

## Audience Perception of Religious Communication in Economic Crisis and Human Insecurity: A Study of South-west, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*Religious communication comprises of variety of themes, depending on the social differentiation and the cultural heritage of the nation. This study was carried out on audience perception of religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity in South-west, Nigeria. This study is anchored on Cognitive Dissonance Theory, survey research design and in-depth interview were adopted. Out of 28,514,235 population of study, 385 sample was selected. It was found that vast majority of the respondents(71.7%) have a very high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, (68.5%) have a very high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity,(69.0%) have a very high level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity,(69.8%) have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication,(67.2%) have a very high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. Some of the recommendations are: The audiences of religious communication should combine both human efforts and religious communication in the restoration of Nigerian economy and security. Religious communication audiences should always use religious communication to encourage other members of the society to accept, and work towards restoring the economy and security of the nation. Audiences of religious communication should put more commitment to religious communication, as this would enhance their divine connections, which would reflect in their economic growth and security.*

**Keywords:** Audience, Perception, Religious Communication, Economic Crisis, Human Insecurity

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### **Introduction**

Religious communication contains a wide variety of themes, depending on the level of social differentiation and the cultural heritage of the vicinity. These topics are referred to by different names in spiritual traditions when they meet a transcendent reality. A few of them include themes like enlightenment, God realization, awakening, self-knowledge, ecstatic communion, and kensho, which can

be brought on by fasting, praying, chanting, dancing, drinking, and meditation (Sweta, 2018). Religion is one of many bodies of knowledge that are accommodated within the academic discipline of communication, and religious communication occurs within a religious community. Religious communication is one factor that unites people in Nigeria today, and one way religion has accomplished this is through the intrinsic artistic expression and communicative activities that may be found in it (Asuquo 2019; Yta 2020).

Religion, however, is defined by the Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary of English Language as a belief in and worship of a super human controlling power, especially a personal God or gods. Various individuals may have different ideas on what communication is. In other words, there is not a single, clear definition that everyone can agree with. It could be categorized as the study or practice of information transmission. Simply said, communication refers to the exchange of thoughts, feelings, wishes, and messages among numerous people via sound or symbols. It is a process that assigns and communicates meaning to create and share understanding. This process involves a variety of repertoire abilities, including speaking, listening, analysing, questioning, assessing, observing, and both interpersonal and intrapersonal processing. "Religious communication" refers to the exchange of information between the Supernatural and humans. Sometimes, divine messages go straight to the person who needs the information, but in many cases, the divine message goes to divinely chosen apostles, messengers, and prophets. They inform their religious members, like prophet Isaiah who prophesied that God would come to Zion to redeem those who turn away from sins. Jesus Christ was wounded for the transgressions of the world, He was bruised for the iniquities of the followers, the chastisement of our peace was upon him and with his stripes, the world is healed (Isaiah 59:20; Isaiah 53:5). In the same vein, Prophet Muhammad SAW, however, was sent to the entire world, according to the Quran. Numerous Muslim scholars have maintained that Islam, to Muslims, is not merely a religion in the traditional meaning of the word, but a comprehensive way of life that encompasses all aspects of human life. Given that religion is the common man's opiate, this is understandable, and this may be somewhat true in societies when authorities persecute their people, their followers are passive, and they turn to religious communication for comfort or solace (Lateef, 2014). According to the Qur'anic verse above, there are four different channels through which religion is communicated: God to man, Man to God, God to man to man, and God to Angel to man to man. Technically, communication from God to man is known as revelation. This revelation from God can solve socio-economic and security problems of any community of people who diligently seek the help of God.

Religious communication acquires a transcendent power and a claim of authority and superiority over secular speeches. Religious speeches raise crucial problems about how national and international identities are established since it has the power to influence broad sentiments. How states view the spread of religious groups' messages varies significantly as "religion" becomes a key component of defining societal matters like economic issues and dangers to national security (Monroe, 2007). Through a variety of religious acts and communications, the essence of faith is transmitted. Religion, as a societal activity, has always served as a conduit for cultural information through its many ways such as: language, dress, and art. The white cloth is thought to help the child think clearly. Religious communication is the primary means by which knowledge is developed and human attitudes and behaviours are stabilized or transformed in the absence of logical and scientific understanding. Religions speak of principles that can profoundly alter individuals' standard of life (Sweta, 2018).

There is a strong connection between communicating religion with the revelation of reality and building of a community, religion employs a variety of communication techniques, including: prayer, preaching, worship, reading and listening to sacred texts, singing, and sharing, prophetic discourse, ritual practice, and theological study (Arens, 2011). The degree to which a community or a nation understands religious communication could be a sign of development in it overall. Religion and communication, two fundamental human endeavours, determine the rate of development in every field of human society.

### **Statement of Problem**

Religious communication is deeply involved in the task of societal development and integration through the distribution of knowledge, ideas, values, norms, feelings, wants, etc. The extent to which this transfer takes place motivates people to show one another fresh and profound tolerance, respect, love, protection, gift and understanding. This can also transcend to economic development and spirit of peace in a country. Religious centres are so many in Nigeria, and the religious communicators keep asking people to seek divine answers to every situation. Thus, this study was carried out to ascertain audience perception of religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are to:

1. Ascertain audience level of trust to religious communication in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.
2. Find out effect of religious communication on the audience in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.
3. Determine audience response to religious communication in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

### **Literature Review**

Since religion communication is thought to have a more complicated structural makeup than other forms of communication, communication theory views religious communication as distinct from other types of communication. Contrary to other modes of communication, religious communication especially nonverbal communication transmits information in a collective form as opposed to directly to an individual. Religious communication is born out of pre-structured communication events, such as divine services in holy sites, prayer times in churches/mosques or temples, individual rituals, and religious gatherings, which ask for the cooperation (Sweta, 2018). Hjarvard (2008), who made this claim more recently, contends that modern media operate as agents of religious transformation by altering both the character of member relationships and the authority of religious institutions. In the growing religious market, traditional religious authorities are losing and to a large extent have already lost the ability to govern their own symbols and the mechanisms by which those symbols act for the wellbeing of their flock (Clark, 2007).

Religious leaders have roles and position in the divine's knowledge acquisition, which enables them to pass judgment, persuade, and issue instructions. This system of communicating relations underpins religious epistemic authority. This assumes the emergence of a wider social and institutional structure made up of norms, values, and practices (Zelditch, 2001). Communication is a human activity. It happens in social groupings, clubs, families, religious groups, and political organizations, among others (Ushie 2018; Udoudom, Idagu & Nwoye, 2018).

Religious communication is enabled by skills from the repertoire skills of the speaker, which include speaking, listening, analysing, questioning, assessing, observing, and both interpersonal and intrapersonal processing. The process of communication offers important insights into the nature of people. Comprehension and the insight which is revealed in symbols and symbolic actions arising from this process contributes to a complete understanding of the human beings. Religious communication is the foundation of cohesion and collaboration for development and peaceful co-existence. One of the fundamental forces in every human community is religion (Duke & Osim, 2020). It either positively or negatively contributes through its functions to the development of people and society. In terms of societal transformation, religious rituals are not only communicative but also transformative. Like culture, religious communication establishes a variety of rules that govern and direct people's views. The primary source of normative behaviour in most human societies is religion.

Therefore, religion's fundamental role is to build individuals and groups of people, including the entire country, through education, instruction, and knowledge. In this sense, religion functions as a

communication tool. The fact that "the relationships and orders of the social and natural world are given, they have been established, and this establishment comes from outside, from the super-social and supernatural realm" is created to establish its message (Eller, 2007). In African traditional religion, diviners who are experts in religious ceremonies, signs, and interpretations, also act as professionals in the field of religious communication. The messages or will of the gods are conveyed to the populace through these signs and symbols. These diviners, who possess divine powers, act as both a god's messengers and a god. African traditional religion includes divination rituals, such a ceremony serves as the entrance to all lines of connection between worshippers and the divinities (Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2020). African religious myths provide morality, values, concepts, and wisdom. African traditional religion also uses myths as intellectual allegories for the supernatural and the cosmos. Africans have always passed down their culture and historical knowledge orally from one generation to the next. For instance, myths regarding the universe's creation provide insightful justifications for the nature and beginning of existence.

Consequently, one can draw the conclusion that African myths serve a communicative purpose. According to Yoruba traditional theology, Satan, also known as Esu (or Eshu), is said to be the supreme god (Olodumare), and he oversees fostering open dialogue between God and humans. In the Yoruba religious communication, Esu (also known as Satan) is seen as the way opener for communication between humans and nonhuman beings, as well as a life-transformer and a healer of illnesses (Awolola, 2018). Religious music's ability to communicate is important in African society. As pertained to religious communication, knowledge, values, and cultural practices are passed down from one generation to the next through singing or music. It serves as a repository for African history, culture, traditions, and morals. Songs or musics in religions play significant roles for human benefits. For example, it is believed that the use of sound is crucial in the establishment and imposition of order in the cosmos by both human and nonhuman forces (Waterman, 2009; Okafor & Stella 2018). Musics and songs can govern the flow of supernatural power among worshipers by invoking an out-of-the-ordinary spiritual possession of worshipers in a religious setting. This can change a negative situation to positive. Similarly, the Fulani people of Northern Nigeria may use musical communication to manage and order the movement of animals, worshipers can also use it to direct and regulate everything including the economic and security situations. Regardless of the apparent differences in their language, culture, religion, race, colour, or economic or social status, members of a given society or community have learned to understand, appreciate, put up with, and work together to pursue a perceived common goal and destiny through religion. This is known as societal integration. As a social instrument in society, religion serves as a means of communication. Religion itself is a form of speech. It conveys to people concepts, information, feelings, knowledge, thoughts, wishes, and other information. The most efficient way to interact for harmonious cohabitation, long-term societal advancement and development is through religion (Bassey, Anweting & Maashin, 2019).

Having studied the ideas of communication and religion, they are closely intertwined. As a powerful form of communication, religion can function as a socialization tool and a unifying force in a society. Religious communication is the most prevalent social force or instrument in modern human civilization that unite people regardless of their social, educational, economic, cultural, or tribal standing (Abel & Uket 2016). Human society is created and maintained by mutual contacts, which also help to resolve disagreements in ways that promote peace and stability. Through shared discoveries, experiments, and intellectual stimulations, religious communication supports development in all facets of human life. It should be emphasized that modern human society has tremendously improved and expanded, thanks to both communication and religion. Religious communication has a constructive role by giving people's lives meaning and purpose, enhancing life satisfaction in the rapidly changing modern society, deepening the sense of community, and belonging, and reducing inner tensions. The primary role of religious communication is the reciprocal exchange of value expectations that allows related actors to share meaning (Kim & Kim, 2016). However, this strategy cannot completely rule out the risk of cultural clashes between various religious societies. Furthermore, there is the practical issue that finding a rational

solution is challenging due to each religion's own absoluteness when a difference in faith leads to communication issues across various civilizations.

In a diverse society like Nigeria, healthy religion and efficient communication can encourage peaceful coexistence and the achievement of societal integration. In this way, people in their society can better understand themselves, discuss their struggles, and give potential solutions to their political, economic, social, ethnic, educational, and spiritual issues through effective religious communication. A civilization that lacks religious communication is a dead society. This is due to the lack of social and spiritual contacts in such a culture. The general state of chaos, conflicts, and upheaval that would otherwise exist in such a society might be avoided with a positive religion and effective communication. Religion, on the other hand, is thought to be a crucial component of communication (Ottuh & Jemegbe, 2020).

The establishment of human value is related to the reconfirmation of spirituality that was shrouded in the shadow of reason, and with the awakening of one's true self, it can serve as a catalyst for empathy to inspire communication and harmony among religions that share human-based intrinsic values as a medium. Additionally, the rediscovering of spirituality and awakening to one's actual self promote optimum mental interactions in human communication acts and enhance one's values and quality of life as a whole person (Kim & Kim, 2016). In this regard, religion is closely tied to cultural, regional, and traditional values of each community, so people continually pay attention to the value of reciprocal dialogue in fostering unity, to pursue a common goal such as economic, cultural, political, and educational values, arousal, execution, and adjustment.

Sometimes, a certain religious communication may encourage good neighbourliness, social righteousness, urbanity, civility, and love while another religious communication may promote chaos by advocating a holy war against non-believers. This is the only contradiction that is known to be true and to have occurred repeatedly throughout the history of religions. Religious communication supports either passivity or revolt, integration, or disruption in any situation. Prophetic roles are also played by religion. It offers trustworthy and established benchmarks against which institutional norms can be assessed. Religious communication serves as both a foundation and justification for critiques of the status quo. Religious communication is assumed to be the social umpire and "watchdog" in a society. Religion has always given a social forum as the accepted keeper of human values and social regulation.

Religious communication offers society a helpful framework for coping with difficulties and misery. Many people who had considered suicide instead decided to live their lives with renewed bravery. Religious communication gives those who are given lengthy prison sentences the necessary hope for a brighter tomorrow. It makes the despairing and dejected find comfort and steers its adherents' focus away from the current injustices, deprivation, oppression, exploitation, and dehumanization to a happy future in the heavenly lands, in the mindset of futuristic happiness and hope of divine intervention. Paul had taught in the New Testament that "all things work together for good" to them that love God. In this view, religious communication encourages audience to accept even unpleasant life events and to view their fate as being predetermined by God (Romans, 8:28). Christians are obliged to prioritize seeking God's kingdom. They need to search for a new house that Jesus has already built for them and whose architect is God. This kind of doctrinal focus elevates the supra-human realm in the perceptions of followers. This kind of communication can transform both economic, security issues and human orientation.

Some religious rituals call for the expression of a spirit of compassion, empathy, and forgiveness. Religious communication serves as a tool of societal control. Numerous statistics show that conversion to Christianity has decreased crime in several societies. Around the world, several formerly criminals now serve as pastors. Religious communication has influenced its followers to accept the situation of things in many societies. This is how religion plays a conservative role. This gives the impression that revolution is a diabolical and pointless endeavour. There are martyrs, the people who have paid a high price, perhaps even the ultimate one, because of their commitment to Christ (Diego, 2020). According to Koenig, McCullough, and Larson (2001), religious commitment is related to how much a person involves himself in his religious activities. The supposition is that a highly religious committed persons will evaluate the world

through religious schemas and thus will integrate his or her religion into much of his other life, perception of religious communication is dependent on the level of religious commitment.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study is anchored on Cognitive Dissonance Theory. Cognitive dissonance is the perception of information that is incongruent to one's belief. A person's actions, feelings, ideas, beliefs, values, and things in the surroundings are examples of relevant pieces of information. When people take part in an action that conflicts with one or more of those things, cognitive dissonance is often experienced as psychological discomfort. In accordance with this hypothesis, people will go to great lengths to alter two behaviours or thoughts until they are psychologically consistent with one another. When a person's beliefs and newly learned facts conflict, discomfort sets in. To ease their discomfort, the person seeks a solution to the conflict (Yalda & Zawn, 2022). The concept of cognitive dissonance was introduced by American psychologist, Leon Festinger in 1957. He states that the mental pain that occurs from having two contradictory views, values, or attitudes is referred to as cognitive dissonance. Due to the desire for consistency in attitudes and perceptions, this conflict can make people feel uneasy or uncomfortable.

Although cognitive dissonance affects everyone to some extent, it is not always simple to identify. There are certain indicators that what you are feeling might be caused by dissonance, such as: (i) Experiencing discomfort prior to acting or deciding. (ii) Trying to rationalize or justify a choice you've made or an action you've taken out of embarrassment or shame. (iii) Feeling ashamed and trying to conceal your behaviour from others. (iv) Feeling guilty or regretful over a former action or inaction. (v) Doing something you didn't want to do due to peer pressure or a fear of missing out. Cognitive Dissonance Theory is suitable in this study because many Nigerians are confused about the effectiveness of religious communication in this period of economic comatose and human insecurity. Meanwhile, the level of religious communication in Nigeria is enough to salvage the country from economic crisis, terrorism, and banditry. Unfortunately, the price of every commodity keeps rising on daily basis, the US Dollar keeps gathering strength against the Naira with the cases of terrorism and banditry in every nook and cranny of the country. Before this challenge, many Nigerians depended on religious communication as their only hope for success and survival in all their endeavours. As the problems persist, this paper sought to ascertain audience perception of religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity in South-west, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

This study adopted survey research design and in-depth interview (mixed method). The data were gathered through questionnaire and interview guide. Out of 28,514,235 population of study, 385 sample was selected through Australian Calculator. 12 respondents were also interviewed. In the first instance, simple random technique was used in selecting three states from the six states of South-west, Nigeria. The reason for using simple random technique was to avail every state the chance of being selected as part of the sample. Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States were selected. One Local Government Area (LGA) was further selected from each of the selected states, making it three Local Government Areas. Simple random technique was also used to give every LGA the chance of being selected as a sample member. Amuwo-Odofin was selected from Lagos State, Obafemi-Owode from Ogun State and Ona-Ara LGA from Oyo State. Two communities were purposively selected from each of the selected LGAs, making it six communities. The reason for using purposive sampling was to select communities where religious congregants could be found in large numbers. Copies of the questionnaire were purposively administered to religious individuals as thus: Alakija=64, Abule-Ado=64, both in Amuwo-Odofin LGA, Lagos State; Ibafo=64, Mowe=64 in Obafemi-Owode LGA, Ogun State; Agugu=64, Oremeji=65 in Ona-Ara LGA, Oyo State. However, 381 copies of the questionnaire were returned to the researcher. 2 religious audiences were purposefully selected from each of the six communities making it 12 respondents for interview.

## Data Presentation and Analysis

**Table 1: Respondents' Religious Inclination**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Christian	273	71.7%
Islam	96	25.2%
African Traditional Religion	12	3.1%
Others	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

Table 1 above recorded that majority of the respondents 273 (71.7%) were Christians, seconded by 96 (25.2%) respondents who were Muslims while 12 (3.1%) respondents were the audiences of African Traditional Religion.

**Table2: Respondents' level of trust to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very high level	264	69.3%
High level	85	22.3%
Average level	16	4.2%
Low level	12	3.1%
Very low level	4	1.0%
No level	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

The data presented on table 2 above contain that vast majority of the respondents 264(69.3%) said that they have a very high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 85 (22.3%) respondents reported that they have a high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 16 (4.2%) respondents ticked that they have average level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 12 (3.1%) respondents were of the opinion that they have low level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 4 (1.0%) respondents ticked that they have a very low level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Table 3: Respondents’ level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very high level	261	68.5%
High level	88	23.1%
Average level	17	4.5%
Low level	12	3.1%
Very low level	3	0.8%
No level	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

The data recorded on table 3 above state that majority of the respondents 261(68.5%) said that they have a very high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 88 (23.1%) respondents said that they have a high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 17 (4.5%) respondents ticked that they have average level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 12 (3.1%) respondents maintained that they have low level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 3 (1.0%) respondents said that they have a very low level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Table 4: Respondents’ level of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very high level	263	69.0%
High level	87	22.8%
Average level	18	4.7%
Low level	11	2.9%
Very low level	2	0.5%
No level	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

The data presented on table 4 depict that majority of the respondents 263(69.0%) said that they have a very high level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 87 (22.8%) respondents held that they have a high level of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 18 (4.7%) respondents were of the opinion that they have average level of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic

crisis and human insecurity, 11 (2.9%) respondents said that they have low level of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 2 (0.5%) respondents ticked that they have a very low level of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Table 5:Area of benefit from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Financial gift	177	46.5%
Business blossom	91	23.9%
Divine protection	83	21.8%
Divine redemption	19	4.10%
Job opportunity	8	2.1%
Financial breakthrough	3	0.8%
None	0	0
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

Table 5 portrays that majority of the respondents 177(46.5%) said that they have benefited financial gift through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 91 (23.9%) respondents said that they have benefited business blossom through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 83 (21.8%) respondents maintained that they have benefited divine protection from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 19 (4.10%) respondents said that they have benefited divine redemption from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 8 (2.1%) respondents said that they have benefited job opportunity through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity and 3 (0.8%) of the respondents reported that they have benefited financial breakthrough from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Table 6: Expectancy level in economic and security restoration through religious communication**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very high level	266	69.9%
High level	89	23.4%
Average level	13	3.4%
Low level	9	2.4%
Very low level	4	1.0%
None	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

The data recorded on table 6 above express that majority of the respondents 266(69.9%) said that they have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 89 (23.4%) of the respondents ticked that they have a high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication,13 (3.4%) respondents have average level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 9 (2.4%) respondents said that they have low level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 4 (1.0%) respondents said that they have a very low level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Table 7:Audience level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.**

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Very high level	256	67.2%
High level	98	25.7%
Moderate level	17	4.5%
Low level	6	1.6%
Very low level	4	1.0%
No level	0	0%
Total	381	100

Source: Field survey

The data recorded on table 7 above depict that greater number of the respondents 256(67.2%) said that they have a very high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 98 (25.7%) of the respondents had a high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 17 (4.5%) respondents maintained that they have average level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity,6 (1.6%) respondents ticked that they have low level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 4 (1.0%) respondents held that they have a very low level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

**Discussion of Findings**

Table 1 recorded that greater number of the respondents 273 (71.7%) were Christians, followed by 96 (25.2%) respondents who were Muslims while 12 (3.1%) respondents were the audiences of African Traditional Religion. This could be because of the areas studied as churches were seen more than mosques in many streets where the survey took place. Qualitatively, one of them who identified himself as a Christian, said that religious communication is the only hope of the World in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity. A Muslim said that religious communication can solve the problem of economic crisis and insecurity. The data recorded on table 2 express that vast majority of the respondents 264(69.3%) have a very high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 96 (25.2%) respondents reported that they have a high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 16 (4.2%) respondents ticked that they have average level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 12 (3.1%) were of the opinion that they have low level of trust on religious communication in

the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 4 (1.0%) respondents ticked that they have a very low level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. Qualitatively, 12 (100%) of the respondents maintained that they trust religious communication and they are sustained through religious communication. This result is related to the statement by Arens (2011), which states that there is a strong connection between communicating religion with the revelation of reality and building of a community, religion employs a variety of communication techniques, including: prayer, preaching, worship, reading and listening to sacred texts, singing, and sharing, prophetic discourse, ritual practice, and theological study. This shows that audience of religious communication still trust the words of their religious communicators.

The data recorded on table 3 depict that majority of the respondents 261 (68.5%) have a very high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 88 (23.1%) respondents said that they have a high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 17 (4.5%) respondents responded that they have average level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 12 (3.1%) respondents maintained that they have low level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 3 (1.0%) respondents said that they have a very low level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. 11 (91.7%) of the qualitative respondents said that they are highly committed to religious communication as their only survival hope in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, while 1 (8.3%) respondent was committed to religious communication at average level. The result is in tandem with the saying by Diego (2020), which express that there are martyrs, the people who have paid a high price, perhaps even the ultimate one, because of their commitment to Christ. The implication of this result is that greater number of the audiences of religious communication are seriously committed to religious communication in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

The data presented on table 4 record that majority of the respondents 263 (69.0%) have a very high level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 87 (22.8%) respondents held that they have a high level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 18 (4.7%) respondents were of the opinion that they have average level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 11 (2.9%) respondents said that they have low level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 2 (0.5%) respondents ticked that they have a very low level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. The qualitative data depict that 10 (83.3%) respondents have a very high level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, but 2 (16.7%) respondents have average level of benefits from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

Furthermore, table 5 portrays that greater number of the respondents 177 (46.5%) have benefited financial gift through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 91 (23.9%) respondents said that they have benefited business blossom through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 83 (21.8%) respondents have benefited divine protection from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 19 (4.10%) respondents have benefited divine redemption from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 8 (2.1%) respondents said that they have benefited job opportunity through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity and 3 (0.8%) of the respondents reported that they have benefited financial breakthrough from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. Qualitatively, 8 (66.7%) respondents said that they benefited business blossom through religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 2 (16.7%) of the respondents benefited divine protection from religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 1 (8.3%) respondent benefited divine redemption and 1 (8.3%) respondent benefited financial gift through religious communication in the time of economic crisis

and human insecurity. These results on table 4 and 5 are in corroboration with the dictum by Sweta (2018), which avers that religions speak of principles that can profoundly alter individuals' standard of life. This shows that the audience of religious communication are really benefiting from the religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human security in the country.

The data recorded on table 6 express that larger number of the respondents 266(69.9%) have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 89 (23.4%) of the respondents ticked that they have a high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 13 (3.4%) respondents ticked that they have average level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 9 (2.4%) respondents said that they have low level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 4 (1.0%) respondents said that they have a very low level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. The qualitative data record that 10 (83.3%) respondents have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 1 (8.3%) respondent has high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, 1 (8.3%) respondent reported average level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication. This finding on table 6 is related to the adumbration by Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020), which maintains that the general state of chaos, conflicts, and upheaval that would otherwise exist in a society might be avoided with a positive religion and effective communication. Religion and communication work best together in this way. This is to affirm that greater number of the audiences of religious communication have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication.

The data recorded on table 7 depict that greater number of the respondents 256(67.2%) have a very high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 98 (25.7%) of the respondents have a high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 17 (4.5%) respondents maintained that they have average level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 6 (1.6%) respondents ticked that they have low level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, 4 (1.0%) respondents held that they have a very low level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. 12 (100%) of the qualitative respondents said that they have a very high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. This result is in alignment with the statement by Lateef (2014), which expresses that religion is the common man's opiate, this is understandable, and this may be somewhat true in societies when authorities persecute their people, their followers are passive, and they turn to religious communication for comfort or solace. This finding implies that vast majority of the audiences accept religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity.

## Conclusion

This study has been carried out on audience perception of religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity in South-west Nigeria. In line with the data gathered, vast majority of the audiences of religious communication have a very high level of trust on religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity, they have a very high level of commitment to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. The audiences have a very high level of expectancy in economic and security restoration through religious communication, and they also have a very high level of acceptance to religious communication in the time of economic crisis and human insecurity. Therefore, this study concluded that the audiences of religious communication have perceived religious communication as a relevant option that could be used to halt economic crisis and human insecurity in Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Audiences of religious communication should always understudy their sources of religious communication, to know if they are worthy of trust, as this would determine their success in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.
2. Audiences of religious communication should put more commitment to religious communication, as this would enhance their divine connections, which would reflect in their economic growth and security.
3. Audiences of religious communication should always seek divine information for economic benefits and security in this time of economic crisis and human insecurity.
4. The audiences of religious communication should combine both human efforts and religious communication in the restoration of Nigerian economy and security.
5. Religious communication audiences should always use religious communication to encourage other members of the society to accept, and work towards restoring the economy and security of the nation.

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