

Pentecostalism and Traditional Identity among the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria

Ugochukwu T. Ugwu¹, Stella O. Nnatu², and Adaeze E. Chinweuba³

¹²³Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Corresponding Author: Ugochukwu T. Ugwu. Email: ut.ugwu@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

There has been proliferation of Pentecostal churches and proselytizing in Nigeria. However, little is known empirically about how Pentecostalism affects the traditional religious identities of the rural dwellers in southeast Nigeria. In light of this, this study investigated how Pentecostalism affects traditional identity of the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria. The theoretical framework is structuralism. The study used mixed method research design. 203 is the sample size for the quantitative data while 4 participants were purposively selected as sample for the qualitative data. The study found that Pentecostalism has affected traditional identity through aggressive proselytizing thereby orchestrating unhealthy relationship among pentecostalists and non-pentecostalists. The study recommends governments interventions with intent to enforce relevant laws against noise pollution and should also arrest and prosecute religious and traditional leaders engaging in fake healing and fake miracles. Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to cohabit peacefully, among others.

Keywords: Religion, Pentecostalism, Traditional, Identity

Introduction

Pentecostalism is a Protestant Charismatic Christian movement that emphasizes direct personal experience of God through baptism with the Holy Spirit (Oyewo, 2012). It also refers to a number of Christian movements emphasizing baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues, prophecy, healing and exorcism (Levinson, 2006; Martin, 2006;). The term Pentecostal is derived from Pentecost, an event that commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the followers of Jesus Christ, and the speaking in unlearned tongues as described in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles (Marshall, 2009; Miller, Sargeant & Flory, 2013).

Pentecostalism adheres to the dictates of the Bible and the necessity of the new birth. It is distinguished by belief in the “baptism of the Holy Spirit” that enables a Christian to live a spirit-filled and empowered life. This empowerment includes the use of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues and divine healing (Adamolekun, 2020; Adebayo, 2017). Themes in Pentecostalism include subjects like restorationism, faith healing and greater attention on the person and work of the Holy Spirit (Anderson, 2004; Archer, 2018). According to Diara and Onah (2020) during the early years of civil rights movement around the globe, women were vital to the early Pentecostal movement.

Traditional identity is a part of a person’s identity or their self-conception and self-perception that is related to nationality, ethnicity, religion, social class, generation, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture (David, 2012). Thus, traditional identity is both characteristic of the individual and the cultural or ethnic group such a person belongs to (Bonke, 2017; Falola, 2018). Traditional identity relates to a person’s cultural identity. It includes how people see themselves and the groups with which they belong (Hallum, 2012; Oniya, 2002). A person’s understanding of his own identity develops from birth and is shaped by prevailing circumstances, values and attitudes in the social environment (Elwell, 2017; Fayomi, 2020). Traditional identity is a part of a person’s self-awareness and relates to ethnicity, religion, social class, locality or any kind of social group that has its own distinct culture. Gaiya (2020) noted that there are three avenues that make up a person’s traditional identity, these are cultural knowledge, category label and social connections such as becoming a member of one religious group or the other.

According to Gbolahan (2004), traditional identify is a fluid process that is changed by different social, cultural and historical experiences. Some people undergo more traditional identity changes than others; those who change less often have a clear cultural identity. This means that they have a dynamic but yet stable integration of their culture. Hallum (2012) and Graham (2018) indicated that there are three components that make up a person’s traditional identity; they are cultural knowledge, category label and social connections. Cultural knowledge is when a person connects to their identity through understanding of their culture’s core characteristics. Category label is where a person connects with their identity through indirect membership of said culture, while social

connection occurs where a person connects with their people through social relationships (Hallum, 2012; Graham, 2018).

Ubaku and Ugwuja (2016) did a study on Pentecostalism and the dwindling state of Igbo language. The aim of the study was to find out the influence of Pentecostalism on traditional identity in Ideani, Idemili North. Using a sample size of 204 respondents selected using purposive sampling method the study found that to a large extent Pentecostalism influences traditional identity amongst the people of Ideani in Idemili North. It was further found that the emergence of Pentecostalism has triggered intense renewal among all the Christian denominations in Igboland. Hence, 30% of the respondents stated that deliverance, healing, signs and wonders, fasting, prayer, speaking in tongues and renewal programmes are becoming increasingly popular among all denominations including the orthodox churches. The qualitative findings noted that the phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in Ideani community has ushered in a unique form of spirituality that was never introduced by the western missionaries and surprisingly also; the proliferation of Pentecostal churches in the study area has negatively affected traditional values of the people. Today, some youths no longer have respects for their elders because some pastors somewhere said their father or uncle is behind their predicaments thereby effectively negating the traditional norm of respect for the elderly. Some elderly persons have even been accused and labelled wrongly.

Uzukwu (2016) carried out another study to investigate the role of Pentecostal church growth and traditional institutions in Nimo, Anambra State. The researcher adopted quantitative survey and used descriptive statistics to analyze data from 240 respondents. In the end, the study found that the role or influence of Pentecostalism is not restricted to the Igbo Christianity. As a formidable agent of social change, it is also having considerable impact on the cultural pattern of the Igbo people in Nimo. Specifically, 41.5% of the respondents said that in Nimo, there are certain Christian denominations formed around syncretistic principles that originated from African traditions. In most cases, these denominations are a consequence of Pentecostal encounter. The researcher reported that in many cases, the level of syncretism involved in these denominations is so evident that such churches could not be classified as Pentecostals. Nevertheless, the fact that these denominations used the Holy Bible and were able to respond to some religious questions

regarding their activities clearly indicate that such a church is influenced by the growth of Pentecostalism. In addition to Christian principles, this category of churches has certain elements of metaphysical power and African spirituality, which indicates one popular way through which Pentecostalism is currently influencing our cultural patterns (i.e., traditional identities).

Achunike (2018) conducted a panel study to ascertain the influence of Pentecostalism on Catholic Priests and Seminarians in Onitsha, Anambra State Nigeria. Using a sample size of 300 respondents the study observed that the proliferation of churches in Onitsha, Anambra State Nigeria has both merit and demerit. For example, 55% of the respondents stated that one of the major positive social influences of Pentecostal church growth is seen in the number of churches all over Onitsha that established Nursery and Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Universities which provided job opportunities for many people. Likewise Teaching Hospitals and Mission Hospitals are also established by these Pentecostal churches which often time provide good health care services to their patients. 15% of the respondents indicated that people with different kind of spiritual and physical problems got solutions to their problems through revivals and crusades organized by these Pentecostal churches that brought healing, deliverance from the bondage of witches and wizards and many other miracles. Nonetheless, 13.5% of the respondents regretted that the spread of Pentecostalism in Onitsha has affected traditional norms and values in the society leading to labelling of people as sinners, outsiders, strangers, name calling, stereotyping of traditional worshippers and the gradual extinction of morality in the society.

Ekwuru (2019) conducted a systematic study to identify problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Nigeria, with a focus on Mbaitoli LGA of Imo State. A total of 204 sample size was generated using Taro Yamane statistical formula. The study found that the Igbo society and culture has always been characterized by strong brotherhood, which largely manifest in the form of *umunna* and age grades. But the emergence and subsequent growth of Pentecostalism has drastically degraded this culture and tradition of oneness. 40% of the respondents argued that the situation could be linked directly to mode of operation of most of these Pentecostal churches. The qualitative finding corroborated that members of a particular congregation refer to one another as “brother”

and “sister”. They are also known to provide brotherly assistance to one another, such as visitation of the sick and helping out in securing paid jobs. However, the way and manner this is being practiced in the society exposed many Pentecostal churches to the risk of over-fraternalization (30.7%), religious nepotism (25.3%) and spiritual ethnicity in Mbaitoli Local Government Area (27.5%). But most importantly, such development is having detrimental impact on the Igbo *ummuna* and age grade traditional systems. For instance, the over-fraternalization of many Pentecostal churches, which is unchristian, prompts such church members to regard those that do not belong to their denomination as strangers and sinners, including family members and relatives.

Nwachukwu (2020) carried out a study tagged “The birth of systematic theology in contemporary Black Africa: an investigation into new interpretations of the Christian faith by the newly evangelized.” The purpose of the study was to find out problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Arochukwu, Abia State, Nigeria. Using a sample size of 250 respondents it was found that there are many problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identities in Arochukwu, 70% of the respondents indicated that a lot of socio-cultural changes have taken place in the study area, some of them have been observed to be sudden, total and devastating, while others happened so gradual but equally corrosive in terms of their impacts on traditional values of the good people of Arochukwu. 20% of the respondents stated that most of the cultural forms and dress patterns that constituted the nucleus of the traditional communal life have vanished. 5% of the respondents noted that the pristine social network that promoted brotherly love within the kingship structure of extended family system has been severed and dismembered because of the advent of Pentecostalism whereas 4% of the respondents regretted that the village commune of the political structure that guaranteed a type of republican form of democratization has been deformed and repudiated in Arochukwu by Pentecostal churches.

Falayi (2021) carried out another study to investigate the proliferation of churches, causes and effects on church growth in Ikere Local Government Area of Ado Ekiti, Nigeria. The study relied on cross-sectional survey method. Using a sample size of 300 respondents the study found that the negative impacts of Pentecostalism in Ikere LGA is not peculiar to the churches alone, the spreading of the two major religions, Christianity and Islam in the

nation which lead to increase in the number of Pastors and Muslim clerics equally impacts on traditional identities/norms and the leaders at the helm of affairs. 35.5% of the respondents indicated that the propagation of the two religions has failed the nation and has no positive influence on our political leaders which has resulted in the present economy setbacks, widespread corruption, high rate of criminal activities and corrupt politicians. The qualitative findings clarified that the nation leaders are under the teachings of either Pastors or Muslim clerics which ought to have positive impact on them, and this has reflected in the governance of the nation. The study concluded that if the Pastors and Imams perform their roles as priests of God and not priests of stomachs, the nation would have been better for it. Thus, bad governance and high rate of crimes being witnessed in Nigeria are clear evidence of negative impacts of the proliferation of both churches and mosques on the nation.

With the proliferation of Pentecostal churches and proselytizing, little is known empirically about how Pentecostalism affects the traditional religious identities of the rural dwellers in southeast Nigeria. In light of this, this study is designed to investigate how Pentecostalism affects traditional identity of the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study intends to provide answers to the following research questions:

- i.** How does Pentecostalism influence traditional identity among Urum of Southeast Nigeria?
- ii.** What are the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria?
- iii.** How can the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria be addressed?

Theoretical framework

After a thorough recap of all the theories reviewed in this study, structuralism is apt, most suitable and therefore adopted as the theoretical framework for the study. Structuralism was chosen because it was able to succinctly explain the proliferation of Pentecostal churches and its implications on the traditional values and norms of the Urum people of Southeast region. Structuralism tries to draw our minds to the inner conscious and

unconscious impulses that generate behaviour (i.e. encourage people to align with the value systems of either Pentecostalism or traditional identity). The theory tries to offer an explanation to the diversity of several patterns of thoughts which are imminent, built into the human mind that pushes people to jettison a particular belief system over the other.

Furthermore, the theory argues that language is a very powerful cultural tool that has the capacity to influence the mind. For this reason, many residents of Urum who were avid followers of tradition but later changed their stand and aligned with the Pentecostal churches could have done so because of the orderly use of language and words to reconstruct their thinking and perception of the social world. It follows therefore that the teachings and messages of Pentecostal churches in Urum could lead to loss of traditional value systems. These theoretical permutations, assumptions and perspectives make structuralism most suitable for a study like this that bothers on perceived benefits of learning the Chinese language in the modern society.

Methods

Study design

The research design adopted for this study was the mixed methods research design which involves the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection to gather information from a given population at a specific period of time.

Area of the study

This study was carried out in Urum Awka North Local Government Area of Anambra State, Southeastern Nigeria. Urum is one of the communities that make up Awka North LGA. It is an agrarian society with a large percentage of the population mainly yam farmers. The history of Urum has been traced to Upata; who was the founding father of Urum. He was a well-known farmer and hunter who commanded the respect of everyone in the entire Eri kingdom. He was one of the grandchildren of Eri who left his parental confines in search of greener pasture. Fortunately, he found arable land with good soil nutrients that made him settle there. In taking cognizance of his roots, he named one of his farmlands, Umueri. Urum oral tradition confirms that Upata got married to Mgbenu when he was ripe for marriage and his wife was beautiful with sterling qualities of a woman. Thereafter, the union was blessed with four children that now represent the four villages that make up Urum today namely: Akaeze village, Ifiteora village, Umuife village and Akitinyi village

respectively. Christianity and African Traditional Religion are the two popular religions in Urum. The indigenes are predominantly Igbo speaking people and located just few kilometres drive away from Awka metropolis, which is the state capital of Anambra State. According to Ekwoanya (2015) Urum is located very close to the state capital and known for food production.

Population and sample selection

According to National Population Commission (2006), Urum of Southeast Nigeria has a total population of 33,000 persons, comprising 17,297 males and 15,703 females. This general population was projected for 2022 using 2.8 percent annual population growth rate to arrive at 52,065 persons. Therefore, the target population for this study were persons aged 18 years and above living in Urum Southeast Nigeria. The 2022 projected population of persons aged 18 years and above living in Urum was put at 32,655. The reason for this choice of target population was that they have reached the age of consent in Nigeria and were believed to be more familiar with the topic under investigation which made it convenient for the researcher and her research assistants to sample them for this study.

With a sample size of two hundred and three (203) respondents aged 18 years and above, this study adopted both probability and non-probability sampling methods. This means that the researcher used different sampling techniques namely, multi-stage sampling technique consisting of cluster sampling, balloting method of simple random sampling technique, as well as purposive sampling techniques. Firstly, the four villages that made up Urum in Awka North Local Government Area were identified namely: Akaeze village, Ifiteora village, Umuife village and Akitinyi village. Then with the use of simple random sampling technique, all the 288 households (i.e. 72 households in each of the four villages) were identified. Thereafter, using a simple random sampling technique 51 households were drawn from each of the three villages while 50 households were drawn from the fourth village. Finally, one male or female respondent aged 18 years and above was selected from each of the selected households and administered the questionnaire. This sequence continued until 203 respondents were selected for this study.

For the qualitative data, four (4) respondents were purposively selected for the in-depth interview (IDI). The interview participants included one Pentecostal Pastor, one

Pentecostal member, one traditional healer and one traditional worshipper who were not part of those administered the questionnaire. The interview was conducted in the participants' residence in order to get the respondents when they were available. The reason for picking these participants was that they were readily available and very knowledgeable in the area of Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum people of Southeast, Nigeria.

Instrument of data collection and administration

The questionnaire schedule and the In-Depth Interview (IDI) guide were the two major instruments used for data collection in this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A was concerned with the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as age, gender, religious affiliation, place of residence, level of education etc, while section B dealt with the substantive issues of the research. To complement the quantitative data, In-Depth Interview (IDI) Guide and probes were used to gather more information in line with the study objectives.

Data analysis

The quantitative data collected from the field were processed using the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The data were analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics and results were presented in frequency tables and simple percentage tables for easy understanding and clarity. Hypothesis formulated was tested using chi-square (χ^2) statistics. This helped to determine and brought out clearly the relationships among variables. Furthermore, the qualitative data were managed and analyzed using a thematic method of data analysis where the records and information collected during the fieldwork were first of all stored in a flash drive, then carefully transcribed and organized in different themes after thorough editing in line with the objectives of the study.

a. Results of data presentation

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents such as sex, marital status, religious affiliation, occupation, level of education, etc.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-Demographic Characteristics

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Sex		
Male	95	47.5
Female	105	52.5
Total	200	100.0
Age		
18 years – 23 years	15	7.5
24 years – 29 years	50	25.0
30 years – 35 years	40	20.0
36 years – 41 years	50	25.0
42 years and above	45	22.5
Total	200	100.0
Marital status		
Single	50	25.5
Married	105	52.5
Divorced	10	5.0
Widowed	15	7.5
Separated	20	10.0
Total	200	100.0
Religious affiliation		
Pentecostal member	90	45.0
Orthodox member	75	37.5
Member of African Traditional Religion	35	17.5
Total	200	100.0
Occupation		
Self-employed	38	19.0
Public servant	40	20.0
Civil servant	26	13.0
Farmer	45	22.5
Unemployed	40	20.0

Native doctor	1	0.5
Student	10	5.0
Total	200	100.0
Education		
No formal education	30	15.0
FSLC	47	23.5
SSCE	40	20.0
OND/NCE	22	11.0
HND/B.Sc.	18	9.0
Higher degrees	2	1.0
Vocational education	41	20.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

Demographic data in table 1 shows that 47.5% of the respondents are males while another 52.5% are females. This means that more number of women took part in this study. In terms of age categorization of the respondents, it can be seen that 7.5% are within the ages of 18 – 23, 25.0% of the respondents are within the age brackets of 24 – 29, 20.0% indicated 30 – 35 years, just as 25.0% and 22.5% of the respondents fall within the ages of 36 – 41, and 42 years and above respectively. This clearly means that many people that took part in this study are adults, knowledgeable residents and natives of Urum community. On the marital status of the respondents, data from the fieldwork show that 25.5% of the respondents are single, 52.5% are married, 5.0% are divorced whereas 7.5% and 10.0% are widowed and separated. Thus, affirming that more number of the respondents are married.

The respondents were further assessed according to their religious affiliations. Findings showed that 45.0% of the respondents are Pentecostal members, 37.5% of the respondents are Orthodox members while 17.5% of the respondents are members of African Traditional Religion. This implies that a greater percentage of the respondents are Pentecostal members. On the occupation of the respondents, it was found that 19.0% are self-employed, 20.0% are public servants, 13.0% are civil servants, 22.5% are farmers,

20.0% of the respondents are unemployed, 0.5% is a native doctor while 5.0% of the respondents are students. This implies that a good number of the respondents are farmers. Of course, this is not unconnected with the fact that Urum is an agrarian community. In terms of education of the respondents, table 1 shows that 15.0% of the respondents have no formal education, 23.5% have FSLC, 20.0% are holders of WAEC certificates, 11.0% of the respondents have OND/NCE, 9.0% of the respondents have HND/B.Sc., 1.0% have higher degrees while 20.5% of the respondents have vocational education. The implication of this finding is that more numbers of the sampled population have only First School Leaving Certificates as at the time of conducting this survey.

Substantive issues

Research Question 1: How does Pentecostalism influence traditional identity among Urum of Southeast Nigeria? The responses are presented in tables 2 and 3 respectively.

Table 2: Respondents' views on whether Pentecostal membership could lead to traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Yes	195	97.5
No	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

Table 4 shows that 97.5% of the respondents confirmed that Pentecostal membership could lead to traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria. Conversely, 2.5% of the respondents disagreed. This however suggests very strongly that Pentecostal membership may have negative impact on traditional norms and values of the good people of Urum in Southeast Nigeria. This aligned with the qualitative data. One of the persons interviewed stated:

Yes, being a Pentecostal member could lead to traditional identity loss. For example, my cousin brother who was once a traditional worshipper but later converted to Pentecostalism came back and destroyed our shrine and deities which led to his family predicament. Today, my cousin himself, his

wife and child are now cripples. Maybe I should add that when he was still a traditional believer he adored and reverence those things he destroyed (Male, Married, 55 years, Native Doctor, Umuife Village, Urum).

A possible interpretation for the above qualitative finding is that people should learn to respect and tolerate other people's religious beliefs and practices. Peacefully co-existence will bring about societal progress while unhealthy religious bigotry and competition will destroy the moral fabric of the society.

Table 3: Respondents' views on how Pentecostalism influences traditional identity among Urum people

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Unhealthy rivalry between Christians and traditional worshippers	39	19.5
The use of the Bible by some traditional healers	50	25.0
Churches now copy some traditional practices e.g. removal of shoes for prayers	31	15.5
Stoppage of obnoxious widowhood practices	45	22.5
Labelling of the aged as witches and wizards	30	15.0
No response	5	2.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

Table 5 shows that the respondents were asked to state how Pentecostalism influences traditional identity among Urum people and 19.5% of the respondents identified the fact that it could lead to unhealthy rivalry between Christians and traditional worshippers, 25.0% said that Pentecostalism has resulted in the use of the Bible by some traditional healers, 15.5% of the respondents revealed that churches now copy some traditional practices e.g. removal of shoes for prayers, 22.5% indicated the stoppage of obnoxious widowhood practices, 15.0% identified labelling of the aged as witches and wizards while 2.5% of the respondents did not indicate any response. This implies that majority of the respondents noted that one of the major influence of Pentecostalism on

traditional identity among Urum people is the fact that it has led to the use of the Bible by some traditional healers. This finding was complemented by the qualitative data. One of the persons interviewed stated:

Over time Christianity and particularly Pentecostalism has been able to bring about positive influences in Umuife village, when I was a little girl, my mom would always tell me about widowhood practices in the past, about how terrible the experience used to be for widows but today because of the influence of Christianity and modernity, all these are in the past now (Female, Single, 25 years, Pentecostal Member, Umuife Village, Urum).

Another participant stated:

The relationship between Pentecostalism and traditional practices or identities is better described as being of mutual and of equal benefits. Today, you would see Pentecostal churches in Urum who would ask their members to come to church with orange, egg, kola nut, white handkerchief, etc for prayers. I strongly believe that this method of prayer is copied from the traditional worshippers. I have also noticed some traditional healers who would ask the patient whether to heal him/her using traditional method or using the Bible. So, you see Pentecostalism influences traditional identity or practices just as traditional practices have found their way into our churches in Urum too (Female, Married, 36 years, Traditional Worshipper, Akaeze Village, Urum).

In a related development, another participant stated:

In terms of the relationship between Pentecostalism and traditional identity, I will like to say that we cohabit in marriage through breaking of kola nut, bride price etc. In the case of burial, we agree in almost all the rituals except in *Isebeta mmadu n'ulo* and in obnoxious widowhood practices. Any ritual or ceremony that is linked to idol worshipping is not accepted by Pentecostals. For example, *okuku-chi* during marriage is not accepted because the "Chi" in it signifies idol. So, the influence or relationship between Pentecostalism and traditional identity is a two way

something; it can be good or bad depending on the circumstances (Male, Married, 44 years, Pentecostal Pastor, Akaeze Village Urum).

Furthermore, another participant puts it this way:

There are some Pentecostal members that understand and associate with traditionalists, like eating kola nut that is offered by a traditionalist but there are some that do their own in the secret, where they hide so that people will not point fingers at them. Such residents like to put Bible in front but in secret they are not true Pentecostal believers or worshippers. The relationship between the two is not always good but we the traditionalists accept them wholeheartedly because we are worshipping the same God, they are the ones that are misunderstanding us (Male, Married, 55 years, Native Doctor, Umuife Village, Urum).

Research Question 2: What are the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria? The responses are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Respondents' views on the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among Urum people

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Lack of respect for cultural norms and values	50	25.0
Stereotyping of traditional worshippers	38	19.0
Noise pollution from loud speakers used by Pentecostal churches	22	11.0
Suspicion, lack of love, lack of peace and unity in Urum	20	10.0
Perception of indigenes from other religions as strangers and sinners	27	13.5
Lack of respect for elders	43	21.5
Total	200	100.0

Field survey, 2023

Table 6 shows that in terms of problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among Urum people, 25.0% of the respondents indicated that it has led to lack of respect for cultural norms and values, 19.0% of the respondents indicated that Pentecostalism has contributed to the stereotyping of traditional worshippers, 11.0% were of the view that it has led to noise pollution from loud speakers used by Pentecostal churches, 10.0% said it has led to suspicion, lack of love, lack of peace and unity in Urum, 13.5% of the respondents indicated that it has influenced and promoted the perception of indigenes from other religions as strangers and sinners while 21.5% of the respondents believed that it has led to lack of respect for elders. This implies that majority of the respondents maintained that one of the obvious problem associated with the marriage between Pentecostalism and traditional identity among Urum people is that it has led to lack of respect for cultural norms and values. These problems were further highlighted by one of the interviewees who stated that:

The Christian tradition is contradictory to the traditional norms and values of the Urum people and this often brings about clashes between the Pentecostal members and traditional members. In terms of obnoxious widowhood practices and some rituals being performed by the traditionalist during burial ceremonies such as *Isebeta mmadu n' ulo*, all these rituals cause problems between Pentecostalism and traditional worshippers (Male, Married, 44 years, Pentecostal Pastor, Akaeze Village Urum).

Another participant stated:

Every spirit likes praises and some of these fake pastors that build their churches with the help of some deities, cast and bind these same deities which often lead to the downfall and destruction of such churches or members. Secondly, the Pentecostal members always try to overshadow and intimidate traditional worshippers and this usually cause problem. The use of politics in church or rather using church to do politics is another source of concern. Another problem is greediness; some Pentecostal pastors are too greedy. They seek help from traditionalists in secret for the progress of their church but publicly they criticize these same traditionalists (Male, Married, 55 years, Native Doctor, Umuife Village, Urum).

The above qualitative findings imply that there are practices that are peculiar to Pentecostal churches while on the other hand, there are practices that exclusively are within the domain of traditional worshippers.

Research Question 3: How can the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria be addressed? The responses are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Respondents' views on ways to address the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum people

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Pastors should serve God in truth and in spirit	33	16.5
Religious and traditional leaders engaging in fake healing and fake miracles should be arrested and prosecuted	27	13.5
Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to cohabit peacefully	20	10.0
Government should enforce relevant laws against noise pollution	17	8.5
Awareness creation on the need for all religious adherents and worshippers to love and respect one another	48	24.0
All of the above	55	27.5
Total	200	100.0

Field Survey, 2023

In terms of measures to address the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Urum, 16.5% of the respondents suggested that pastors should serve God in truth and in spirit, 13.5% of the respondents said that religious and traditional leaders engaging in fake healing and fake miracles should be arrested and prosecuted, 10.0% of the respondents recommended that Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to cohabit peacefully, 8.5% of the respondents affirmed that government should enforce relevant laws against noise pollution, 24.0% proposed awareness creation on the need for all religious adherents and worshippers to love and respect one another whereas 27.5% of the respondents indicated all of the above. This implies that majority of the

respondents opined that in order to amicably address all the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum people, then all the solutions outlined in this study should be taken more seriously. This aligned with the qualitative data. One of the interviewees stated:

The good side of traditions like bride price, dowry, burying of dead etc which is Biblical should be adopted and adhered to but those practices and traditions that are linked to idol worshipping should be eradicated completely and they should not be imposed on Pentecostal members (Male, Married, 44 years, Pentecostal Pastor, Akaeze Village Urum).

Similarly, another participant stated:

The problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity can be addressed by educating the people especially the younger generation that there is no difference between Christianity and traditional identity. People should stop deceiving the ignorant ones that tradition is evil but instead the two religious groups should learn to co-habit peacefully (Male, Married, 55 years, Native Doctor, Umuife Village, Urum).

Also, another participant suggested that:

Pentecostal churches should remove hatred and stereotypes placed on traditional worshippers like always praying death prayers for people who do not believe in their own religion i.e. they should stop praying bad prayers for traditional believers or innocent people just for a trivial matter like “Die by fire.” They should carry out an investigation before assisting someone in hateful prayers. By so doing the negative impact of Pentecostalism will be addressed (Female, Married, 36 years, Traditional Worshipper, Akaeze Village, Urum).

The implication of this qualitative data is that there are strategies that when fully implemented would go a long way towards addressing the diversities and problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the Urum people.

Test of Hypothesis

In this section, the researcher tested the two hypotheses that were formulated in this study using the Chi-square (χ^2) statistics.

Hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between Pentecostal membership and traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria. Data in table 6 formed the basis for testing this hypothesis.

Table 6: Relationship between Pentecostal membership and traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria

		<i>Tendency of Pentecostal membership to lead to traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria</i>			<i>Hypothesis Testing and Decision Rule</i>
		Yes	No	Total	
Religious affiliation	Pentecostal member	85	5	90	χ^2 (2, N=200) =21.335 P = .002
	Orthodox member	75	0	75	
	Member of African Traditional Religion	35	0	35	
	Total	195	5	200	

Field Survey, 2023

Table 9 shows that the computed chi-square value is 21.335 while the table value of chi-square at 0.05 level of significance with a degree of freedom (df) of 2 is 5.991. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the table value, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis. This shows that there is a significant relationship between Pentecostal membership and traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeast Nigeria. This implies that Pentecostal membership in Urum is associated with loss of traditional identity among Urum people of Southeastern Nigeria. In other words, being a member of Pentecostal Church in Urum could lead to disregard for traditional identities and values.

Discussion and conclusion

Findings indicated that more often than not Pentecostal membership could lead to traditional identity loss among the Urum of Southeastern Nigeria. Majority of the respondents indicated that Pentecostalism influences traditional identity among Urum people in the following ways: the use of the Bible by some traditional healers, unhealthy rivalry between Christians and traditional worshippers, churches now copy some traditional practices e.g. removal of shoes for prayers, stoppage of obnoxious widowhood practices and putting an end to the labelling of the aged as witches and wizards. This supports another study by Ubaku and Ugwuja (2016) which found that to a large extent Pentecostalism influences traditional identity amongst Nigerians. It was found that Pentecostalism in Nigeria has ushered in a unique form of spirituality that was never introduced by the western missionaries and that this Pentecostal church growth has negatively affected traditional values of the people. There is the issue of some traditional healers making use of the Bible. Today, some youths no longer have respects for their elders because some pastors somewhere said their father or uncle is behind their predicaments thereby effectively negating the traditional norm of respect for the elderly. Some elderly persons have even been accused and labelled wrongly because of Pentecostalism.

Furthermore, data revealed that one of the major problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among Urum people are: lack of respect for cultural norms and values, stereotyping of traditional worshippers, noise pollution from loud speakers used by Pentecostal churches, suspicion, lack of love, lack of peace and unity in Urum, perception of indigenes from other religions as strangers and sinners, and lack of respect for elders. These findings align with a previous study carried out by Nwachukwu (2020) which reported that there are many problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identities in Igboland, some of which include: the weakening of social network that promoted brotherly love within the kingship structure of extended family systems, lack of respect for elders, cultural norms and values, stereotyping of traditional worshippers, suspicion and lack of love for one another.

Moreover, this study found that there are measures that can be adopted to address the numerous problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the

Urum of Southeast Nigeria. These measures according to majority of the respondents include: that pastors should serve God in truth and in spirit, religious and traditional leaders engaging in fake healing and fake miracles should be arrested and prosecuted, Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to cohabit peacefully, government should enforce relevant laws against noise pollution, and awareness creation on the need for all religious adherents and worshippers to love and respect one another. This falls in consonance with another study by Ogunkunle (2019) who maintained that in order to address the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Ibadan, the Oyo State capital, it is important to first of all realize that the influence of culture on the church is positively inseparable which helps to take the gospel to the unreached. It is therefore essential that Pentecostal gospel message is contextualized in order to share it effectively in every culture or tradition in Oyo State. Also, there is need for awareness on the need for religious adherents and worshippers to love and respect one another.

The test of hypothesis indicates that Pentecostal membership in Urum is associated with loss of traditional identity among Urum people of Southeastern. In other words, being a member of Pentecostal Church in Urum could lead to disregard for traditional identities and values.

This study further supports the theoretical framework (i.e., structuralism) adopted for this study. Structuralism tries to draw our minds to the inner conscious and unconscious impulses that generate behaviour (i.e. encourage people to align with the value systems of either Pentecostalism or traditional identity). The theory tries to offer an explanation to the diversity of several patterns of thoughts which are imminent, built into the human mind that pushes people to jettison a particular belief system over the other. Structuralism argues that language is a very powerful cultural tool that has the capacity to influence the mind. For this reason, many residents of Urum who were avid followers of tradition but later changed their stand and aligned with the Pentecostal churches could have done so because of the orderly use of language and words to reconstruct their thinking and perception of the social world. It follows therefore that the teachings and messages of Pentecostal churches in Urum could lead to loss of traditional value systems.

The following recommendations were made to address the problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity among the good people of Urum and residents of South-eastern Nigeria in general.

1. Pastors should serve God in truth and in spirit: Serving God demands that believers including pastors should worship God in truth and spirit and eschew the desire for worldly and material possessions.
2. Government should enforce relevant laws against noise pollution and should also arrest and prosecute religious and traditional leaders engaging in fake healing and fake miracles. This measure when fully implemented will serve as deterrent to others.
3. Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to cohabit peacefully. Pentecostal and traditional believers should learn to tolerate and understand that people will always differ across religious lines. This understanding will usher in lasting peace devoid of unhealthy competition among religious leaders in Urum and environs.
4. The mass media should create adequate awareness on the need for all religious adherents and worshippers to love and respect one another. This will go a long way towards ensuring that most of the effects and problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Urum can be addressed on a permanent basis.

Conclusion

Pentecostalism has positive impact in the society some of which include: development of the human mind in the act of public speaking, encouraging congregants to develop independent mindsets, diffusion of knowledge through religious teachings, bringing people from different cultures together, enhancement of the flow of information such as spreading of gospel message, dissemination of Igbo images, ideas and styles, introduction of western education through Christianity, reduction and abolition of some harmful Igbo cultural practices. However, Pentecostalism can affect traditional norms and values. This study found out that problems associated with Pentecostalism and traditional identity in Urum include: lack of respect for cultural norms and values, stereotyping of traditional worshippers, noise pollution from loud speakers used by Pentecostal churches, suspicion, lack of love, lack of peace and unity in Urum, perception of indigenes from other

religions as strangers and sinners and lack of respect for elders. To this end, as recommended in the next subsection there is need for stakeholders to intervene and save the traditional identity of the Urum people before it is too late. The time to act is now.

References

- Achunike, H. (2018). *The influence of Pentecostalism on Catholic Priests and Seminarians in Nigeria*. Onitsha: Africana First Publishers Limited.
- Adamolekun, T. (2020). Main trends in church growth in Nigeria. *European Science Journal, October Edition, 8* (23), 1857–7881.
- Adebayo, E.B. (2017). *Pentecostalism in the Anglican church*. Ibadan: The Faith Publication.
- Anderson, A. (2004). *An introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity (GCC)*. Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, K. J. (2018). *A Pentecostal hermeneutic for the twenty-first century. Spirit, scripture and community*. London: T & T Clark International.
- Bonke, H. (2017). *Holy spirit revelation and revolution: Exploring Holy spirit dimensions*. Orlando: ER Productions LLC.
- David, M. (2012). *Pentecostalism: The world, their parish*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Diara, B. & Onah, N. (2020). The phenomenal growth of Pentecostalism in the contemporary Nigerian society: A challenge to mainline churches. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 5* (6), 395–405.
- Elwell, A. W. (2017). *Evangelical dictionary of theology*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Ekwuru, E. G. (2019). *The pangs of an African culture n travail: Uwa Ndi Igbo Yagara Ayaga*. Owerri: Totan.
- Ekwoanya, M. (2015). *History and culture of Orum community*. Nimo: Rex Charles & Patrick Nigeria Limited.
- Ezeah, P. C. (2014). *Basic social statistics*. Nimo, Anambra State: Rex Charles & Patrick Limited, Booksmith House, Harmony Place.
- Falayi, O. (2021). Proliferation of churches: Causes and effects on church growth. A case study of Ikere Local Government Area of Ado Ekiti. *An unpublished project*

submitted to the RCCG College, Lagos.

Falola, T. A. (2018). *Islam and Christianity in West Africa*. Ile-Ife: University of Ife Press.

Fayomi, M. O. (2020). *The Christians response to our moral and social crisis*. Ado Ekiti Paper Mills.

Gaiya, M. (2020). The interplay between religion and culture in African traditional religion. *Jos. Journal of Humanities*, 3 (1), 10–17.

Gbolahan, J. F. (2004). *Effective church conflict management*. Messiah Publications, Ibadan.

Graham, B. (2018). *The holy spirit (New Edition)*, Nashville. Billy Graham Evangelistic Association.

Hallum, A, M. (2012). Looking for hope in central America: The Pentecostal movement. *Journal of Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective*, 2 (1), 4–10.

Levinson, D. (2006). *Religion: A cross-cultural encyclopaedia*. ABC-CLIO.

Martin, B. (2006). *The aesthetics of Latin American Pentecostalism: The sociology of religion and the problem of taste in materialising religion*. England: Ashgate.

Marshall, R. (2009). *Political spiritualities: The Pentecostal Revolution in Nigeria*. The University of Chicago Press.

Miller, D. E., Sargeant, K. H. & Flory, R. (2013). *Spirit and power: The growth and global impact of Pentecostalism*. Oxford University Press.

National Population Commission (2006). Federal Republic of Nigeria Official Gazette on 2006 Population Result. *Journal of Population Census in Nigeria*, 1 (2), 10–17.

Nwachukwu, F. (2020). The birth of systematic theology in contemporary Black Africa: An investigation into new interpretations of the Christian faith by the newly evangelized, Rome: Domenici–Pecheux.

Nwadike, I. U. (2018). *Igbo language and culture: Whither bound (Asusu na Omenala Igbo: Ije Anaa?)*. Onitsha: Onitsha Varsity Publishing Co. Ltd.

Odinye, I. S. (2017). Preventing the extinction of Igbo language. *A New Journal of African Studies*, 1 (1), 79–92.

Ogunkunle, A. (2019). African culture and the challenges. *Journal of Theological Studies*, 3 (1), 5–10.

Ojo, M. (2016). *The end-time army: Charismatic movements in modern Nigeria*. Trenton: Africa World Press.

- Oniya, A. (2002). *Proliferation of Pentecostal churches and its social implication on the society*. A thesis at Immanuel College of Theology, University of Ibadan.
- Oyewo, K. (2012). *Pentecostalism and conflict resolution strategies*. A thesis at the Immanuel College of Theology, University of Ibadan.
- Ubaku, K. C. & Ugwuja, A. A. (2016). Pentecostalism and the dwindling state of Igbo language: *An appraisal, proceedings of 86th International Conference, Johannesburg, South Africa, 2 (1), 11–15.*
- Uzukwu, E. E. (2016). *A listening church: Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, Maryknoll: Orbis Books.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Elementary sampling theory*. New York, NY: Prentice-Hall Incorporated.