M. M., Mahmud, A. K., Harun, A. B., Mohd, A., Azlan, N. B. & Yusoff, M. B. (2021) An Empirical Investigation on Religious Diversity Practices at Malaysian Private and Public Sectors *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research* Volume 4 Issue 5. DOI - <http://doi.org/10.37502/IJSMR.2021.4504>
- Sarumi, R.O., Faluyi, O.T. & Okeke-Uzodike, O.E. (2019) Transcending Ethnic and Religious Barriers in Decision-Making: A Case of a Muslim Women Civil Organisation in Nigeria. *Journal Frontiers in Psychology*. 9:2693. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.02693
- Seliverstova, Y. (2021). Workforce diversity management: A systematic literature review. *Strategic Management*, 26(2), 3–11.
- Spinova, H. & Kiyaa O. (2017) The effect of Foreign Direct Investment on socio-economic development in developing European countries. Retrieved from <https://www.diva-portal.org>
- Uzochukwu, O.C., Uzoamaka, N.P., & Robert, I.O. (2021). Diversity management and performance of ministries in Edo State, Nigeria. *Current Journal of Applied Science and Technology*, 40(21), 89-99.

- Waters, J., Neale, R., Hutson, S. & Mears, K. (2004) Personal safety on university campuses defining personal safety. Khosrowshahi, F (Ed.), Heriot Watt University. Association of Researchers in Construction Management, Vol. 1, 411-8.
- Yadav, S., Lenka, U. (2020). Diversity management: A systematic review. Equal. Divers. Inclusion: Int. J. 39, 901–92.