

Televangelism As a Catalyst for Good Governance and Socio-Political Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the televangelism as a catalyst for good governance and socio-political development in Nigeria. The theoretical framework of the study was drawn from the social influence theory. A phenomenological research design was employed to explore the lived experiences of individuals influenced by televangelism regarding governance and socio-political development in Nigeria. The target population included key stakeholders such as televangelists, political analysts, and members of the public who regularly engage with televangelist broadcasts. The sample size consisted of approximately 12 participants and participants were selected using purposive sampling and data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the influence of televangelism on socio-political development. Findings from the study revealed that the televangelism significantly shapes perceptions of ethical leadership among Nigerian citizens by positioning televangelists as moral authorities who promote values such as honesty, integrity, and accountability, thus encouraging followers to demand higher ethical standards from political leaders and fostering a culture that emphasises moral conduct in governance. The study concluded that the influence of televangelism on perceptions of ethical leadership underscores the significant role that religious leaders play in shaping public expectations for integrity in governance, highlighting the potential for moral discourse within religious contexts to promote accountability among political leaders. The study recommended that religious leaders actively promote ethical leadership principles in their teachings and engage in discussions about accountability, thereby reinforcing the expectations for integrity among political leaders and empowering their congregations to demand higher ethical standards.

Keywords: *Televangelism, Good Governance, Socio-political, Development*

Introduction

Televangelism, the practice of religious broadcasting via television, has become an influential tool in shaping public discourse and mobilising various social and political movements. Globally, televangelism has garnered significant attention due to its broad reach, capacity to engage diverse audiences, and its perceived role in fostering moral consciousness. In Nigeria, a country deeply rooted in religious beliefs and practices, televangelism has grown in prominence over the past few decades, serving as a potent platform for evangelists to communicate their messages to millions of viewers. The intersection of religion, politics, and governance in Nigeria creates a complex matrix where televangelism potentially plays a role in influencing societal values and shaping governance structures (Agu, 2020).

The Nigerian political landscape is fraught with challenges, ranging from corruption, ethnic strife, and economic instability to poor governance and a lack of transparency. These issues, pervasive in the country's socio-political system, have led to widespread disillusionment among the populace. As a response, religious leaders, particularly televangelists, have emerged as influential voices, leveraging their platforms to advocate for moral reformation, good governance, and social justice. While some scholars argue that televangelism can be exploitative or focused on personal gain, there is growing recognition of its potential as a catalyst for socio-political change (Omotola & Ojo, 2022).

One of the ways televangelists influence governance is through the propagation of moral values that resonate with the general public. By advocating for integrity, transparency, and accountability, televangelists have positioned themselves as moral authorities capable of influencing political behaviour and governance outcomes. Their messages often emphasise the need for leaders to exhibit ethical behaviour in public office, while also encouraging citizens to demand accountability from their leaders. This role as moral arbiters provides televangelists with the leverage to shape public opinion on matters of governance (Afolabi & Obadare, 2021).

In addition, televangelists in Nigeria have actively engaged in mobilising citizens to participate in the political process. By encouraging voter participation, they contribute to the democratic process, particularly in a context where political apathy is prevalent. Many televangelists have utilised their platforms to educate their viewers on their civic duties and the importance of electing leaders who are capable of fostering good governance. This advocacy for political engagement aligns with broader goals of socio-political development, as it empowers citizens to be active participants in shaping the future of the nation (Eze & Adamu, 2023).

Despite the potential positive influence of televangelism, it is important to acknowledge the controversies surrounding its practice. Critics have pointed to the commercialisation of religion and the manipulation of religious sentiments for personal or political gain. Some televangelists have been accused of exploiting the faith of their followers for financial gain or using their platforms to endorse political candidates who align with their personal interests. This has raised questions about the genuine role of televangelism in promoting good governance and whether its impact is always positive (Adewole, 2023). However, it is essential to differentiate between televangelists who engage in unethical practices and those who genuinely seek to use their platforms for the betterment of society.

Televangelism's reach and influence in Nigeria are further enhanced by the pervasive

nature of the media. The country's media landscape is diverse, with a growing number of television stations, including faith-based channels, dedicated to religious programming. This widespread access to media has allowed televangelists to reach audiences across the country, including in rural areas where access to other forms of civic education may be limited. The ability to communicate directly with millions of viewers positions televangelists as key players in shaping public opinion and, by extension, influencing governance and socio-political development (Dada, 2022).

Furthermore, televangelism in Nigeria must be understood within the broader context of the country's religious diversity. Nigeria is home to a large population of Christians and Muslims, and the messages broadcast by televangelists often reflect the values and concerns of their religious communities. As a result, televangelism has the potential to either bridge or deepen divides along religious lines, depending on how messages are framed. Thus, the role of televangelism in fostering socio-political development must be considered in light of the religious dynamics that characterise the Nigerian state (Ibrahim, 2023).

Meanwhile, televangelism in Nigeria is not without its controversies, its potential as a catalyst for good governance and socio-political development cannot be ignored. By promoting moral values, encouraging political engagement, and leveraging the reach of the media, televangelists have become important actors in the Nigerian socio-political space. Understanding the role of televangelism in this context requires a nuanced analysis of both its positive contributions and the challenges it presents. As Nigeria continues to grapple with governance issues, the influence of televangelism on the political process will likely remain a subject of both scholarly inquiry and public debate.

Statement of the problem

The growing influence of televangelism in Nigeria, particularly in relation to socio-political development and governance, presents a multifaceted problem. While televangelists have gained significant traction as moral and religious authorities, their role in promoting good governance remains controversial. On one hand, some televangelists use their platforms to advocate for ethical leadership, transparency, and public accountability. On the other hand, concerns have emerged over the commercialisation of religious platforms, the manipulation of public sentiments, and the potential for televangelists to align with political elites for personal gain. This duality creates a complex scenario that raises questions about the actual impact of televangelism on Nigeria's governance and socio-political landscape. The primary problem, therefore, is whether televangelism serves as a genuine catalyst for good governance or if it contributes to the perpetuation of systemic issues such as corruption and political exploitation.

Despite the potential for positive influence, many televangelists have been accused of prioritising personal wealth and political favouritism over their professed moral and spiritual missions. This exploitation of religious sentiments has led to disillusionment among some members of the public, who view televangelism as a tool for self-enrichment rather than a platform for advocating for societal change. The commercialisation of faith, often seen in the extravagant lifestyles of some televangelists, raises questions about the ethical responsibilities of these religious leaders in a country struggling with poverty, inequality, and governance failures. The problem is further compounded by the difficulty in distinguishing between televangelists

who genuinely seek to influence governance positively and those who exploit their audiences for personal gain.

Additionally, televangelism in Nigeria is often characterized by its broad appeal and reach across diverse socioeconomic and religious demographics. This broad influence has the potential to sway public opinion and mobilise political action, but it also raises concerns about the lack of regulatory oversight. Without adequate regulation, televangelism runs the risk of fostering uncritical political endorsements, where religious leaders use their platforms to support politicians without proper scrutiny of their governance track records. This creates a problem of accountability, as the relationship between televangelists and political figures may result in the entrenchment of poor governance practices rather than their correction.

Finally, the role of televangelism in fostering socio-political development in Nigeria is hampered by the country's complex religious and political dynamics. Nigeria's religious plurality, with its significant Christian and Muslim populations, means that televangelism's impact may vary depending on the religious affiliations and biases of the viewers. This reality presents a problem, as televangelists' messages, if not carefully managed, may deepen societal divisions or reinforce existing tensions. Thus, the challenge lies in understanding how televangelism can contribute to national unity, political engagement, and good governance without exacerbating religious or political conflicts in the country. This problem requires a critical examination of televangelism's role in the broader context of Nigeria's socio-political development.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study examines the role of televangelism as a potential catalyst for good governance and socio-political development in Nigeria, evaluating its influence on public morality, political engagement, and the challenges it presents in the context of religious and political dynamics.

The objectives are to:

1. To examine the influence of televangelism on promoting moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria.
2. To assess the role of televangelism in encouraging political participation and civic engagement.
3. To analyse the potential negative impacts of televangelism, such as commercialisation and political manipulation.
4. To explore how televangelism affects religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political landscape.

Research Questions

1. How does televangelism promote moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria?
2. What role does televangelism play in encouraging political participation and civic engagement?
3. What are the potential negative impacts of televangelism on governance and society in Nigeria?
4. How does televangelism influence religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political context?

Literature Review

Conceptual Review

Televangelism and the Promotion of Moral Values and Ethical Leadership

Televangelism has been widely recognized for its role in promoting moral values and ethical leadership, particularly in deeply religious societies like Nigeria. Through their televised sermons, Nigerian televangelists frequently emphasise the importance of virtues such as honesty, integrity, and accountability, which are critical for the effective functioning of governance systems (Afolabi & Obadare, 2021). By framing ethical leadership as a divine mandate, televangelists appeal to both political leaders and the public, fostering a culture that encourages moral behaviour in public service. These messages resonate deeply in a country where corruption and unethical leadership have been endemic issues (Agu, 2020).

The influence of televangelism in promoting ethical leadership extends beyond religious boundaries, as these broadcasts are accessible to millions of Nigerians, regardless of their faith. Televangelists frequently draw upon religious scriptures to illustrate the consequences of immoral leadership, making a compelling case for governance reforms based on ethical principles. This widespread media coverage enables televangelists to impact not only the Christian community but also the general public, positioning them as moral watchdogs in Nigeria's socio-political space (Eze & Adamu, 2023). However, critics argue that some televangelists use moral teachings selectively, applying them to political leaders they oppose while excusing unethical behaviour among those they favour (Adewole, 2023).

Nonetheless, the potential of televangelism to shape the moral framework of Nigerian leadership cannot be ignored. As ethical leadership continues to be a pressing issue in Nigeria, televangelists' emphasis on moral values provides a platform for influencing governance and creating public discourse around the need for integrity in leadership positions. By doing so, televangelists contribute to a socio-political environment that encourages both leaders and citizens to aspire to higher ethical standards (Omotola & Ojo, 2022).

The Role of Televangelism in Encouraging Political Participation and Civic Engagement

Televangelism has also played a crucial role in encouraging political participation and civic engagement in Nigeria, especially in light of widespread political apathy. By using their platforms to educate the public on civic duties, televangelists contribute to increasing awareness of the importance of participating in the political process. This has been particularly important in Nigeria, where disillusionment with political leaders has historically resulted in low voter turnout and a lack of public interest in governance issues (Ibrahim, 2023). Televangelists, through their broad reach, provide accessible political education to citizens across different regions and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Moreover, televangelists often link political participation to religious duty, encouraging their followers to vote for candidates who align with moral and ethical standards. This approach frames political engagement not just as a civic responsibility but also as a form of spiritual obedience. The use of religious narratives to motivate political action has proven effective in mobilising voters, particularly during critical elections (Dada, 2022). By doing so, televangelists help bridge the gap between religion and politics, making civic engagement a priority within the religious community.

However, while televangelism positively impact political participation, there are concerns about its potential to sway voters based on religious biases rather than on informed political decisions. Some televangelists may endorse political candidates based on religious affiliations or personal relationships, which can undermine the objectivity of their civic advocacy (Afolabi & Obadare, 2021). Nevertheless, the role of televangelism in fostering political engagement remains significant in a country where religious leaders hold substantial influence over their congregations.

The Potential Negative Impacts of Televangelism: Commercialisation and Political Manipulation

While televangelism has the potential to influence governance positively, its commercialisation has raised concerns about the ethical use of religious platforms. Many Nigerian televangelists have been accused of prioritising financial gain over spiritual guidance, using their platforms to amass wealth through donations from their followers. This commercialisation of faith detracts from the potential of televangelism to serve as a force for good governance, as the focus shifts from moral advocacy to financial enrichment (Adewole, 2023). The extravagant lifestyles of some televangelists also create disillusionment among the public, who view their leaders as detached from the struggles of ordinary citizens (Agu, 2020).

Furthermore, televangelists' involvement in politics has raised concerns about political manipulation. By endorsing political candidates or forming alliances with political elites, some televangelists are seen as compromising their moral authority for personal or institutional gain. This can lead to situations where religious leaders are used to legitimise corrupt political figures or policies, thus contributing to the perpetuation of poor governance practices (Eze & Adamu, 2023). The alignment of televangelists with political actors may erode public trust in religious institutions and weaken their role as impartial moral guides.

These negative impacts have called for increased regulation and oversight of televangelism in Nigeria. While religious freedom is protected, there is a growing debate on how to balance this with the need to prevent exploitation and manipulation. Ensuring that televangelists remain focused on their ethical responsibilities rather than personal gain is crucial in mitigating the commercialisation of faith and protecting the integrity of religious influence on governance (Omotola & Ojo, 2022).

Televangelism's Influence on Nigeria's Religious and Political Dynamics

Televangelism in Nigeria operates within a complex religious and political landscape, where religion plays a central role in shaping political identities and alliances. As televangelists preach messages that often align with the values of their religious communities, their influence can either bridge or deepen divides along religious and political lines. In a country with significant Christian and Muslim populations, the messages broadcast by televangelists can foster unity or exacerbate tensions, depending on how they are framed (Ibrahim, 2023). This dual impact reflects the delicate balance that televangelism must maintain within Nigeria's pluralistic society.

In some cases, televangelism has contributed to fostering dialogue and cooperation between different religious groups, particularly when televangelists focus on shared national

concerns such as corruption, poverty, and poor governance. By emphasising common values, televangelists can help bridge religious divides and promote a unified approach to socio-political development. This role as mediators between religion and politics positions televangelists as influential figures capable of shaping national discourse (Dada, 2022).

However, televangelism also has the potential to reinforce religious divisions if messages are framed in ways that emphasise differences between religious communities. Some televangelists may use their platforms to promote political candidates or policies that favour their religious group, contributing to the polarization of the political landscape. This influence on Nigeria's religious and political dynamics underscores the need for televangelists to approach their advocacy with sensitivity to the diverse and complex nature of the country's socio-political environment (Afolabi & Obadare, 2021).

Theoretical Review

Social Influence Theory

This theory, propounded by Herbert Kelman in 1958, explains how individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are shaped by their social environments and external influences, such as media, authority figures, or peers. The theory outlines three primary processes through which influence occurs: compliance, identification, and internalisation. Compliance refers to an individual adopting behaviour in response to direct pressure, identification occurs when a person aligns themselves with someone they admire, and internalisation is when a person fully integrates an influence into their belief system (Kelman, 1958). This framework helps explain how televangelists, as religious and moral authorities, influence their audiences' views on leadership, governance, and socio-political participation through these three mechanisms.

The theory assumes that individuals are malleable and susceptible to external influences, particularly from authority figures like religious leaders. It assumes that the degree of influence depends on the perceived legitimacy and expertise of the influencer. In the context of televangelism, viewers often comply with the televangelists' messages because they perceive them as spiritual authorities. These televangelists have built a connection with their audiences through repeated exposure via media, thereby enabling them to influence both political opinions and social behaviour. However, criticism of the theory points to its oversimplification of human behaviour, as it doesn't fully account for individual agency, cultural differences, or the complexity of social identity. Critics argue that individuals might resist influence due to personal beliefs or societal pressures that the theory doesn't consider adequately (Smith, 2021).

The relevance of social influence theory to this study lies in its ability to explain how televangelists, through their platforms, can act as catalysts for socio-political change. In Nigeria, televangelists are viewed as moral leaders whose influence often extends into the political arena. They encourage civic engagement, endorse political candidates, or condemn corruption, thereby shaping public perceptions of good governance and political participation (Adamu, 2022). By applying Social Influence Theory, this study can analyse how Nigerian televangelists use their authority to influence governance and political participation, either positively or negatively, through compliance, identification, or internalization by their followers.

Empirical Review

Aluko (2020) conducted a research on “Televangelism and Public Accountability in Nigeria.” The study investigated the impact of televangelism on public accountability, with a focus on how religious leaders influence public officeholders to uphold ethical standards. The research employed a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews with religious leaders and political officeholders. It also included content analysis of televangelist broadcasts. The study found that televangelists play a significant role in holding public officeholders accountable by promoting transparency and integrity in governance. Televangelists’ sermons that emphasise accountability often result in political discourse among citizens, leading to increased demands for transparency from leaders. Both studies focus on the role of televangelism in promoting ethical governance, particularly with respect to transparency and integrity. The reviewed study is more narrowly focused on public accountability, whereas the current study examines televangelism's broader role in promoting good governance, socio-political development, and civic engagement.

Babajide (2021) did a research on “Televangelism and Political Participation among Nigerian Youth.” The objective was to assess the influence of televangelism on political participation, especially among Nigerian youth, and to understand whether religious messages motivate this demographic to engage more in the political process. This study used a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys administered to 500 young Nigerians with focus group discussions to explore their perceptions of televangelism and its impact on their political engagement. The study found that televangelism significantly influences political participation among Nigerian youth, with many young people motivated to vote or engage in political activism after watching religious broadcasts that emphasise civic responsibility. Both studies explore televangelism’s role in fostering political participation and civic engagement, particularly in the Nigerian socio-political context. While reviewed study focused specifically on youth political participation, the current study takes a broader view of how televangelism impacts the general population’s civic engagement and overall governance in Nigeria.

Obasi (2019) carried out a paper on “Religious Broadcasting and Political Manipulation in Nigeria.” This study examined how religious broadcasting, particularly televangelism, is used to manipulate political outcomes and public opinion in Nigeria. The study used a case study approach, analysing televised religious broadcasts during key election periods in Nigeria. The study also involved interviews with political analysts and media experts to assess the political motivations behind certain televangelist endorsements. The finding revealed that some televangelists use their platforms to endorse political candidates for personal gain, which often leads to the manipulation of public opinion. This practice undermines democratic principles and diminishes the potential positive role that religious figures could play in governance. Both studies recognise the potential for televangelists to be involved in political manipulation, raising concerns about how religious platforms are used for personal or political gain. While the reviewed study focused primarily on political manipulation during elections, the current study also highlights the positive aspects of televangelism, such as promoting good governance and civic responsibility, offering a more balanced analysis.

Okoye (2022) carried out a research on “The Role of Media in Shaping Governance: A Study of Religious Broadcasts in Nigeria.” This study evaluated the role of media, specifically

religious broadcasts, in shaping public perceptions of governance and leadership in Nigeria. The study used a content analysis of religious broadcasts across five Nigerian television stations, alongside surveys of 1,000 viewers, to assess how religious messaging impacts their views on governance and political leadership. The study found that religious broadcasts, including televangelism, have a profound impact on how the public perceives political leaders. Many viewers reported that their opinions on governance and leadership were shaped by the moral and ethical teachings of televangelists. Both studies explore how televangelism influences public perception of leadership and governance, recognising its significant role in shaping socio-political discourse in Nigeria. The reviewed study looks more broadly at religious broadcasts across multiple media platforms, while the current study focuses specifically on televangelism and its impact on governance, political engagement, and socio-political development.

The literature review highlights the significant role of televangelism in influencing governance and socio-political development in Nigeria. It demonstrates that televangelists, through their widespread media reach, serve as moral authorities promoting values like ethical leadership, civic engagement, and public accountability. However, it also reveals the potential negative impacts, such as the commercialisation of faith and political manipulation, where televangelists align with political figures for personal gain. Various studies emphasise both the positive and negative roles of televangelism in shaping political participation, especially among Nigerian youth. Theoretical perspectives, such as Social Influence Theory, underscore how religious leaders can sway public behaviour and attitudes through compliance, identification, and internalisation processes. Overall, the review underscores the dual nature of televangelism as both a force for good governance and a potential tool for political exploitation, highlighting the need for further research on its broader societal impact.

Methodology

A phenomenological research design was employed to explore the lived experiences of individuals influenced by televangelism regarding governance and socio-political development in Nigeria. This approach is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the meanings and interpretations that individuals attribute to their experiences with televangelism and its impact on their political beliefs and actions. The target population included key stakeholders such as televangelists, political analysts, and members of the public who regularly engage with televangelist broadcasts. The sample size consisted of approximately 12 participants, which is typical for qualitative studies aiming to gather rich, detailed data.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, ensuring that individuals with varied perspectives on televangelism are included, such as those who actively follow televangelists and those who may be critical of their influence. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, allowing for open-ended questions that encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences freely. This method fosters a conversational atmosphere, providing insights into participants' perceptions of the influence of televangelism on their political engagement and attitudes toward governance. The interviews were audio-recorded,

transcribed, and analysed using thematic analysis to identify key themes and patterns related to the influence of televangelism on socio-political development. This analysis involved coding the data to uncover recurring themes, allowing the researcher to capture the complexities of the participants' experiences and insights effectively.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Themes were deduced deductively following the research objectives. The following themes were deduced: How televangelism promotes moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria; role televangelism play in encouraging political participation and civic engagement; the potential negative impacts of televangelism on governance and society in Nigeria; and televangelism influence religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political context. These were presented and discussed below:

How televangelism promotes moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria; this segment started with the views to understand how televangelism promotes moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria. When asked, the interview report has shown that the televangelism significantly influences perceptions of ethical leadership among Nigerian citizens through its ability to frame moral discourse within the context of governance. Televangelists often emphasise the importance of virtues such as honesty, integrity, and accountability, which resonate deeply in a society where corruption and unethical behaviour have been prevalent in public office. By delivering messages that promote these values, televangelists position themselves as moral authorities, urging their followers to demand ethical conduct from political leaders. This emphasis on ethical leadership not only shapes individual beliefs but also fosters a collective expectation for higher standards from those in power.

Moreover, the interviewees stated that televangelists leverage their platforms to hold leaders accountable for their actions, often addressing political issues directly in their sermons. This practice instils a sense of responsibility among citizens to advocate for ethical leadership, as they view their religious leaders as allies in the fight against corruption. The moral teachings disseminated by televangelists can encourage followers to scrutinise the actions of political leaders more critically, leading to increased demands for transparency and integrity in governance. Consequently, this influence contributes to shaping a political culture that values ethical leadership and promotes civic engagement among the populace.

However, the interviewees said that the impact of televangelism on perceptions of ethical leadership is not without criticism. Some televangelists may selectively promote ethical behaviour, endorsing certain political figures while condemning others based on personal or financial interests, which can lead to confusion among followers about what constitutes true ethical leadership. Additionally, there may be instances where followers become disillusioned with the inconsistencies between the preached values and the actions of the televangelists themselves. Nevertheless, the overarching influence of televangelism in shaping public expectations around ethical leadership remains significant, as it continues to engage citizens in critical discussions about morality in governance

Role televangelism plays in encouraging political participation and civic engagement; this section began with the understanding on role televangelism plays in encouraging political participation and civic engagement. Majority of the Interviewees believed that the televangelists encourage political participation among their followers in Nigeria by framing civic engagement as both a spiritual duty and a civic responsibility. Many televangelists use their platforms to educate viewers about the importance of voting and being actively involved in political processes, often linking these activities to religious teachings that emphasise stewardship and community responsibility. By positioning political participation as a moral obligation, televangelists can motivate their followers to engage in elections, advocate for social justice, and hold leaders accountable

Confirming that, some of the Interviewees stated that televangelists often utilise their influence to mobilise followers during critical electoral periods. They may organise events, such as prayer sessions or rallies, aimed at fostering community solidarity around specific political causes or candidates that align with their values. Through these initiatives, televangelists create a sense of urgency and purpose among their followers, encouraging them to take action in the political arena. This mobilisation not only increases voter turnout but also enhances political awareness among their congregants, who may become more informed about the political landscape and the importance of their voices in shaping governance

The interviewees added that the impact of televangelism on political participation can also be complex. While many televangelists promote positive engagement, there are concerns about the potential for manipulation, where followers may be swayed to support specific candidates or parties based on the televangelists' endorsements. This can lead to situations where political decisions are made more on the basis of religious allegiance than informed civic responsibility. Therefore, while televangelists can be powerful catalysts for political participation, their influence must be viewed with an understanding of the potential ethical implications and the need for critical engagement among followers

The potential negative impacts of televangelism on governance and society in Nigeria; all the interviewees agreed that the potential negative effects of televangelism on governance and political engagement in Nigeria include the risk of commercialisation and the perpetuation of political manipulation. As televangelism has grown in popularity, some religious leaders have shifted their focus from spiritual guidance to financial gain, exploiting the faith of their followers for personal enrichment. This commercialisation can lead to a situation where the ethical and moral teachings of televangelists are overshadowed by their financial interests, resulting in a loss of credibility and trust among followers. When the emphasis is placed on donations and material wealth, it diminishes the role of televangelists as moral guides in the socio-political landscape

Also, other Interviewees acknowledged that the televangelism can contribute to political manipulation, where religious leaders endorse specific candidates or policies that align with their interests rather than the collective good of their followers. This endorsement can create a dangerous precedent, where political leaders are perceived as legitimate based solely on their association with influential televangelists, potentially undermining democratic processes. Followers may feel pressured to support these political figures, believing it to be a spiritual

obligation, even if they do not align with the candidates' policies or ethics. This situation can hinder genuine political engagement, as it may result in a polarised electorate driven more by religious loyalty than informed political choice

To ascertain this, one of the Interviewee said that, the influence of televangelism on governance can exacerbate existing societal divisions along religious lines, especially in a diverse country like Nigeria. When televangelists align themselves with specific political parties or candidates, they may inadvertently contribute to the fragmentation of the electorate, leading to increased tensions between religious groups. This polarisation can hinder collaborative efforts toward addressing pressing societal issues, as the focus shifts from collective problem-solving to sectarian loyalties. Thus, while televangelism has the potential to engage citizens in political discourse, it also poses risks that can adversely affect governance and political engagement in Nigeria.

Televangelism influence religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political context; this section started with the opinions on televangelism influence on religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political context. When asked, all the interviewees agreed that televangelists significantly impact the civic engagement and social responsibility of their followers in Nigeria by framing civic duties as integral to religious beliefs. Many televangelists emphasise the importance of being active members of society and participating in communal life as an extension of their faith. They encourage their followers to engage in social issues, such as poverty alleviation, education, and healthcare, often linking these efforts to biblical teachings about compassion and service to others. This religious framing helps to foster a sense of obligation among followers to contribute positively to their communities, thus enhancing civic engagement.

Moreover, the interviewees stated that televangelists often organise and promote charitable initiatives and community development programs, which provide practical avenues for followers to exercise their civic responsibilities. These initiatives might include food drives, health clinics, and educational outreach, allowing followers to engage in hands-on activities that address local needs. By participating in these programs, followers not only contribute to societal welfare but also cultivate a sense of community and belonging among themselves. Such actions are crucial in reinforcing the idea that civic engagement is a shared responsibility that transcends individual or partisan interests, ultimately fostering a spirit of cooperation among diverse groups within society.

However, the interviewees said that the impact of televangelism on civic engagement and social responsibility is not without its challenges. While many televangelists promote positive engagement, there are concerns about the sustainability and effectiveness of the programs they promote. Some initiatives may focus more on publicity and attracting donations rather than addressing systemic issues within communities. Additionally, followers might prioritise religious engagement over civic duties if they perceive televangelism as a means to spiritual fulfilment rather than a pathway to active citizenship. Therefore, while televangelists can inspire social responsibility and civic engagement, it is essential to critically assess the depth and efficacy of these engagements to ensure they lead to meaningful societal change.

Discussion of Findings

Research Question One: How does televangelism promote moral values and ethical leadership in Nigeria?

The findings revealed that the televangelism significantly shapes perceptions of ethical leadership among Nigerian citizens by positioning televangelists as moral authorities who promote values such as honesty, integrity, and accountability, thus encouraging followers to demand higher ethical standards from political leaders and fostering a culture that emphasises moral conduct in governance. This finding upholds the finding of Aluko (2020) which stated that televangelists play a significant role in holding public officeholders accountable by promoting transparency and integrity in governance. Televangelists' sermons that emphasise accountability often result in political discourse among citizens, leading to increased demands for transparency from leaders. In congruence with the finding, the relevance of Social Influence Theory to the finding that televangelism shapes perceptions of ethical leadership lies in its explanation of how followers adopt the moral frameworks presented by televangelists, suggesting that the authority and credibility of these religious leaders significantly impact the ethical standards expected of political leaders within the community. The implication of the finding is that the influence of televangelism on perceptions of ethical leadership implies that religious leaders can play a pivotal role in shaping public expectations and accountability for political leaders, suggesting that enhancing the moral discourse within religious platforms can lead to a more ethically conscious electorate that actively demands integrity from those in power.

Research Question Two: What role does televangelism play in encouraging political participation and civic engagement?

The results showed that the televangelists actively encourage political participation among their followers by framing civic engagement as a spiritual duty, mobilising their congregations during election periods, and promoting the idea that voting and political activism are essential expressions of faith, thereby enhancing political awareness and motivating citizens to engage in the political process. This finding corroborates with the finding of the Babajide (2021) that televangelism significantly influences political participation among Nigerian youth, with many young people motivated to vote or engage in political activism after watching religious broadcasts that emphasise civic responsibility. Equally, the findings of the study support the theoretical framework which is Social Influence Theory is relevant to the finding that televangelists encourage political participation among their followers because it illustrates how the televangelists' framing of civic engagement as a spiritual duty can lead to compliance and internalization of political activism, thereby motivating followers to participate actively in the democratic process as an expression of their faith. The implication of the finding is that the active encouragement of political participation by televangelists implies that religious platforms can serve as effective channels for civic engagement, indicating that integrating faith with political awareness can empower citizens to take an active role in governance and influence democratic processes, potentially leading to increased voter turnout and political activism.

Research Question Three: What are the potential negative impacts of televangelism on governance and society in Nigeria?

The findings revealed that the potential negative effects of televangelism on governance and

political engagement in Nigeria include the commercialisation of faith, where some televangelists prioritise financial gain over moral guidance, and the risk of political manipulation, as followers may feel pressured to support specific candidates based on televangelists' endorsements rather than informed decision-making, which can undermine democratic processes and exacerbate societal divisions. This finding aligns with the finding Obasi (2019) which posited that some televangelists used their platforms to endorse political candidates for personal gain, which often led to the manipulation of public opinion. This practice undermines democratic principles and diminishes the potential positive role that religious figures could play in governance. The theoretical framework that underpinned this study gives backing to this finding as the relevance of Social Influence Theory to the finding regarding the potential negative effects of televangelism highlights how the authority of televangelists can lead to manipulation and the prioritisation of financial interests over ethical guidance, suggesting that followers' susceptibility to influence can result in detrimental outcomes for both governance and individual political agency. The implication of the finding is that the potential negative effects of televangelism on governance and political engagement imply that the commercialisation and political manipulation associated with some televangelists can undermine public trust in religious institutions and the democratic process, highlighting the need for ethical accountability and transparency within religious leadership to prevent exploitation of followers for personal or political gain.

Research Question Four: How does televangelism influence religious and political dynamics in Nigeria's socio-political context?

The finding revealed that televangelists impact the civic engagement and social responsibility of their followers by promoting community service as a religious obligation, organising charitable initiatives that address local needs, and reinforcing the notion that active participation in societal issues is a crucial aspect of their faith, though challenges remain regarding the sustainability and effectiveness of these efforts. This finding supports the finding of Okoye (2022) which elicited that religious broadcasts, including televangelism, have a profound impact on how the public perceives political leaders. Many viewers reported that their opinions on governance and leadership were shaped by the moral and ethical teachings of televangelists. Social Influence Theory is pertinent to the finding that televangelists impact civic engagement and social responsibility, as it underscores how the teachings and actions of religious leaders can instil a sense of obligation among followers to engage in community service, thus reinforcing the social responsibility tied to their religious identity and beliefs. The implication of the finding is that the impact of televangelists on civic engagement and social responsibility implies that religious leaders can mobilise communities for social good, suggesting that effective collaboration between religious organisations and civic initiatives can lead to meaningful societal change, although careful attention must be paid to the sustainability and focus of these efforts to ensure they address systemic issues rather than merely providing temporary relief.

Conclusion

The study concluded that the influence of televangelism on perceptions of ethical leadership underscores the significant role that religious leaders play in shaping public expectations for

integrity in governance, highlighting the potential for moral discourse within religious contexts to promote accountability among political leaders. The study justified that the televangelists effectively mobilise their followers for political participation by framing civic engagement as a spiritual obligation, thereby fostering a more politically aware and active citizenry that sees voting and activism as integral to their faith.

Also, the study established that the potential negative effects of televangelism, including commercialisation and political manipulation, highlight the risks associated with the unchecked influence of religious leaders on political behaviour, which can undermine both public trust in governance and the integrity of the democratic process. Finally, the study concluded that televangelists have a profound impact on the civic engagement and social responsibility of their followers by promoting community service as an extension of their faith, thereby fostering a sense of obligation to contribute positively to societal well-being.

This study contributes to knowledge by providing a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted role of televangelism in shaping governance and socio-political development in Nigeria, highlighting both its potential to foster ethical leadership and civic engagement, as well as the risks of commercialisation and political manipulation, thereby offering valuable insights for policymakers, religious leaders, and scholars interested in the intersection of religion and politics in contemporary Nigerian society.

Recommendations

In view of the findings from the work, the following recommendations have been made.

- 1) Religious leaders actively promote ethical leadership principles in their teachings and engage in discussions about accountability, thereby reinforcing the expectations for integrity among political leaders and empowering their congregations to demand higher ethical standards.
- 2) Televangelists continue to promote civic engagement initiatives and educate their congregations about the importance of political participation, ensuring that their followers are equipped to make informed decisions and actively engage in democratic processes.
- 3) Regulatory frameworks should be established to ensure ethical conduct among televangelists, promoting accountability and transparency in their political endorsements and financial dealings to protect followers from exploitation.
- 4) Televangelists develop and support sustainable community engagement initiatives that address systemic issues, ensuring that their followers' contributions lead to meaningful and long-lasting improvements in their communities.

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