The Impact of the Rise in Religious Institutions on Residential Property Values in Bariga, Akoka, and Sabo, Lagos State, Nigeria

John Uyi OSAGIE[1] & Ruth Oluwatobiloba OGUNMOLA[2]
[1 2]Department of Estate Management, University of Lagos, Akoka, Lagos.

Corresponding Author's Email: uyiosagie78@gmail.com

Abstract

The study investigates the impact of the rising number of religious institutions on residential property values in selected neighbourhoods of Bariga and Akoka/Sabo in Lagos State, Nigeria. The proliferation of churches, mosques, and other places of worship in residential areas has raised concerns about their implications for neighbourhood liveability and property market dynamics. Anchored in the Concentric Zone Theory and the Hedonic Pricing Model, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative techniques. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 100 purposively selected respondents comprising tenants, landlords, real estate agents, and business owners located near religious institutions. Data were analysed using descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies and percentages. The findings reveal that religious institutions exert both positive and negative influences on residential property values. On the positive side, their presence stimulates economic activities, increases neighbourhood foot traffic, and raises demand for rental housing, thereby contributing to higher occupancy rates and rental values. However, the study also identifies negative externalities, including traffic congestion, noise pollution, and overcrowding, which may reduce residential desirability. The study concludes that the impact of religious institutions on residential property values is context-dependent and influenced by planning regulations, infrastructure capacity, and the scale of religious activities. It recommends improved zoning enforcement and traffic and noise management strategies to ensure sustainable coexistence between religious developments and residential neighbourhoods.

Keywords: Religious institutions; residential property values; rental values; neighbourhood externalities; urban planning; Lagos State

Introduction

Places of worship are described as "lands or buildings used for religious assembly and worship by an association which is a charitable organisation permanently organised for the advancement of religion and for the conduct of religious worship, services, or rites" in a report made by the City of Toronto Council and Committees. Thus, churches, mosques, Chinese temples, Hindu temples, shrines, and Gurudwaras are examples of places of worship (City of Toronto, 1998, as cited in Lamichhane, 2015).

Religion affects land use and development within the parameters of its complex nature, since worshipping the Supreme Being has become one of man's most significant activities. Thus, the decision was made to set aside land for religious use (Odunola, Odufuwa, Odunsi, & Morenikeji, 2021). There are many different religions in Nigeria, which has led to the growth of religious organisations and the establishment of religious camps. These camps serve as both places of prayer and refuge for their adherents and as marketplaces for numerous businesses and marketers who typically set up shop during regular public gatherings. Due to the regular gatherings and associated commercial activities, many people move to these camps and nearby towns. (Ogunleye & Adeniran, 2017).

Numerous urban areas designated for residential use face challenges due to the presence of industrial, commercial, and religious institutions within residential neighbourhoods. (Akanni, 2013). The intricate nature of religion significantly impacts land use and development, as the need to engage with the Supreme Being through worship has become a crucial human activity. Thus, the decision to set aside land for religious uses is made. (Odunola et al., 2021).

Property values and religious developments have an intricate relationship since they are entangled with sociocultural, economic, and even political facets of urban life. The perceived stability, community benefits, and aesthetic value that religious institutions provide may raise property values, according to some studies. However, other studies contend that these developments may decrease property values due to issues such as noise, traffic, and increased commercial activity. The emergence of religious

developments, including the construction of new houses of worship, religious institutions, and associated infrastructure, has significantly contributed to urban development.

The dual impact of these developments, both as potential enhancers of neighbourhood appeal and as sources of environmental and infrastructural strain, presents a complex challenge for urban planners and real estate professionals. A key area of concern is the effect of religious land use on residential property rental values. The proximity to religious sites may either increase property desirability through improved community cohesion and enhanced neighbourhood amenities or reduce rental values due to issues such as increased traffic, noise, and altered land-use patterns.

Lagos has recently seen an increase in new churches and mosques in its urban areas. Still, little is known about how this wave of religious growth is affecting property markets. Previous studies on Lagos are limited and out of date. A 2011 study indicated that larger churches tend to have lower surrounding rental values (Babawale & Adewunmi, 2011). A 2018 study revealed significant negative price effects due to traffic and noise around a major church camp. (Oyetunji, Olukolajo & Omorogbe, 2018). However, many works precede the current surge and do not mention mosques at all.

This study aims to assess the impact of the growing number of religious institutions on residential property values. The research offers valuable insights for urban planners and local government authorities, who are frequently tasked with making zoning and land-use decisions. Understanding the spatial and economic impacts of the expansion of religious institutions can inform policy decisions, ensuring that urban growth is equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of both religious communities and residents. The findings are critical for real estate developers, investors, and appraisers. A variety of location-specific factors influence residential property values, and religious institutions may act as both amenities and potential sources of disruption. For homeowners and prospective buyers, the study provides practical insights into how the presence of religious institutions may affect the liveability, desirability, and long-term value of residential properties. This can influence housing choices, especially in communities where religious presence is expanding rapidly. The research contributes to the existing body of academic literature by addressing a relatively underexplored topic at the intersection of urban studies, sociology, economics, and real estate.

Literature Review

Literature Review

Residential Property Values

Residential property value is the monetary worth of residential real estate, typically expressed as market value, assessed value, or rental value. Various factors influence these values, including location, neighbourhood infrastructure, access to amenities, security, environmental quality, and local supply-demand dynamics. Understanding residential property value is critical in this study as it provides the basis for analysing the impact of surrounding developments such as religious institutions. Research on residential property values highlights various factors that influence them. Riyanto (2021) finds that non-structural attributes, as perceived by government valuers, significantly affect residential property values, emphasising the subjective nature of property valuation. Zulkarnain et al. (2020) focus on properties in flood-risk areas, revealing that structural, locational, and environmental attributes play crucial roles in determining property values, with effects varying with economic conditions. Their findings underscore the need for empirical studies in this domain. Jain, Chileshe, Muwowo and Mwewa (2019) investigate the effects of high-voltage transmission (HVT) lines on property values in Zambia, finding that property values increase with distance from HVT lines, despite new developments occurring in stigmatised areas.

Religious Institutions and Urban Space

Religious institutions encompass places of worship such as churches, mosques, temples, and synagogues. These institutions often serve not only spiritual purposes but also act as social, educational, and community centres. The rise in the number and scale of religious developments in urban areas has spatial, economic, and social implications, including potential influences on nearby residential property values. Recent research explores the complex relationship between religious institutions and urban spaces. Cities serve as sites of religious coexistence, interaction, and innovation, challenging traditional views of urban modernity versus religious tradition (Vladimirovna, 2020; Ruepke, 2023). Religious actors shape urban landscapes through spatial projects, adapting to changing environments and influencing city development (Burchardt et al., 2023). Religious buildings act as symbolic cultural markers, determining urban space characteristics and reflecting broader social transformations (Bernyukevich, 2020; Burchardt et al., 2023). The interplay between religion and urban development is reciprocal, with religious practices impacting urban conditions and vice versa (Ruepke, 2023). This relationship

manifests in various aspects, including monumentalisation, public displays of communication with deities, and the organisation of time (Ruepke, 2023). Additionally, religious affiliation correlates with community attachment and involvement in urban settings, highlighting the practical implications for both secular and religious institutions (Pascaru, 2019).

Key Factors Influencing the Relationship Between Religious Developments and Rental Values

Key factors include urban planning policies, zoning laws, accessibility, and the scale of religious development. Large religious institutions may attract commercial activity and infrastructure development, which could increase rental values. Conversely, over-concentration or inadequate planning could lead to congestion and depreciation of property desirability. Various factors influence religious developments and rental values. Geographic Information Systems and machine learning algorithms can be used to predict rental amounts for religious endowments, achieving high accuracy (Jasim, Mejbel, and Hashim, 2021). Neighbourhood density and infrastructure development play crucial roles in determining rental values, with significant differences observed between adjacent communities (Oloke et al., 2021). Specific factors influencing the capital values of residential properties are more numerous and more highly rated than those affecting rental values (Bello, Adepoju, and Durosinmi, 2020). Land Use Succession (LUS) has a significant impact on property values, with commercial properties showing a greater increase than residential properties over time (Makinde & Makinde, 2020). Understanding these factors can aid property investment decisions and urban planning, particularly in developing countries where religious endowments and changing land use patterns play important roles in shaping urban landscapes and property markets.

Demographic Characteristics of Neighbourhoods and Their Influence on Rental Values

Demographics such as income level, family size, religion, and educational background influence rental preferences. Areas with a high population of residents affiliated with a particular faith may see increased demand for housing near religious centres. Conversely, demographic shifts, such as gentrification or displacement due to new developments, may alter rental dynamics.

Recent studies have explored the relationship between neighbourhood characteristics and rental housing dynamics. Demographic factors, including race, socioeconomic status, and age, significantly influence rental values and housing choices (Kumar et al., 2021; Besbris et al., 2021; Vardhan, 2025; Forthman et al., 2021). Spatial variations in rental values are attributed to tenants' preferences for specific locational and neighbourhood attributes (Kumar et al., 2021). Online rental listings reveal disparities in information availability across neighbourhoods based on ethnoracial and socioeconomic composition (Besbris et al., 2021). For economically weaker sections, physical, locational, economic, and social factors play crucial roles in rental housing decisions (Vardhan, 2025). Furthermore, neighbourhood characteristics, particularly those related to affluence and racial composition, have been associated with residents' mental health outcomes (Forthman et al., 2021). These findings underscore the complex interplay between demographic characteristics, rental markets, and community well-being, offering valuable insights for urban planners and policymakers.

Summary of Empirical Review

Globally, the number of churches, mosques, and other places of worship has surged alongside urban population growth and religious movements. In many cities, sprawling “megachurches” and large mosque complexes are increasingly common (Oyetunji, Olukolajo, and Omorogbe, 2018). Research on how these institutions affect nearby housing markets is mixed. Early U.S. hedonic studies found that large neighbourhood churches can act as amenities, raising nearby home prices as people value walking-distance worship (Carroll, Clauretie, & Jensen, 1996). However, Carroll et al. (1996) noted that churches may also constitute nuisances when noise, traffic, or overcrowding reduce the desirability of nearby residential properties. By contrast, studies in the UK and the US have shown slightly lower home prices near mosques in certain cities, and even a ~5% price drop around U.S. mosques after 9/11 due to rising prejudice (Lepage, L. P., 2023). These divergent findings imply that local attitudes, traffic patterns, and cultural context heavily influence whether a new church or mosque helps or hurts nearby home values. Peyman et al. researcher (2020) analysed the Role of Basic Religion Institutions especially mosques in the Local Community Development: The Case of Sheshgelan Neighborhoodusing - Descriptive-analytical research approach - Documentary method for the theoretical framework and literature review - Field method for data collection, including a questionnaire - Study population of residents in the Sheshgelan neighborhood - Sample size of 150 individuals determined using Cochran's formula and the study found that - There is a strong positive correlation between the development of local communities and the presence of religious

institutions, specifically mosques, in those communities. - Regular interactions and activities in the neighbourhood mosques helped build trust and social cohesion among the residents. - The mosques in the Sheshgelan neighbourhood played an important role in representing the community and contributing to its overall development and problem-solving. Hungerman (2020) examined the relationship between religious institutions and economic well-being; the study found that religious institutions play an important role in providing spiritual guidance, a sense of belonging, and material support to individuals. Engagement with religious institutions is associated with improved economic well-being.

A study conducted by Bernyukevich (2020) examined the Urban Space as a space of coexistence and interaction of religious cultures using comprehensive analysis to examine the cultural space of the city as an integrated system with interacting cultures - Interdisciplinary approach drawing on methods from fields such as philosophy of culture, cultural studies, religious studies, urban planning, architecture, sacred geography, sociology, and political science - comparative approach to identify common patterns and mechanisms of interaction between religious cultures and their findings revealed that the cultural space of the city can be considered in terms of its past, present, and future. The actualisation of the spatial characteristics of culture can help identify and analyse the problem of the meaningful spiritual and material expression of the role of certain religious cultures in developing the cultural spaces of cities. - Religious buildings represent religious cultures, shaping their ontological status in the city, and can be considered within the "metaphysics of the city" framework, which views the city as a phenomenon "having certain ontological structures and meanings and occupying a special place in the symbolic space of culture". - The religious aspects of the development of urban space are the subject of various interdisciplinary fields, including philosophy and metaphysics of the city, sacred geography and sacred topography, history of culture and urban planning, and a religious study of urban space as a space where religious cultures interact, which can unite the efforts and achievements of these studies.

Pascaru (2019) assessed community and religious life in urban space through a questionnaire-based survey conducted in Alba Iulia, Romania, as part of a municipal local development strategy project. The research team comprised two university lecturers from the "1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia. The study found differences in community relationships, attachment, and participation in community activities across religious affiliations. - The non-religious, Pentecostals, Baptists, Greco-Catholics, and Orthodox tend to experience more conflicts with neighbours and show less attachment to the local community. - Pentecostals, Baptists, Jehovah's Witnesses, the non-religious, and Protestants tend to be less likely to make monetary or labour contributions to community activities.
In African and developing-world contexts, the picture is similarly complex.

Adebara et al. (2020) explored the spatial pattern of residential property value around cultural heritage sites in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The methodology employed a combination of primary data collection through questionnaires and interviews, and quantitative analysis techniques such as multiple regression and rent differentials, to examine the relationship between cultural heritage sites and residential rental values in Ile-Ife, Nigeria. The study showed that rental value increased with distance from cultural heritage sites, suggesting that proximity negatively affect the rental values of nearby residential properties. The negative impact of cultural heritage sites on rental values decreases with increasing distance from the sites. One study of the Lagos–Ibadan highway corridor (2008–2018) found that large new religious “camp” developments coincided with rising nearby rents (Ogunleye & Adeniran, 2016). The study attributed the increase to new investment and housing supply around popular pilgrimage sites. However, another study in Lagos found that residents living near a major church camp reported serious congestion, noise, and air pollution from gatherings, and statistical analysis confirmed that these effects significantly lowered surrounding property values (Oyetunji et al., 2018). In summation, both positive and negative impacts have been documented in Nigerian studies, mirroring the global literature’s lack of consensus, as shown by Thompson, Butters, and Schmitz (2012) and Oyetunji et al. (2018). This suggests the net effect of a growing church or mosque depends on details of land use, infrastructure, and community response in each locality.

Theoretical Framework

Concentric Zone Theory

Ernest Burgess, a sociologist, developed the Concentric Zone Theory in 1925. It is a fundamental paradigm in human geography and urban studies. According to the theory, a central business district (CBD) is the centre of a network of concentric rings that radiate outward from it. Every ring denotes a distinct land use and social function, ranging from

residential zones of various socioeconomic levels to industrial and transitional zones. The central thesis is that social dynamics and competition shape land-use patterns and urban expansion, with various land uses emerging and changing with distance from the city centre.

The Concentric Zone Theory provides a helpful framework for examining how the growth of places of worship, including churches and mosques, affects the value of residential real estate across various urban areas in this study.

Depending on factors such as land availability, zoning laws, historical significance, and access to population centres, religious organisations frequently congregate in specific urban areas. They can have both direct and indirect impacts on property prices as they proliferate in residential neighbourhoods, especially those in inner zones.

According to the Concentric Zone Theory:

Zone of Transition: This is the area immediately surrounding the central business district, which is frequently characterised by mixed land uses and significant population turnover. Growth in religious institutions in this area may affect property values in various ways. On the one hand, religious institutions can provide social stability, community services, and improved security, making the neighbourhood more desirable and potentially enhancing property prices. On the other hand, frequent traffic congestion, noise during worship services, and large visitor inflows may discourage some residents and reduce the appeal of surrounding residential properties.

Working-Class and Middle-Class Residential Zones: The construction of sizable religious institutions in outlying residential areas may serve as community development anchors, drawing families and spurring the expansion of auxiliary services such as public transit, retail stores, and schools. Property values may rise due to increased housing demand in these locations. However, an overabundance of religious buildings could overload infrastructure, compromise privacy, and restrict the amount of land available for residential development, all of which would lower property prices.

Outermost Commuter Zones: In the suburban rings, places of worship may be seen as hubs of cultural identity and community unity. For some demographic groups, the presence of reputable houses of worship can be a major selling point, helping raise home values and appeal. Whether it is a megachurch with major traffic repercussions or a small neighbourhood chapel, the impact here may likewise vary depending on the institution's size and nature.

Hedonic Pricing Model

In urban and real estate economics, the Hedonic Pricing Model (HPM) is a widely used economic valuation technique for estimating the influence of different features on the market price of goods, especially residential properties. Essentially, the model asserts that a property's intrinsic qualities (such as size, number of rooms, and building age) and extrinsic qualities (such as location, neighbourhood quality, and proximity to amenities or disamenities) determine its price. For this study, the Hedonic Pricing Model provides a strong theoretical foundation for examining how the growing number of religious institutions affects the value of residential real estate. The presence of religious facilities is treated as one of the numerous factors incorporated into a property's pricing, enabling an assessment of how buyers or tenants may value proximity to religious institutions. The expansion of houses of worship, such as churches, mosques, and temples, can have both beneficial and negative effects on housing costs. When viewed through the Hedonic Pricing Model, these institutions' presence is treated as a neighbourhood or locational characteristic that influences how desirable (or undesirable) a residential area is perceived to be. Religious organisations frequently improve a neighbourhood by fostering community involvement, strengthening social cohesion, and providing services such as healthcare, education, and charitable endeavours. A nearby house of worship may be a highly prized feature for many locals, particularly those who practice a religion. Under such circumstances, the hedonic model would account for this desire by increasing the value of residences close to these establishments. On the other hand, an excessive number of religious organisations, or an abrupt increase in their number, could result in adverse externalities such as land-use conflicts, traffic jams, unlawful parking, or noise during worship times. For some buyers or tenants, particularly those with strong religious ties or who prefer peaceful residential environments, these features may make the neighbourhood less appealing. This would be represented by a decline in property values associated with proximity to places of worship in the Hedonic Pricing Model. The Hedonic Pricing Model not only provides a strong theoretical foundation for this research but also enables a data-driven understanding of how social and cultural institutions, such as houses of worship, interact with urban property markets. Its versatility and precision make it a great instrument for documenting the complex influence of religious expansion on urban property values.

Research Methodology

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative techniques, enabling it to capture measurable trends in rental value while also reflecting residents' perceptions and lived experiences of religious developments. The study was conducted in Bariga, Akoka and Sabo, Lagos State, Nigeria. These areas were deliberately selected for their high residential density, mixed land use, and proliferation of churches, mosques, and other religious institutions along major residential corridors. Specifically, the study covered the following routes: Bariga: Baale–Deeper Life, Deeper Life–Ifako High School, Bariga Roundabout–Bajulaye, Bajulaye–Masquerade House, and Pako–Folagoro Junction. Akoka/Sabo: Unilag Gate–Sabo, Sabo–Adekunle, Sabo through Alara–Second Gate, and Pako–Ilaje. The target population comprised residential tenants and residents, landlords and property owners, real estate agents, and business owners operating near religious institutions. These groups were considered appropriate because they are directly affected by changes in rental values and neighbourhood conditions resulting from religious activities. These locations typify the interaction between residential land use and religious expansion within the Lagos metropolis and provide an appropriate context for evaluating property value dynamics. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select respondents who live in, own property in, or conduct business in proximity to religious institutions. This technique was considered suitable because it ensures that respondents possess relevant experience and knowledge regarding the impact of religious developments. The sample size of 100 respondents was considered statistically adequate for this study because it exceeded the minimum threshold recommended for quantitative property research and neighbourhood studies. Based on the LABSCA compilation of religious institutions within Akoka, Bariga, and Yaba, the study population was sufficiently large to permit sampling. Using Yamane's (1967) sample size determination principles, a sample of approximately 100 respondents is acceptable at a 95% confidence level with a 10% margin of error. Moreover, the purposive sampling technique adopted targeted respondents with direct knowledge of residential property values and neighbourhood dynamics, ensuring the collection of relevant and reliable data. Consequently, the sample size was deemed sufficient to achieve the study objectives and provide meaningful findings regarding the impact of religious institutions on residential property values in Bariga, Akoka, and Sabo. This sample size was adequate for the analysis, given the study's focused geographical scope. The study utilised both primary and secondary data sources:

Primary data were obtained through a structured questionnaire administered to respondents within the study areas. Secondary data were sourced from journals, textbooks, conference papers, government publications, and prior empirical studies on religious land use, residential property values, urban planning, and neighbourhood dynamics. The collected data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, tables, and graphical representations. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire items were developed based on variables identified in the literature and aligned with the research objectives. Ethical approval for this study was obtained from the appropriate institutional authority before data collection commenced. Respondents were informed of the study's objectives and their rights as participants. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained, and all information provided was treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes. No personally identifiable information was disclosed in the presentation of the findings. Reliability was enhanced through consistent question structure and clarity, ensuring respondents interpreted questions uniformly.

Findings

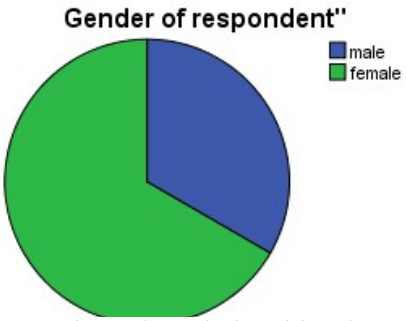


Figure 1 shows the majority of female respondents (66.7%) compared to male respondents (33.3%).

Table 1: Respondents' Profile

The percentages revealed the respondent profile in the study areas of Bariga and Akoka/Sabo in Lagos, Nigeria, as summarised in Table 1. These locations, known for their dense residential environments and the proliferation of religious institutions, particularly along key thoroughfares, formed the focus of the research. The analysis covered notable sub-areas including Baale - Deeper Life, Bariga Roundabout – Bajulaye, and Unilag Gate – Sabo, among others.

Regarding duration of stay, the largest proportion of respondents (41.7%) had lived in the area for 1–3

years, followed by 33.3% who had lived there for more than 6 years. Those who had resided in the area for 4–6 years accounted for 16.7%, while only 8.3% had lived there for less than one year. This suggests a relatively stable population with a significant number of medium- to long-term residents. Regarding housing category, the majority of respondents (58.3%) identified as tenants, while 25% were landlords. Squatters and others each accounted for 8.3%, highlighting a mix of formal and informal housing arrangements in these densely populated urban neighbourhoods. Regarding religious affiliation or proximity to places of worship, 57.1% of respondents reported being near churches, 35.7% near mosques, and 7.1% near shrines. This distribution underscores the prominent presence of Christian and Islamic worship centres in the Bariga, Akoka and Sabo areas, supporting the study's focus on the impact of religious institutions on urban space and residential dynamics.

Table 2: Respondents' Role in the Organisation

Role	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Tenant/Resident	30	30	30
Landlord/Property Owner	20	20	50
Real Estate Agent	10	10	60
Business Owner	30	30	90
Others	10	10	100
Total	100	100	

Frequencies and percentages presented in Table 2 summarise the roles of respondents in the Bariga and Akoka/Sabo areas of Lagos, Nigeria, locations noted for their high population density and increasing concentration of religious institutions. These areas include neighbourhoods such as Bariga Roundabout – Bajulaye and Sabo – Adekunle, where residential life intersects closely with religious expansion. As shown in the table, the majority of respondents identified either as tenants/residents (30%) or business owners (30%), indicating a strong mix of residential and commercial occupancy. Landlords/property owners made up 20% of the sample, reflecting a significant level of property ownership among residents. Additionally, real estate agents and respondents categorised as others each accounted for 10%, suggesting that a range of stakeholders, including those indirectly involved in the housing or business sectors, are affected by the area's evolving land-use patterns. This distribution supports the study's interest in understanding how different types of land users perceive and experience the spatial and social impact of religious institutions within these urban neighbourhoods.

Table 1: Respondents Profile

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Duration	1–3 years	41.7
	Less than 1 year	8.3
	4–6 years	16.7
	More than 6 years	33.3
Category	Tenant	58.3
	Landlord	25
	Squatter	8.3
	Others	8.3
Religious Body	Church	57.1
	Mosque	35.7
	Shrine	7.1

Figure 2: Impact on Tenants and Residents

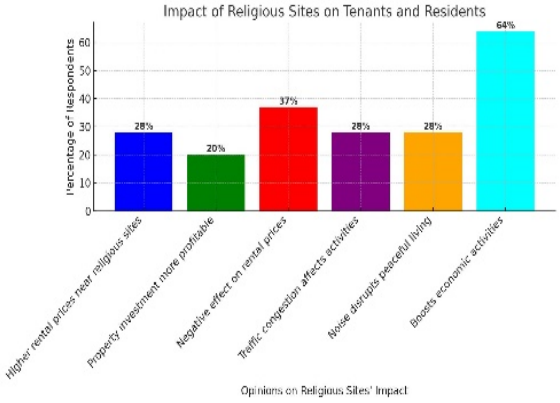
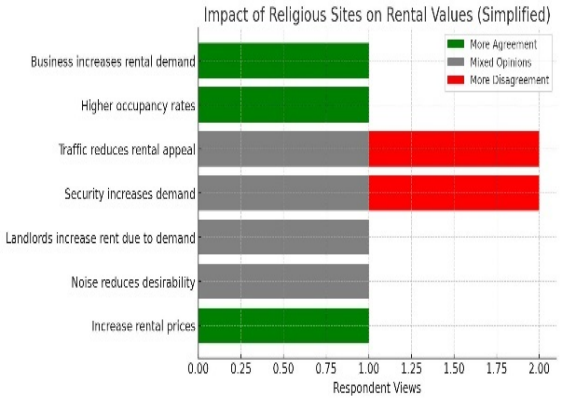


Figure 2 examined the impact of religious sites on tenants and residents in the densely populated areas of Bariga and Akoka/Sabo in Lagos, Nigeria. These neighbourhoods, marked by a steady rise in churches, mosques, and other religious institutions along major thoroughfares such as Bariga Roundabout – Bajulaye and Unilag Gate – Sabo, reflect how religious growth is reshaping urban experiences.

A significant portion of respondents (64%) believe that the presence of religious sites boosts economic activities. This suggests that these institutions attract people and commerce, potentially benefiting nearby small businesses and street vendors. However, the data also highlight several concerns. 37% of respondents reported that traffic congestion caused by religious activities negatively affects daily life, especially during peak service hours. In addition, 28% expressed concern about rising rental prices near religious sites, which may reflect increased housing demand in areas with high levels of religious activity.

Similarly, 28% noted that noise from religious gatherings disrupts peaceful living, while the same percentage felt that such noise and crowding disturb daily activities. These responses point to the growing tension between the spiritual role of religious sites and the livability of surrounding residential zones. Interestingly, while 20% of respondents see property investment near religious sites as more profitable, another 28% raised concerns about its negative effect on rental affordability, reflecting a divided view based on one's stake, whether as a landlord, tenant, or investor.

Figure 3: Impact on Rental Values

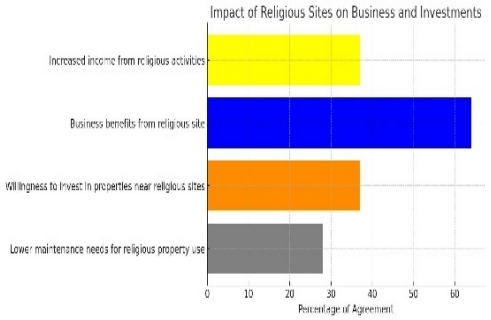


The impact of religious sites on rental values in the Bariga and Akoka/Sabo areas of Lagos was explored using a simplified chart capturing respondents' perspectives. These areas are characterised by high residential density and a growing concentration of churches, mosques, and other religious institutions. Specifically, the study focused on sub-locations such as Baale–Deeper Life, Deeper Life–Ifako High School, Bariga Roundabout–Bajulaye, Bajulaye–Masquerade House, and Pako–Folagoro Junction in Bariga, as well as Unilag Gate–Sabo, Sabo–Adekunle, Sabo through Alara–Second Gate, and Pako–Ilaje in Akoka/Sabo.

From the responses gathered, there was considerable agreement that the presence of religious sites contributes positively to rental demand. Many respondents agreed that these institutions promote business activity and lead to higher occupancy rates. This increase in economic activity and residential appeal was also associated with an overall rise in rental prices in these areas. Such observations were most evident in areas with active religious centres, where the presence of congregants and associated commercial activities drives up demand for rental properties. However, not all impacts were viewed positively. There was strong disagreement among respondents regarding the desirability of properties near religious sites due to traffic congestion and perceived security issues. These concerns were especially relevant in locations such as Sabo and Bariga Roundabout, where religious activities frequently cause crowding and disrupt regular traffic. Respondents also highlighted the adverse effect of noise from religious gatherings, although opinions on this issue were mixed. While some viewed it as a disturbance reducing the area's appeal, others did not consider it a significant factor.

Additionally, respondents expressed divided opinions on whether landlords increased rents due to demand driven by religious institutions. This mixed perception suggests a tension between property owners seeking to capitalise on increased demand and tenants wary of rising housing costs.

Figure 4: Impact on Business and Investments



(For Property Owners & Business Owners Only)

Figure 4 presents the views of property owners and business owners regarding the impact of religious sites on business and investment activities in the Bariga and Akoka/Sabo areas of Lagos. These locations are known for their mix of residential and commercial use, with a significant presence of churches and mosques that influence the surrounding real estate and economic landscape.

The data reveal that a notable proportion of respondents acknowledged direct business benefits from proximity to religious sites, with over half agreeing that their businesses benefit from nearby religious institutions. This may be attributed to the high foot traffic generated during religious gatherings, which increases visibility and patronage for local businesses. These benefits were most likely felt by owners of retail shops, eateries, and other service-oriented establishments situated near areas such as Sabo–Adekunle and Deeper Life–Ifako High School. Regarding increased income from religious activities, approximately one-third of respondents agreed. This reflects recognition of the economic opportunities that accompany religious events, such

as renting spaces, supplying goods, or providing services to attendees. It suggests that religious gatherings are not only spiritual activities but also avenues for financial gain in these urban neighbourhoods. Moreover, about one-third of respondents expressed a willingness to invest in properties near religious sites, signalling confidence in the sustained demand and economic potential of these areas. Locations like Pako–Ilaje and Bariga Roundabout–Bajulaye, where religious and commercial life intersect, may be particularly attractive to investors who foresee continued growth in rental demand and customer base. Finally, lower maintenance needs for religious property use received the least agreement, with fewer than 30% of respondents concurring. This may indicate that property owners do not necessarily associate religious tenants with lower upkeep costs, possibly due to the intensity of use or the specific infrastructure demands of religious gatherings.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the study conducted in Bariga and Akoka/Sabo areas of Lagos reveal a multifaceted relationship between religious development and residential property values. These densely populated urban neighbourhoods, marked by a high concentration of churches and mosques, show both positive and negative influences on the local housing market. On the positive side, a significant number of respondents acknowledged that the presence of religious sites contributes to increased rental demand and higher occupancy rates. Many residents and stakeholders agreed that religious institutions promote business activities and generate economic opportunities, which can drive up property demand and, subsequently, rental prices. This economic boost, particularly in locations like Sabo and Bariga Roundabout, often translates into a higher perceived value of nearby residential properties; this finding corroborates the work of Carroll et al. (1996), who observed that neighbourhood churches can function as local amenities, increasing nearby property values by enhancing community attraction. Similarly, Brandt et al. (2013) reported rental and sales premiums for residential properties located in proximity to places of worship in Hamburg, Germany, suggesting that religious landmarks can enhance neighbourhood desirability. However, the data also highlighted several concerns that complicate this dynamic. Issues such as traffic congestion, noise disturbances, and overcrowding—especially during major religious gatherings were seen as factors that reduce the desirability of living near religious institutions. These disruptions negatively impact tenant satisfaction and, in some cases, lead to perceptions of reduced residential appeal, potentially dampening rental value appreciation for certain property types. These findings are consistent with Babawale and Adewunmi (2011), who found that large churches in Lagos neighbourhoods negatively influenced surrounding rental values due to congestion and environmental disturbances. Furthermore, while some landlords increase rent in response to heightened demand, opinions are mixed on the sustainability and fairness of such pricing strategies. Property owners generally recognise the investment potential of areas surrounding religious sites, but tenants are more cautious, especially when improvements do not match rising rents in liveability.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study on the impact of religious development on residential property values in the Bariga and Akoka/Sabo areas of Lagos reveals a complex interaction between religious institutions and the urban housing market. Religious institutions, particularly churches and mosques, play a prominent role in shaping land use, population dynamics, and property demand in these densely populated neighbourhoods. The findings indicate that religious sites contribute positively to rental values by stimulating economic activity, increasing foot traffic, and creating demand for residential and commercial space. These benefits often lead to higher occupancy rates and rental income for landlords and property investors. However, these advantages come with trade-offs. Many residents expressed concerns about traffic congestion, noise pollution, and overcrowding from religious gatherings, all of which can detract from the quality of life and, in some cases, reduce the perceived value of living near such institutions. The divergent views among stakeholders (tenants, landlords, business owners, and real estate agents) highlight the need for a balanced approach in managing urban development in areas experiencing intense religious expansion.

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to manage better the impact of religious development on residential property values in Bariga and Akoka/Sabo.

Firstly, urban planners and local authorities should implement and enforce appropriate zoning regulations that clearly distinguish between residential, commercial, and religious land uses. This will help prevent overcrowding and reduce the friction between religious activities and residential living. Where religious institutions already exist within residential neighbourhoods, buffer zones or designated activity areas should be introduced to minimise direct disturbances to residents. Secondly,

traffic management strategies should be developed in collaboration with religious organisations to address congestion during peak service hours. These strategies may include deploying traffic wardens, creating designated parking areas, and rerouting traffic to reduce road blockage. This will ease movement for residents and preserve the functionality of major roads, especially in high-density corridors like Sabo and Bariga Roundabout. Lastly, religious institutions should adopt noise control measures to limit disruptions to nearby residents. This includes installing soundproof materials, lowering speaker volumes, and observing quiet hours, especially during early mornings or late nights. Encouraging the scheduling of services at less intrusive times can also contribute to a more peaceful coexistence within the neighbourhood.

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