

THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN MUKONO DISTRICT

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I, Joshua Kisakye declare that the information contained in this dissertation titled “The influence of religious practices and political participation in Mukono district” is original and to the best of my knowledge has not been submitted to any institution for any award.

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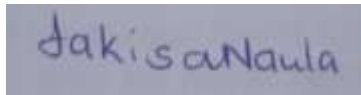
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APPROVAL

As the supervisor, I certify that this dissertation has been done under my supervision and guidance and is submitted with my approval.

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A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jakisa Naula".

Sign:

Date: 26th March 2026

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this report to my wife and children who played an instrumental role in my educational career. To Ayinza Bethel my six-year-old daughter who always encouraged me to read and do my work and finish on time. Your prayers and support have been a constant source of strength and motivation throughout this course.

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I thank God the Almighty whose guidance, mercy and grace made my report writing a success and kept me alive all through my education. I am indebted to my supervisor, **MARY NAULA JAKISA OWOR, PhD** who supported, encouraged, guided and equipped me with all the skills used in writing this report. Furthermore, I wish to convey my thanks to the University for the facilities provided through the library and computer laboratories.

I also extend my sincere appreciation to my friends for their contribution to this report.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IRCU : Inter-Religious Council of Uganda

CVI : Content Validity Index

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effect of religious activities on political involvement in Mukono District, Uganda. It was driven by the increasing awareness of the role religious institutions have in shaping values, civic attitudes and engagement in communities. The study was concentrated on three aspects of religious practice: public or organizational, private, and religious support systems, and their impact on political participation of members of the community.

The research design adopted was mixed methods, which included both a quantitative and qualitative approach. Structured questionnaires were used to get quantitative data whereas qualitative data was obtained through interviews with some religious leaders and active participants in the community. Religious institutions and community groups in Mukono District were used to obtain a sample of 160 persons through purposive and convenience sampling. Data collected were analysed using descriptive analysis (frequencies and percentages) with the aid of Microsoft Excel for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data to find out common themes related to religious influence in political engagement.

The findings indicated that participation in religious practices in the public sphere, including attending church services and engaging in church activities significantly improve political awareness and civic involvement. There is an indirect connection between private religious practices (prayer, personal reflection) and participation, through their impact on moral values and civic responsibility.

The study concludes that religious institutions have an important social and moral role to play in the promotion of political participation and civic responsibility. They teach, connect to, and support citizens to become more conscious of governance issues and more open to participating in the democratic process of voting and public discussion. The study suggests that civic education should be incorporated into religious education programs, and that there should be greater cooperation between religious organizations, the government, and civil society to promote civic awareness and democratic engagement.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The study examined the influence of religious practices on political participation in Mukono District. In this study, religious practices were conceptualized as the independent variable, while political participation was treated as the dependent variable. This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, scope, significance, justification, conceptual framework, and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

1.1.1 Global perspective of religious practices and political participation

The world over, religion remains a powerful influence on political views, civic involvement, and governance. In the past, religious institutions and confessions have shaped political ideologies, political activities, and public policies in many societies. As Norris and Inglehart (2011) note, religion frequently offers moral structures that inform citizens' political decision making and involvement in governance. Religious institutions in many countries provide space for the community to talk about social issues, call for justice, and include political involvement.

In the more established democracies (e.g., the USA), religious organizations have been significant contributors to the political agenda and voting patterns. Christian evangelical groups have, for instance, had a major impact on voters' attitudes and policy discussions about social issues like family values, education, and human rights (Pew Research Center, 2020). Likewise, in some European countries, while secularization has grown, religious institutions have remained active in promoting social justice, peace, and good governance through their involvement in political dialogue. The Catholic Church has always been a force that functions in Italy and Spain to mobilise Catholics for social and political reform (Casanova, 2018).

In other parts of the globe, religion has also been transformative in political movements. For example, in Poland, the Catholic Church was pivotal in helping to develop the Solidarity

Movement, which helped to bring about changes in the political system and democratic reforms (Gill, 2013). Religion is intertwined with political systems in the Middle East. In Iran and Saudi Arabia, for instance, religious authority affects the legitimacy and governance in the countries (Nasr, 2016). More pluralistic societies like Indonesia, on the other hand, can show how interfaith cooperation can facilitate democratic participation and social tolerance (Liddle & Mujani, 2019).

However, religion and politics have at times led to conflict although it has sometimes helped. While religion can foster ethical leadership, social cohesion, and civic engagement, its politicization can also result in social divisions and exclusion, argues Fox (2019). So, religion is still a strong social institution that can both promote democratic participation and shape politics on the global level.

1.1.2 African perspective of religious practices and political participation

Religion plays a major role in social, cultural and political life in Africa. Religious institutions often serve as influential platforms for mobilizing communities, shaping public opinion, and promoting civic engagement. Religious institutions are one of the most powerful institutions in Africa's social and political landscape, with a large majority of Africans identifying with a religious faith (Gifford 2015).

Africa's religious institutions - both Christian and Muslim, and even African Independent Churches - have contributed significantly to the promotion of democratic governance, peacebuilding and social justice. Religious leaders in Nigeria, Kenya, and Ghana often are involved in civic education campaigns and urging citizens to vote, as well as encouraging peaceful political participation (Agbiji & Swart, 2015). For example, the Christian Council of Ghana and the Kenya

In times of elections, the Conference of Catholic Bishops have often acted as mediators of political conflicts and promoted dialogue.

Religion and politics have also been problematic in Africa, though. In some instances, political leaders have persuaded voters to vote for their party based on religious affiliation or

attempted to strengthen political divisions. In Nigeria, for instance, religion is a political determinant as it shapes voting behaviour and party affiliation, creating political polarization (Kalu, 2014). In other countries, like Ethiopia and Sudan, religious groups have been involved in some instances in political struggles, leading to tensions within societies.

Still, African religious organizations make a positive contribution to political life throughout the continent. Religious leaders are often found to be promoting ethical leadership, calling for an end to corruption and civic responsibility among the citizens through their actions and influence (Adewale, 2021). Consequently, religion continues to play a significant role in politics and governance in Africa.

1.1.3 East African perspective of religious practices and political participation

In the East African part, religion plays a role in the social and political behaviors. Religious involvement in social development and political processes has a long history in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda and Uganda. Educational institutions can be a link between the citizens and the government, as well as between the government and the citizens in their role of promoting peace, justice and democratic governance (Mbogo, 2015).

During the twentieth century, the EARM played an important role in changing the religious landscape in East Africa and helped to build robust faith communities. These movements helped to inspire spiritual renewal and social responsibility and political consciousness among believers (Holistic Development, 2020). In the process, religious institutions in the area routinely undertake civic education, election monitoring and advocacy for good governance.

Faith-based institutions like the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda, and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) have actively worked on promoting peaceful elections and encouraging good citizenship by encouraging citizens to exercise their civic rights responsibly. But, the political involvement of the religious leaders has sometimes led to worries about partisanship. Agbiji and Swart (2015) highlight that some religious leaders in the region have faced condemnation for openly affiliating with political parties in the region, which can lead to a reduction in their credibility and the polarization of congregations. For instance in the

elections of 2007 in Kenya, religious leaders were accused of tying up with political groups and this created conflicts among religious groups.

Nevertheless, religion remains influential in East Africa in terms of social values and political attitudes. In the region, religious education and moral teachings also tend to instill ethical leadership, accountability and a sense of civic responsibility in the citizens (Koenig, 2019).

1.1.4 Uganda's Perspective of Religious Practices and Political Participation

The links between religion and politics are very much historical in Uganda, having originated in the pre-colonial and colonial era. The arrival of Christians in the nineteenth century had an impact on religious life as well as political and social life of the nation. Western education and political concepts like leadership, governance and community development (Senyonga, 2003) were introduced by the missionaries.

Religious preferences had a bearing on access to education, employment, and political opportunities during the colonial era. The Protestants and Catholics had a historical antagonism that led to their sectarian differences influencing the early political life of Uganda. Certain political parties even had a religious affiliation before independence (Jackson, 2003).

During the struggle for independence, religious institutions were part and parcel in the promotion of civic awareness, peace building and community mobilization. Churches such

The Church of Uganda and the Roman Catholic Church facilitated social programmes and urged citizens to take part in national development programmes.

Today's Uganda still has a religious dimension to political involvement and civic engagement. Religious communities play a significant role in the religious landscape and regularly leverage their platforms to promote peaceful elections, civic engagement and accountability in governance. Voter education, election observation and peacebuilding initiatives are part of the electoral process that is actively promoted by organisations like the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). (Adewale, 2021)

But religion-politics nexus is not without its challenges in Uganda. Partisan political messages have been criticized for being promoted by some religious leaders, and there are concerns about other religious leaders' freedom of expression on political issues. The dynamics reflect the intricate relationship between religious practices and political participation in the country.

1.1.5 Religious practices and political participation in Mukono District

The local dimension of Mukono District is typical of the whole of Uganda, where religion is key in every community life and social organization. The district also has several religious

institutions, such as churches, mosques and faith-based organizations which shape community values, social cohesion and civic engagement.

It is common to find religious leaders in the Mukono area advising their followers about ethical, leadership and social responsibility issues. They promote the involvement of believers in community development through community meetings, outreach, and sermons, and engage them in national processes like elections. Citizens also have opportunities to discuss social and political issues that impact their community in religious congregations.

Although religious institutions have exerted a significant influence, there is little empirical evidence that shows the effect of religious practices on political participation by citizens in Mukono District. This relationship is key, as knowledge of it is significant for religious

The teachings and leadership may either promote civic participation or influence political orientations which impact on civic participation.

This study therefore aims at finding out the effect of religious practices on political participation in Mukono District, Uganda.

1.2 Problem statement

Although Christianity has been a key player in the social and moral life of many people in Mukono District, lack of political participation is observed among some segments of the population. Other voters are ambivalent about voting or participate only in the most basic way: voting. Based on the informal observation, there is a gap between the emphasis of morality and social justice in the church and the engagement of the church members in political activities like participating in political party meetings, being members of political parties or in public discussions (Nsubuga, 2021).

It is known from reports and local surveys that voter attendance at the local government elections, particularly in certain sub-counties of Mukono is below the national average. There are some young people and adults who view politics in a negative light, believing it to be corrupt, untrustworthy or corrupted in moral character, which results in low participation. There are other people who believe that their spiritual life is different from that of the political life such that they don't see political participation as their Christian duty (Kaggwa,

2022).

Furthermore, although religious patterns in terms of church attendance, fellowship and sermons are common, there is little systematic understanding of how these patterns relate to political action. The churches that emphasize only the spiritual aspects are specifically abstaining from political activities in the public sphere. In some instances, however, church leaders are afraid to talk politics because of the fear of the government repercussions or the church policies that discourage political discussion (Mukasa, 2020).

There are important implications of these disconnections between the religious practices and political participation. An understanding of the dynamics of how Christian belief contributes to or detracts from political engagement is crucial to supporting democratic consolidation and civic engagement,

education, and good governance in Mukono District. If this is not understood, any interventions may be inappropriate and religious institutions, civic groups and government bodies have no idea how to use religious values to encourage participation or tackle negative values that hinder participation (Ssemenda, 2023).

Thus, this study aims to bridge this gap in knowledge by finding out the effect of Christian religious practices on political participation in Mukono District. It seeks to recognize positive and negative influences and point to contextual factors that influence these relationships (Turyatemba, 2024).

1.3 General objective

To examine the influence of religious practices on political participation in Mukono District

1.4 Specific objectives

i. To examine the influence of public/organizational religious practices and political participation among residents of Mukono District.

ii. To assess how private religious practices influence political engagement among residents of Mukono District.

iii. To evaluate the role of religious support systems in shaping voter behavior and political participation in Mukono District.

1.5 Research questions

i. What is the influence of public/organizational religious practices (service attendance and group worship) and political participation among residents of Mukono District?

ii. How do private religious practices (prayer and devotional routines) influence political engagement among residents of Mukono District?

iii. What is the role of religious support systems in shaping voter behavior and political participation in Mukono District?

1.6 Scope of the study

1.6.1 Geographical scope

This research will be carried out in the districts of Mukono in the central region of Uganda. The research will cover the urban, peri-urban, and rural parishes located within the municipality of Mukono and certain sub-counties. This district has been chosen since it has a diversity of Christians.

1.6.2 Content Scope

The scope of content in this study involved identifying the various dimensions through which religion impacts political participation in Mukono District. Based on the study objectives, the research examines the impact of public/organizational religious practices such as attending services and worshipping in groups on political participation among citizens. It is intended to establish how participation in organizational religion impacts citizenry knowledge, responsibility, and involvement in political processes.

This study also examines the impact of private religious practices such as prayer and devotion on the political behavior and attitude of the individual. Additionally, it assesses the impact of religious support systems like congregational support and faith-based community support on voter behavior and political participation. The study focuses only on Christian and Islamic religious settings in Mukono District, with insights gained from religious leaders, congregants, and political figures within the area.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study covered the period from **2022 to 2025**, capturing at least one recent election cycle (local or national), recent practice of religious programming, and current

attitudes. Data collection focused on current and retrospective reports from respondents about their political participation in this period.

1.7 Justification of the study

This research was justified by the need to understand the interconnection of religion and politics for the sake of ensuring inclusive governance and enhancing political participation in Uganda. Religion plays an important role in developing the moral fabric of a community and can be used both to empower and constrain citizens when engaging in political activities (Okello, 2023). In Mukono district where churches, mosques, and other religious organizations play a very significant role in the community life, their influence on political participation bears great significance to civic education, policymaking, and elections (Nanyonga, 2021). By studying how religious teachings, religious organizations, and religious meetings influence political participation, the research brought useful insights for scholars, policymakers, and other individuals who want to enhance democracy in Uganda without neglecting the religious factor (Turyasingura, 2022).

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study may be significant academically, socially, and practically in several ways:

Academic contribution. It will make a contribution to academic work on religion and politics in Uganda by looking at Christian activities rather than institutional religion in the context of political participation, which remains a largely underresearched subject. It will provide empirical findings from Mukono District for comparison with studies of religion, civic activity, and democracy.

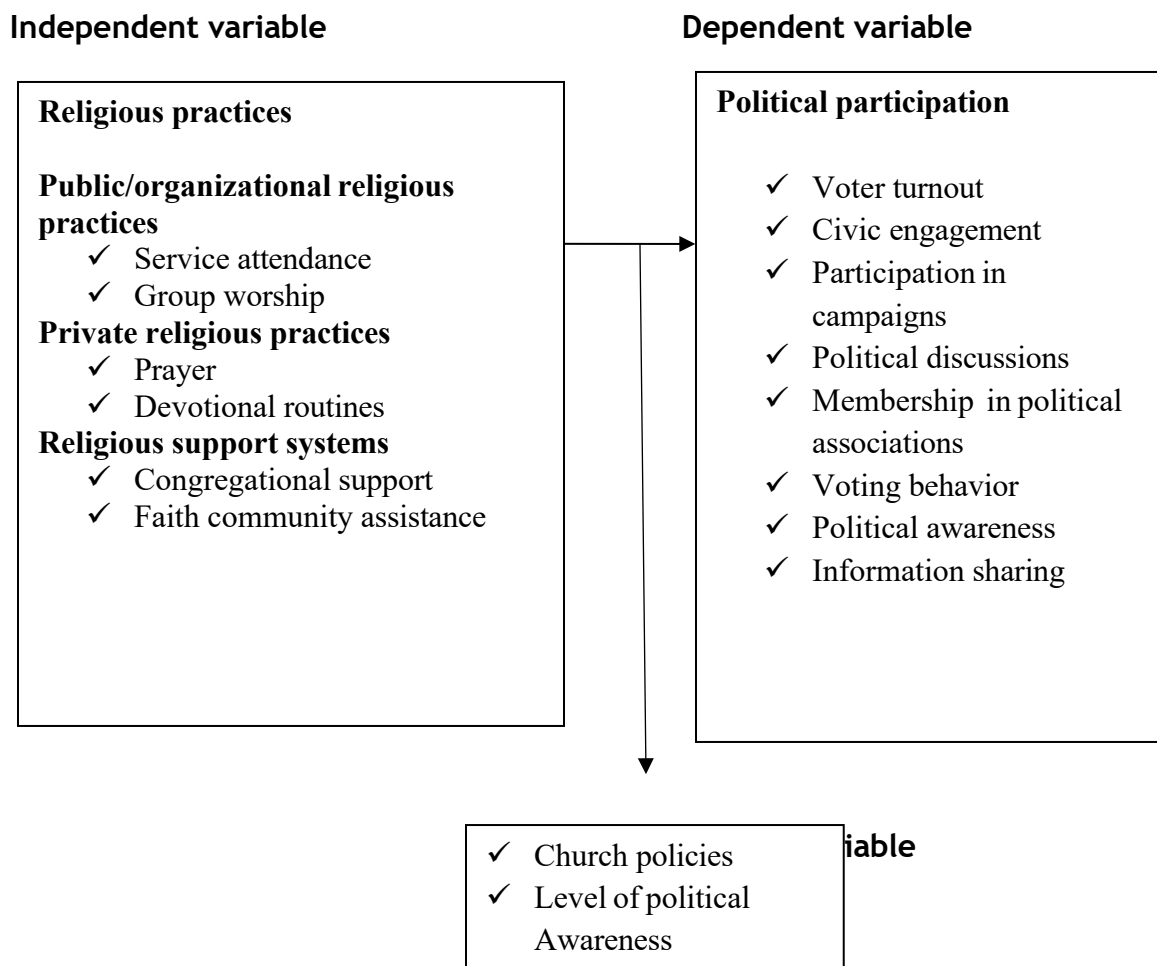
For religious institutions. The churches and other Christian organizations will be in a position to know how their activities and preaching affect the political engagement of their congregations and what messages, programs, or campaigns can foster such involvement without conflicting with their spiritual activities.

For policymakers, civil society organizations, and civic educators. The results can guide electoral commissions, local administrations, NGOs, and civic organizations in designing

programs that utilize religious networks to increase voter registration, mobilization, deliberative processes, and political participation. The study will identify which attitudes or activities are either enabling or hindering engagement.

For the residents of Mukono. They will learn whether there is anything about their beliefs and religious practices that might impact political participation positively or negatively.

1.9 Conceptual framework



Source: Researcher 2025

The conceptual framework represents the relationship between religious practices (X) and political participation (Y) of the members of the community. Religious practices fall into three categories: public/ organizational religious practices, private religious practices and religious support systems. Public religious practice includes any act of religious observance in which participants interact with others in the context of its religious institutions, such as attending worship services. Private religious practices are those that relate to personal prayer and devotional activities that affect personal beliefs and values. Religious support systems cover congregational support and assistance from faith-based organisations that can increase inter-personal/community bonds and collective identity among believers. The attitudes, values and civic responsibility that people develop as a result of these religious activities can affect their participation in the political arena.

The dependent variable, political participation, is measured using various indicators including voter turnout, civic involvement, campaign involvement, political discussion, political association membership, voting behavior, political awareness, and information sharing. The framework implies that those who are actively involved in religious practice are more likely to have networks, leadership and sense of civic awareness and are more likely to be involved in political activities. But intervening factors like the church policies, and political awareness might also affect the religious practice and political participation relationship. Political awareness creates an awareness of political issues and encourages people to participate in democratic processes and processes which can either be encouraged or discouraged depending on the dogma and policies of each church. So the influence of religious practices on political participation can be strengthened or weakened by these intervening factors.

1.10 Chapter summary

In Chapter One, the study was set to examine the effect of religious practices on political participation in Mukono District with religious practices as the independent variable and political participation as the dependent variable. It offers a worldwide,

African, East African and Ugandan viewpoints, examining the impact of faith on morals, civic involvement and politics and recognising the difficulties of partisanship and voter apathy. The chapter perceived that there was a problem gap in Mukono; even though religious groups are actively involved in various activities, political participation is low, particularly among youth and adults who are concerned with spiritual life and believe that it has no connection with civic engagement.

The study aimed to generally explore the effect of religious practices on political participation and particularly, religious teaching, religious organizations, and religious events.

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, a detailed review of the literature is provided regarding the study of the impact of religious activities on the involvement in politics in Mukono district. The main objective of the literature review is to analyze previous findings from other researchers' work in order to provide the basis for the present research. Through the review of other researchers' works, this chapter identifies themes and issues that have been developed regarding the subject matter.

2.1 The influence of public/organizational religious practices and political participation

Most sociologists and researchers generally accept religion as one of the significant social institutions that impact civic orientations and behaviors. Nonetheless, there is a disagreement among academics regarding the extent of influence exerted by religious behaviors on political activity. In most of the existing literature, there is an agreement that publicly or organizationally organized religious activities like going to church, joining religious organizations, group prayers, and taking part in other religious activities contribute to creating a social environment that encourages civic participation.

Another viewpoint focuses on the idea of the civic skills approach. According to Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), religious organizations function as "incubators of civic skills," where people gain the ability to communicate, organize themselves, and be leaders as they take part in committee work, prayer groups, and other religious outreach programs. These skills can then be utilized in politics, helping individuals take part in political activities such as voting and campaigning. Likewise, Smidt (2003) reinforces this theory, showing how people who regularly attend religious gatherings become more politically active since churches give the opportunity for mobilization and civic education.

Whereas these authors focus on the role of skills, other authors emphasize the formation of social capital within religious networks. As stated by Putnam (2000), participation in religious organizations helps strengthen the creation of both types of social capital as the result of creating networks characterized by elements of trust and reciprocity, facilitating political information dissemination and cooperation. This point is confirmed by Norris & Inglehart (2011) who point out that religious organizations often act as carriers and transmitters of civic obligations. Fox (2018) proposes a somewhat different explanation as he states that in

developing countries, religious organizations not only help generate social capital but also serve as mediators in relations between citizens and political elites in case of weak state institutions. Thus, religious organizations might be seen as alternative structures of political representation. Although these authors focus on various aspects, they generally concur that public religious life helps create a social environment that might promote political activity.

The final scholarly disagreement involves the influence of religious teachings and leadership on political involvement. For instance, Guth et al. (2001) suggest that doctrines promoting principles such as social justice, stewardship, and moral responsibility can motivate individuals to be politically involved. Similarly, Calfano & Djupe (2009) note that the clergy uses sermons to present political matters from a theological point of view and therefore influences the political opinions of parishioners. These researchers assert that in this process, the religious leaders serve as opinion leaders who legitimize political participation among believers. In contrast, some academics argue that religious doctrines could limit an individual's level of involvement in politics. Kalyvas (2000), for example, suggests that certain perspectives of religious beliefs could promote subservience to authority or detachment from the material world. Thus, the scholars' disagreement indicates that the effects of religious teachings could depend on the perspective held by the religious leaders themselves.

Additional research highlights the significance of various types of religious activities such as public activities, private activities, and religious support networks in political participation. In particular, Campbell & Tilley (2022) posit that the more one is involved in religious practices, the higher one's civic engagement level will be since they are exposed to deliberations on issues relating to social justice and good governance. Foley (2019) concurs that people who have adopted religious doctrines that teach them about social responsibility are likely to take part in politics such as voting. Additionally, Smith et al. (2021) assert that religiously engaged communities are civic-minded since religion provides individuals with social cues and encouragement to become politically active.

Compared to other societies, religious entities play a very important role in the lives of Africans, such that religious entities are important arenas for the political communication process and mobilization in the African context. For instance, Gyimah-Boadi (2007) explains

that religious institutions such as churches in sub-Saharan Africa have been instrumental in fostering democracy through the promotion of civic education, accountability, and peaceful participation in politics. More recent literature has identified similar trends. Ojo (2020) reveals that religious meetings in many parts of Africa act as important sources of political information dissemination, especially in the rural setting where there is little formal civic education. In addition, Wanyama (2021) points out that religious beliefs can affect political participation levels and styles due to their interaction with cultural beliefs.

However, it is worth mentioning that researchers are not unanimous about the role of religious activities in stimulating people's involvement in political life. Some researchers claim that the politicization of religion could

result in politically exclusive behavior of the people. According to Kalyvas (2000), a strong religious identity may result in increased division of social groups and, therefore, individuals will tend to adopt political opinions in order to protect their religious interests and not democratic ones. Likewise, Fox (2018) points out that sometimes religious organizations may cooperate with political elites and, thus, restrict the freedom of political activities among their members.

Despite all the arguments, most researchers are unanimous in the assertion that public expressions of religion continue to be relevant indicators of political participation. This is because religions provide people with chances to become more civically aware through activities like communal worship, religious education, guidance from religious leaders, and social networking. With regards to this research, public or institutional religious activities, including church attendance and participation in religious groups and activities, will play a role in shaping people's political behavior by developing civic skills and social networking as well as moral motivations towards political participation.

2.2 The role of private religious practices in promoting political engagement

It is common knowledge among scholars that religion is a strong social phenomenon that has

a great impact on politics. However, controversy exists concerning the way through which religion exerts its influence on politics. In the earlier works, the role of religious institutions and public religious actions were stressed. Currently, many scholars have shifted their focus towards the influence of private religious actions and religious networks in the development of political involvement. According to Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995), religious institutions offer essential civic skills that are necessary for political participation. They consider public religious activities, like attending churches and participating in congregational activities, as major stages where people gain political consciousness and civic skills. In the same manner, Putnam (2000) asserts that joining religious gatherings helps to build up social capital, which enhances civic trust and political mobilization. Therefore, both authors agree that public religious activities form a network that encourages citizen participation in democracy.

Although these authors emphasize the relevance of public religious activities, other studies show that there is equal relevance of private religious practices in political involvement. According to Smidt (2003), not only do organized activities contribute to the development of political orientations but private spiritual activities are just as relevant to formulating one's political perspectives. The fact that people pray, read, and meditate contributes to their internalization of virtues such as justice, responsibility, and accountability. Smidt takes the ideas of Verba et al. (1995) further to argue that motivation for politics is derived from faith, not organizational involvement.

In like manner, according to Calfano and Djupe (2009), private religious beliefs might encourage people to get involved in political activities because of their personal religious beliefs, viewing them as a responsibility of morality to pursue justice and good governance. According to the arguments presented by Calfano and Djupe, this provides empirical support for the assertion that the practice of religion privately increases internal political efficacy, meaning that an individual believes that his/her actions can have a positive impact in politics. On the other hand, Fox (2018) presents a contrary perspective that religious beliefs might inhibit political activity since people tend to view spiritual obligations as separate from politics.

Apart from individual dedication and group worship services, the third aspect stressed by the scholars includes religious support mechanisms that help in promoting involvement in politics. This is made up of social networks, guidance by religious figures,

and moral encouragement offered through religion. As stated by Haynes (2007), religious organizations tend to frame political questions as moral matters, thus affecting how religious individuals view governance and leadership. In the same vein, Wadood et al. (2023) hold that religious leaders significantly contribute to the molding of political attitudes through moral encouragement and interpretation of religious texts.

Furthermore, recent findings have also underlined the role of religious support systems in motivating citizens to engage in civic duties. For instance, Smith et al. (2020), as well as Johnson and Lee (2022), explain how the role of religious organizations in educating their members morally and civically helps build a culture of citizen awareness and engagement. Both sets of scholars have agreed that such religious support systems serve as the informal civic education structures, especially where political civic education systems are not strong. Nevertheless, Garcia and Chen (2022) note that the impact of religious support systems depends on the institutional strength and trust of religious institutions.

Concerning the case of religion in Africa, the relationship between religion and social-political aspects is still very strong. For example, Gyimah-Boadi (2015) claims that in different parts of Africa, religious institutions have traditionally served as mediating structures between citizens and the political leadership, thus shaping political attitudes. Likewise, new studies by Afrobarometer (2023) have indicated that in some African countries, including Uganda, religious leaders tend to be one of the most trusted figures in the country.

It has been argued that religion plays an important role in defining the public and private aspects of civil society in Uganda. According to Bompani & Brown (2015), churches and other religious groups often engage in discussions concerning politics, democracy, and social justice within their communities. These discussions show how public religious practices such as church services and meetings play a significant role in creating an environment for addressing national issues and promoting civil awareness. Religious practices are also highly personal in Uganda,

where people pray and study the Bible on a regular basis.

According to recent findings, it is also possible that individual practices involving religion may boost civic awareness. According to Gobena (2019), individual practices help an individual imbibe values such as responsibility and ethics, which are necessary for being a good citizen. As mentioned by Uribe et al. (2020), personalization of religious beliefs may instill a sense of civic responsibility among individuals, thus motivating them to take part in activities such as voting, attending community meetings, and engaging in advocacy.

Nevertheless, researchers agree that there is still a lack of research regarding the interrelationship among these three aspects in the domain of religion. In other words, not much has been discussed about how these three factors work together in influencing political behavior within a community or locality.

Religion is an integral part of the social identity in Mukono District and this is significant in the context of religion and political involvement. Religious activities (e.g., in the church, community worship) offer venues for civic discourse and group mobilization. Individuals' political attitudes and moral reasoning may be influenced by private religious practices such as personal prayer and devotional studies. Meanwhile, faith-based and religious support structures (e.g., guidance from clergy and religious networks) can help to strengthen civic awareness and promote engagement in governance processes.

There is however little empirical research that looks at the relation between the three forms of religiosity and political participation in Mukono District. This is a significant gap to fill in order to grasp the role of religion in community civic engagement and democratic growth.

Finally, the literature shows that religion has an impact on political participation in different ways, such as public religious practices, private religious practices, and religious support structures. Although there is agreement among many scholars that

Some emphasize that religion can reinforce civic and political values and others point out that the effects of religious participation can be different, depending on interpretations of the doctrines and socio-political contexts. Therefore, further studies are needed in Mukono District to explore the interplay between these various facets of religiosity and their impact

on political attitudes and participation of its citizens.

2.3 The influence of religious support systems in shaping voter behavior and political participation

The religion support system, encompassing congregation support, pastoral counseling, and faith community aid, is one of the essential factors that define the voting behavior and political involvement of citizens. In addition to being houses of worship, religious organizations also become social networks, through which members receive emotional, moral, practical, and civic support. As suggested by Putnam & Campbell (2012) and Campbell & Tsuria (2018), religious organizations represent more than just spiritual institutions; they also become social establishments that promote civic attitudes and participation. Through the support mechanisms provided, people form a communal identity, which affects their civic actions.

The social connections made through congregation contribute towards enhancing social bonds between individuals, leading to active citizenship. According to Verba et al., civic skills and participation in politics are usually learned through voluntary associations, which include religious organizations. Frequent social interaction through religious organizations fosters the development of trust, good communication skills, and ability to lead, all of which can be used during political activities such as voting and campaigning. Individuals who are encouraged in their congregations tend to believe in themselves politically.

Religious aid such as counseling, welfare assistance, and community outreach initiatives has also a considerable impact on voter behavior. Religious organizations providing social assistance make individuals more loyal to their communities. The feeling of belongingness is likely to make people take up civic duties, including voting. According to Putnam (2000), social capital built through religious networks makes people engage in collective activities. Thus, individuals having positive connections within religious networks will be inclined to consider themselves socially obligated to participate in political affairs.

The role of religious leaders as agents in these networks is also crucial because they provide spiritual and civic guidance. According to Campbell & Tsuria (2018), the clergy tends to discuss political issues in terms of morality or ethics, which reflects religion's teachings. The religious

leaders can encourage their members to vote as a civic responsibility in sermons and counseling sessions. This discussion makes people see their votes as more than a political action and as an ethical act as well. Members of religious organizations who are constantly encouraged to vote by their leaders are politically aware and vote regularly (Verba et al., 1995; Campbell, 2002).

Moreover, congregational involvement plays an important role in determining the level of political influence that members have. According to Olson and Rodeheffer (2020), members of well-organized congregations who participate actively are much more likely to be politically involved than those of loosely structured religious organizations. Small group participation, working in charity committees, engaging in youth ministry, and participation in faith-based forums are ways in which discussions can be made about politics and political information can be exchanged among members.

In the developed world, religion-based social networks tend to combine with political organization efforts. In the US and some regions of Western Europe, churches play an active role in informing their congregations on voter registration and citizenship and policies (Campbell & Tsuria, 2018). This is evident in black churches that for decades have been offering not only spiritual support but also political organization, through voter registration campaigns and civic activities (McClerking, 2003). The supportive atmosphere found in such churches builds group identity and enables individuals to engage in political activities.

Religious support systems also contribute significantly in developing nations, though the nature of their contribution depends on the particular socio-economic context they operate within. Religious organizations are known to engage in welfare programs, educational activities, and other developmental activities in nations like Uganda, Kenya, and Nigeria (Barkan & Chege, 1989; Lindberg, 2010). Such support mechanisms foster a relationship of mutual trust between the congregation members and religious figures. In rural areas where civic knowledge is lacking among people, religious meetings provide the main platform to discuss governance issues and voting concerns. According to Lindberg (2010), religiously integrated individuals are more politically active.

In the same way that religious support structures shape voting behavior, they have an effect on political activity as well through socialization and identity formation. Religious support structures are important since joining such structures leads to value reinforcement, normative reinforcement, and political identity (Putnam, 2000; Campbell, 2002). This is because religious organizations provide information about government structures, voting processes, and citizenship rights through various means such as workshops and seminars organized by these institutions. Such information fosters political efficacy and awareness, which are highly related to the act of voting (Verba et al., 1995).

In addition, programs of faith-based assistance frequently call on their membership for involvement in social justice issues, poverty relief, and community development, and this involvement can also take a political form. Recipients of community assistance may also become more responsive to political appeals that correspond with their own social and economic concerns. This relationship between social assistance and politics serves to illustrate how religious organizations bridge the private world of religion with public affairs (Putnam & Campbell, 2012).

Yet, the effects of religious support systems can sometimes have a biased effect. As Haynes (2012) observes, religious organizations sometimes exploit support structures for the sake of advancing certain political interests or endorsing particular politicians. Mobilizing people using these structures may lead to higher turnout rates, but this might also affect independent political reasoning. However, according to the results of empirical research, the overwhelming majority of cases show that support structures positively affect citizens' involvement into political processes through developing social capital, responsibility, and civic engagement (Putnam & Campbell, 2012).

The impact of religious support through congregational unity, religious aid, guidance from leaders, and social networks on voting behavior and political participation can be described in multiple ways. It helps accumulate social capital, establish civic norms, provide political information, and increase efficacy. Even though there may be differences depending on the particular setting and religion practiced, research findings prove that religious support positively contributes to voter turnout and political participation.

2.4 Research gap

Whereas the existing literature indicates a relationship between religious involvement and political participation, many sources used for literature review involve the application of religious involvement within politically developed countries, including the US and Western Europe (Campbell & Tilley, 2022; Verba et al., 2020). In addition to that, despite some sources touching upon the issue in the context of politically developing countries, including Kenya, Nigeria, and Uganda (Ojo, 2020; Wanyama, 2021; Lindberg, 2010), there is still little empirical data on the effect of religious teachings on political participation in smaller districts such as Mukono in Uganda.

However, most of the literature examined concerns adults and community involvement. Little information exists about how religious doctrines, faith-based organizations, or church meetings affect political participation among younger

populations, such as those enrolled in universities or secondary schools. In addition,

minorities or marginalized segments, for instance, individuals from rural areas or economically deprived backgrounds, receive inadequate attention. This makes it difficult to comprehend the effects of religion on political participation across various socio-economic settings concerning demographic groups.

In as much as the literature addresses the impact of religious practices and institutions in promoting civic activities, the process and ways of effecting such impacts remain poorly studied. For instance, literature touches on the concept of moral encouragement, networks, and mobilization (Smith et al., 2021; Campbell & Tsuria, 2018). However, little research explains the significance of these mechanisms or their interactions with political knowledge and cultural norms. It is important to understand which factors play a more critical mediating role in political participation processes.

Previous literature has noted that the nature of religious teachings, denominational differences, and the organizational capacities of faith-based organizations can impact the degree of political involvement (Smith et al., 2021; Garcia & Chen, 2022). But few comparative analyses have been conducted concerning other types of religions or faith-based organizations in developing nations. Similarly, the extent of the effect of religious events on voters' behaviors when their leaders might advocate for certain parties has not yet been fully examined. It remains to be answered how the neutral, biased, or cleric-led stance on politics affects the election process in certain places.

The existing body of literature primarily employs the cross-sectional study designs or observation to analyze the connection between religion and political behavior. Very few longitudinal analyses are available in the literature which would investigate the cumulative effect of repeated participation in religious events and teachings on people's involvement in politics. Moreover, mixed-methods studies, which would involve both quantitative indicators of political involvement alongside the qualitative data on the attitudes and motivations of participants at the events, are lacking

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodology employed in conducting the study will be presented. The chapter will highlight the research approach, the study setting, study population, sampling techniques, determination of the sample size, data collection techniques, the tools of data collection, validity and reliability of data collection tools, data analysis techniques, ethics in the study and the expected limitations of the study. The aim of the chapter is to describe the procedures through which credibility and reliability of findings from the study could be assured.

3.1 Area of study

The research was carried out in Mukono District, which is situated in the central part of Uganda. Mukono District is comprised of urban as well as rural areas and is known for a relatively diverse religious setting, such as various denominations of Christians, Islam centers, and other religion-related institutions. It should be noted that there are a number of churches and mosques in the district that influence the community's social and civic activities.

It should be mentioned that the decision to select Mukono District as the study area is based on its rather lively religious background as well as the observable levels of civic and political involvement of the local population. In Mukono District, various religion-related institutions often act as centers for providing people with moral and social guidelines as well as community mobilization.

3.2 Research design

Mixed methods research design, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques, was utilized in this study. A mixed methods approach was appropriate for conducting this research, taking into account that the researcher did not just need to identify the measurable relation between religious involvement and political activities but also explore the beliefs, perceptions, and views of participants that motivate their behavior.

Quantitative data collection in this study entailed measuring the extent of religious practice and different forms of political engagement using numerical data collected from questionnaires. With quantitative data, researchers can identify trends and establish relationships between variables (Busetto et al., 2020).

Qualitative data were gathered through interviews conducted with selected participants. It included gathering data about the views of individuals on how religion affects their political beliefs and behavior. Qualitative data provide context to findings as they include in-depth descriptions of participant experience (Rahman, 2017).

The use of two methods made the research more comprehensive, allowing the researcher not only to gather data but also to provide detailed explanations and context.

3.3 Study population

The study population comprised adult inhabitants of the Mukono district who participated actively in both religious and political activities. Participants included members of religious groups like churches and mosques, religious leaders, and community members who engaged in political activities through voting, attending community meetings, civil activism, and other related political discussions.

Incorporating participants from various religious groups and communities helped to get varied insights on the impact of religious practices on political participation.

3.4 Sampling technique and sample size determination

A sample size of 160 was established through use of the Sample Size Determination table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The sample size determination table helps researchers choose a

proper sample from the population. From the estimation of the population of active religious persons in the selected areas of Mukono District, the sample size was adequate to represent the target population.

Two sampling procedures were used to recruit respondents for this research:

Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants that included religious leaders and active people in civic activities. These participants were chosen deliberately because of their prior knowledge about the association between religion and political participation.

Convenience sampling was employed in recruiting those who were accessible in the selected places of religious practice. Convenience sampling helped in making it easier to collect data especially when distributing questionnaires.

This sampling procedure helped the researcher get both opinions from key participants and general views from ordinary community members.

3.5 Data collection methods

The study relied primarily on **primary data**, which was collected directly from respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Using multiple data collection

methods allowed the researcher to obtain both quantitative and qualitative information relevant to the study objectives.

3.5.1 Survey questionnaires

Respondents were given structured questionnaires to gather quantitative information on their religious practices and degree of political involvement. These questionnaires included closed questions that provided details on religious activities, participation in civil affairs, and respondents' perceptions on the connection between religion and politics.

The questionnaires were self-administered by respondents who had ample time to fill them out in the comfort of their own spaces.

3.5.2 Interviews

Face-to-face structured interviews were carried out with chosen religious leaders and members of the community. In addition, the interviews delved into participants' perceptions of the impacts of religious teachings, leadership teachings, and religious institutions on political beliefs and civic engagement.

The interviews took approximately 15-25 minutes each. This gave the interviewer time to ask supplementary questions.

3.6 Data collection instruments

3.6.1 Questionnaire

The questionnaire was designed based on existing literature on religious participation and political engagement (Bryman, 2016). The instrument consisted of structured questions organized into sections addressing demographic information, religious practices, and political participation.

3.6.2 Interview guide

The interview guide played an important role in ensuring that the qualitative information was collected effectively. The interview guide included questions that helped in examining the impact of religious beliefs, teachings, and leadership on political engagement. While the interview guide included questions on all topics of interest, there was room left for further questioning when required.

3.7 Validity and reliability of instruments

3.7.1 Validity

Validity is defined as the degree to which the research instrument accurately assesses what it was designed to assess. In order to validate the instruments, both the questionnaire and the interview guide were analyzed by research experts and supervisors for relevance and clarity. Their comments were taken into consideration in improving the instrument before conducting actual data collection.

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was calculated in order to determine whether the instrument items are adequate. Items found relevant by experts were included in the instrument while irrelevant items were discarded.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability means the extent to which an instrument remains constant while measuring similar results under similar conditions. Reliability was improved by conducting a pre-test (also known as pilot testing) on a small number of respondents who did not constitute part of the final sample. Ambiguous questions identified during this test process led to improvements in clarity.

Pilot testing ensured that the instrument was consistent in measuring and also understandable to respondents.

3.8 Data analysis

The numerical data acquired through the use of questionnaires was coded, entered, and analyzed with Microsoft Excel. Descriptive statistics were applied to the data, with the help of frequencies and percentages, to determine any trends about religious involvement and political participation.

The qualitative data collected through the interviews was transcribed and analyzed using the technique of thematic analysis, where the data was sorted out thematically, based on how the respondents viewed the effect of religion on their political involvement.

3.9 Ethical considerations

This research followed the set ethical guidelines in conducting social sciences research. Several ethics were observed while conducting this research.

First, permission to carry out the research was granted by Uganda Christian University as well as the local authorities in Mukono district.

Secondly, informed consent was received from all participants prior to their involvement in the study. The participants were briefed on what the research entailed and also had the freedom to withdraw from the research.

Thirdly, confidentiality and anonymity were ensured in the entire course of the research. This is because the identities of the participants were not included in the research report and all the data collected was strictly for academic use only.

Lastly, the study involved voluntary participation by the respondents and no one was coerced to participate.

Finally, the researcher ensured **honesty and integrity** by avoiding fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data and by properly acknowledging all sources of secondary information used in the study.

3.10 Limitations of the study

One expected limitation of the study was that there could be social desirability bias, whereby respondents would answer based on what is socially desirable and not necessarily their opinions especially on matters that were politically sensitive such as religion.

Also, one other expected limitation of the study is that the findings of the study will only be applicable to Mukono district since they were very contextual.

These limitations were however minimized by the utilization of various methods of data gathering.

3.11 Chapter summary

This chapter covered the methodology that was adopted for the conduct of the study. The study was done in Mukono district using a mixed method approach. Study population included adult residents who were engaged in religious and civic affairs. One hundred sixty (160) respondents were sampled utilizing purposive sampling and convenience sampling. Data collection was done through questionnaire administration and interviews. Measures of validity, reliability and ethical consideration were also considered.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis and interpretation of the data gathered to assess the impact of religious activities on political engagement in the Mukono District. This analysis relies on responses gathered from 150 respondents that include religious leaders, religious members, and other community members from the Mukono District area. Responses were gathered by administering structured questionnaires and conducting key informant interviews.

As stated by Taherdoost (2016), through the process of statistical analysis, researchers have the ability to convert raw data into useful information for interpretation and making decisions. Following this principle, statistical data analysis involved the use of both descriptive and inferential methods in analyzing the data. Descriptive methods of analysis such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used in analyzing the respondents' demographics and other general responses while correlational and regression analyses were done through inferential methods.

The chapter starts with the response rate, after which demographic details of the respondents like gender, age, education level, and religious affiliation are provided. The next part provides both descriptive statistics and inferential analysis to show the link between religiosity and political engagement in Mukono District.

4.1 Response rate

Table 4.1 Response rate of respondents

Category	Sample Size	Responses	Response Rate (%)
Religious Leaders	20	20	100
Religious Members	100	100	100
Community Members	30	30	100

Total	150	150	100%
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Source: Field Data (2026)

A response rate refers to the percentage of distributed questionnaires that have been duly filled out and submitted. As stated by Nandan & Mathiyazhagan (2010), a response rate of more than 70% is deemed appropriate for statistical analysis in social sciences.

According to Table 4.1, the distribution of 150 questionnaires was a success as all the distributed questionnaires were returned, thereby making a total response rate of 100%. The exceptionally high response rate points to the fact that the target respondents were very willing to participate in the survey, hence reflecting their interests in the subject matter (religion and political involvement).

In terms of methodology, such a high response rate contributes greatly to credibility and reliability of findings as well as their representativeness, since the views of the targeted respondents have been sufficiently represented. Additionally, non-response bias does not come into consideration since a majority of respondents did not neglect to submit their questionnaire forms. As a result, there are enough data to conduct the analysis of the association between religious activities and political involvement.

4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

The demographic characteristics serve as the basis for obtaining the social context surrounding the research variables. According to Chappelow (2019), the demographic characteristics help the researcher make sense of response patterns in order to explain differences in social attitudes and behaviors.

The study examined demographic characteristics including gender, age group, education level, and religious affiliation.

4.2.1 Gender of respondents

Table 4.2 Gender distribution of respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	82	54.7
Female	58	38.7
Prefer not to say	10	6.6
Total	150	100

Source: Field data (2026)

As indicated in Table 4.2 below, most of the respondents were males (54.7%) with 38.7% being females while only 6.6% chose not to state their genders. The small increase in the number of male respondents can be explained by the fact that men appear to dominate many public religious and political affairs in most societies.

Nonetheless, the significant number of women included in the sample population implies that women are also active participants in religious organizations and civic affairs. This can be said to agree with Verba et al., who noted that religious organizations are good avenues for individuals including women to develop civic and political skills.

Considering the research questions, the inclusion of respondents regardless of whether they were male or female ensures that the results obtained are credible in answering the questions concerning religion and political participation.

4.2.2 Age Group of respondents

Table 4.3 Age distribution of respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-29 years	42	28
30-39 years	45	30
40-49 years	36	24
50+ years	27	18
Total	150	100

Source: Field Data (2026)

According to Table 4.3, the majority of the participants interviewed (30%) fell within the age group 30-39 years, while 28% belonged to the 18-29 year age bracket. 24% of the participants were aged 40-49 years, while 18% were older than 50 years.

The predominance of young adults and middle-aged adults in the sample used for the study is an indication that the data collected reflects views of people who are more politically engaged and have high interest in politics due to their involvement in religious organizations.

This is consistent with Putnam's (2000) argument that the development of social networks and civic skills through membership of community organizations such as religious congregations leads to greater political participation. Consequently, it is appropriate to use the current age demographic to analyze the relationship between religiosity and political behavior.

4.2.3 Education level of respondents

Table 4.4 Education level of respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Primary	30	20
Secondary	65	43
Diploma	30	20
Degree	20	13
Postgraduate	5	4
Total	150	100

Source: Field Data (2026)

As can be seen from Table 4.4 below, the majority of respondents had secondary education (43%), while the percentages of respondents having primary education, diplomas, bachelor's degree, and postgraduate qualification were 20%, 20%, 13%, and 4% respectively.

It appears that most respondents have received education. Education is crucial in influencing one's awareness about civic rights, government operations, and the importance of participation in politics. In the opinion of Brady, Verba, and Schlozman (1995), persons who have more education are more politically aware and active. As concerns research objectives, the fact that respondents have received some education allows concluding that they could interpret all questions related to governance, civic activity, and the role of religion in politics.

4.2.4 Religious Affiliation of Respondents

Table 4.5 Religious affiliation of respondents

Religion	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Catholic	40	27
Anglican	35	23
Pentecostal	38	25
Muslim	20	13
SDA	10	7
Other	7	5
Total	150	100

Source: Field Data (2026)

According to Table 4.5, the largest group among the respondents was Catholic respondents (27%), followed by Pentecostal respondents (25%) and Anglican respondents (23%). Muslims were next at 13%, while Seventh Day Adventists formed only 7% of the respondents. Other respondents made up 5%.

It is evident from the findings that there exists diversity in religious belief systems within Mukono District. It is essential to note that such diversity is crucial in assessing the influence of diverse religious beliefs, teachings, and values on civic participation.

According to scholars such as Smidt (2003), religion usually plays a role in shaping civic values through fostering the spirit of morality and civic participation. Hence, considering the above findings, it becomes easier to understand the role of religion on political participation.

4.3 Descriptive statistics of study variables

Table 4.6 Descriptive statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Public Religious Practices	150	2.00	4.50	3.42	.55
Private Religious Practices	150	2.20	4.80	3.60	.51
Religious Support Systems	150	2.10	4.60	3.30	.59
Political Participation	150	1.80	4.70	3.28	.63

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

Descriptive statistics of the study variables have been presented in Table 4.6 below. From the analysis, private religious practices emerged with the highest mean of 3.60, implying that respondents indulge in a lot of personal religious practices including prayer and other forms of personal devotion.

Public religious practices emerged with a mean of 3.42, implying that respondents engage in public religious practices including attending church activities and worship. The mean value of religious socialization systems was found to be 3.30, implying that religious bodies somewhat motivate their members to take up civic roles and talk about governance. The mean value of political participation among the study variables was 3.28.

From the findings above, religion seems to be actively involved in the lives of the respondents. From Putnam's study on Social Capital, he argues that involvement in social organizations like religion is a source of social capital and helps foster civic engagement and political participation. The small standard deviation across the variables shows that there was consistency in what the respondents believed in concerning the involvement of religion in civic engagement.

4.4 Regression Analysis: Influence of Religious Practices on Political Participation

Table 4.7 Regression model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std Error
1	.421	.177	.160	.54

Source: Data analysis (2026)

Figure 4.7 demonstrates the regression model testing the effect of religious practices on political participation. According to the results presented below, there is a coefficient R equaling 0.421, showing that there is a strong correlation between religious practices and political participation.

According to the figure above, the R-square value is equal to 0.177; consequently, 17.7 percent of variation in political participation is caused by religious practices. In other words, those people participating actively in religious practices tend to be politically active as well. Nevertheless, there is still 82.3 percent of variation caused by some other factors like education level, socio-economic background, political awareness.

These results confirm the claim made by Verba et al. (1995) that religious organizations play a significant role as civic learning grounds for developing civic skills and motivations for political action. Engagement in religious activities introduces people to the topics related to social affairs, leadership, and community service, thus fostering their political behavior.

4.5 Correlation between study variables

Table 4.8 Correlation matrix

Variable	Political Participation	Public Religious Practices	Private Religious Practices	Religious Support
Political Participation	1	.392**	.358**	.310**
Public Religious Practices	.392**	1	.410**	.367**
Private Religious Practices	.358**	.410**	1	.330**
Religious Support Systems	.310**	.367**	.330**	1

Correlation significant at 0.01 level

Source: Data Analysis (2026)

Table 4.8 gives an account of the correlation analysis which is undertaken to determine the extent to which the various relationships exist among the variables used in the study. There was a positive correlation and statistical significance observed between all forms of religious practices and political participation.

There was a strong relationship between public religious practices and political participation ($r = 0.392$). Those people who are regularly involved in religious services have a high tendency to participate in political and other civic engagements. This could be due to the discussions on social and political issues during religious meetings.

Similarly, there was a positive relationship between private religious behavior and political participation ($r = 0.358$). The reason behind this is that people who indulge in spiritual thinking through religion may acquire values such as moral responsibility, justice, and civic responsibility, which encourage their participation in governance.

Additionally, religious networks had a positive association with political participation ($r = 0.310$). The reasoning here is that motivation provided by social groups within religious organizations leads to political participation.

The results above agree with the work of Putnam (2000) and Smidt (2003), who state that religious organizations can be an important source of social capital that encourages political participation.

4.6 Summary of Key Findings

This chapter discussed the data analysis and interpretation of results about the effect of religious practice on political participation in Mukono District.

The results of the demographic analysis showed that the respondents varied based on their gender, age, level of education, and religion, hence proving that the analysis included a wide range of views from the community members.

The descriptive analysis proved that respondents practiced both public and private forms of religious practices. In addition, private religious practices received higher scores of practice than public religious practices. Political participation by the respondents is medium.

As can be observed from the results obtained from the regression model, religious practice has a moderately significant positive effect on political participation, accounting for about 17.7% of the variations in political activity. It was also found through correlation analysis that public religious practice, private religious practice, and religious support systems have a positive relationship with political participation. In general, this study shows that religious organizations can contribute significantly to developing positive attitudes towards politics in society.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research findings in relation to the research objectives and the results provided in Chapter Four. The purpose of the research was to establish the impact of religious activities on the level of political involvement among the community members in Mukono district. In particular, the study intended to explore the impact of public religious activities, private religious activities, and the religious support system on political involvement.

The findings of the research are compared to the existing body of literature relating to religion and civic involvement. This chapter will also analyze the findings of this study against the Ugandan social background, which places a lot of emphasis on the role played by religious organizations such as churches.

5.1 Influence of public religious practices on political participation

In the first place, one of the aims of this study was to investigate the effect of public religious involvement on political participation. As is shown from the findings provided in Chapter Four, many of those questioned reported that their involvement in church services, church meetings, and church activities helped them to become aware of community affairs and engage in community activities. This study demonstrated that people who regularly attend church services have a higher level of participation in activities including community meetings, governance, and voting process. These results are in line with the idea that religious institutions serve as crucial venues for social engagement and political consciousness. Putnam (2000) observes that religious events offer chances for interaction, which lead to improved civic engagement. Also, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) observe that religious institutions offer civic skills like leadership and organization, which help improve political involvement.

Churches, within the Ugandan setting, have a special role to play in facilitating community deliberations and mobilization of the citizenry. In most communities, including Mukono District, it is usual for meetings of the faithful to be used as a platform for deliberation on matters affecting the community, ranging from governance and service provision to social justice. Religious leaders usually encourage the faithful to take part in community development and civic affairs in a responsible manner.

These results are in agreement with those by Djupe and Gilbert (2009) where the authors assert that involvement in religious ceremonies provides people with social contacts and political discourse, thus shaping their civic perceptions. Nonetheless, according to Norris and Inglehart (2011), the degree to which religion motivates political activities may depend on the nature of religious doctrine and the attitude of the religious institution towards politics. Despite this, the current study suggests that in Mukono District, public religion appears to instill civic consciousness and engage people in political and community life.

5.2 Influence of private religious practices on political participation

Another aim of the research was to investigate how individual religious observance affects participation in politics. It was revealed in Chapter Four that there are many people who personally practice their religion through prayer, contemplation, and reading of sacred books. The study findings also suggested that individuals who often do this are morally responsible for themselves and others as members of the community, making them actively participate in civic affairs.

These results indicate that personal religious devotion impacts political engagement indirectly through fostering the development of an individual's morals and civic sense. According to Smith (2003), religion usually promotes concepts like responsibility, righteousness, and compassion, motivating individuals to engage in activities meant to improve their community. In the same vein, Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2014) point out that personal religiosity usually impacts attitudes towards accountability, governance, and leadership.

In the Ugandan context, religious devotion is common and constitutes a fundamental aspect of daily existence for most people. Personal activities like praying and meditating usually promote the same moral teachings espoused by churches and other religious groups. Such moral teachings include concepts like honesty, fairness, and responsibility, which can encourage individuals to get involved in civic activities like voting and community engagements.

On the other hand, according to Norris & Inglehart (2011), in some cases, the level of religiosity can cause people to be interested in spiritual rather than political matters. Nevertheless, results obtained within the framework of the current study reveal that in Mukono District, the practice of religion at a personal level enhances civic-mindedness instead of reducing participation in politics. This means that, in the local environment, personal religiosity is used as the basis for civic behavior.

5.3 Influence of religious support systems on political participation

The last goal of the study involved analyzing the effect of religious support networks on political involvement. It is evident from the results provided in Chapter Four that religious communities were considered by many survey participants to be social support networks characterized by interactions between network members where they talk about various issues facing their community.

Such results are consistent with the principles of social capital theory, as they stress the significance of social networks as an important component of civic engagement. Putnam (2000) states

that social networks created within religious affiliations increase the levels of trust among network members and promote cooperation. Furthermore, such networks allow for the exchange of ideas and the promotion of civic engagement.

Religious networks in Uganda usually act as very powerful social institutions because they gather people together through fellowships, community programs, and development projects. Religious communities usually discuss issues of concern in their communities, including governance, service delivery, and leadership problems. Therefore, religious support networks can lead to increased civic engagement.

These results are also consistent with those obtained by Ager and Strang (2008), whose research highlights the significance of a well-developed community network in fostering social integration and collective action. Likewise, Djupe & Gilbert (2009) note that religious communities may play a role in political mobilization and encourage members to engage in community activities including voting.

However, according to Fox (2018), religious organizations may at times foster political polarization through direct support for particular political figures. Although these scenarios are not unheard of, the results of this research indicate that in Mukono District, the role played by religious structures tends more towards fostering collaboration within the community and productive civic engagement.

5.4 Overall influence of religious practices on political participation

Overall, the findings presented in Chapter Four indicate that religious practices collectively influence political participation among community members in Mukono District. The results show that public religious activities, private spiritual practices, and supportive religious networks all contribute to shaping civic attitudes and encouraging community members to engage in political and community affairs.

These findings reinforce the broader argument that religion functions as an important social institution that shapes civic culture and democratic participation. Putnam (2000) emphasizes that religious organizations are among the most influential institutions in building social capital and promoting civic engagement. Similarly, Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2014) argue that religion can play a constructive role in democratic societies by encouraging ethical leadership, community participation, and social responsibility.

Within the Ugandan context, religious institutions particularly churches play an important role in mobilizing communities for development initiatives, social welfare programs, and civic engagement activities. Through sermons, community outreach programs, and fellowship groups, religious leaders often address social and governance issues that affect local communities. These interactions help foster civic awareness and encourage individuals to take part in decision-making processes.

However, the findings also indicate that religious practices alone cannot fully explain political participation. Other factors such as education, economic conditions, access to information, and trust in political institutions may also influence citizens' involvement in political activities. This perspective is supported by Verba, Scholzman, and Brady (1995), who emphasize that political participation is shaped by multiple social and institutional factors.

In summary, the discussion of findings demonstrates that religious practices play a meaningful role in shaping political participation among community members in Mukono District. Public religious activities promote civic interaction, private religious practices reinforce moral responsibility, and religious support systems provide social networks that encourage community engagement.

The next chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study based on the findings discussed above. It also highlights the implications of the study for policymakers, religious institutions, and community leaders, as well as suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Introduction

Chapter four provides an outline of the summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research related to the impact of religious practices on political participation in Mukono district. The research was aimed at finding out how various factors of religious practices have a bearing on civic activities amongst people involved in religious organizations as well as the society in general. The main emphasis of the research was on three important areas of religious practices.

6.1 Summary of findings

This section summarizes the key findings of the study in relation to the specific research objectives and the results presented in Chapter Four.

6.1.1 Public Religious Practices and Political Participation

According to the findings presented in Chapter Four, public religious activities play a crucial role in encouraging participation in political processes among members of the community in the district of Mukono. From the description of data obtained, it can be seen that many of the respondents were regular attendees of religious activities and worship services in their places of congregation.

Another finding shows that public religious activities serve as forums for guidance provided by religious leaders to community members as well as discussions on social and political matters. The correlation test also showed a positive relationship between public religious activities and political activities including voting and discussion of governance issues

6.1.2 Private Religious Practices and Political Participation

From the results presented in chapter four, it was clear that private religious practice also has a positive impact on political participation of members of religious organizations in Mukono district. Respondents were of the opinion that private religious practices like praying and meditating contribute to the development of good moral values and consciousness among religious adherers.

According to the analysis of the results, respondents who often indulge in private religious practice have a high level of social responsibility and care about the wellbeing of their communities. These moral values that individuals have affect their attitude towards governance and motivate them to take part in political activities.

Thus, from the above, it is evident that private religious practice indirectly contributes to political participation through value creation.

6.1.3 Religious Support Systems and Political Participation

Another finding revealed by the research is that religious social support structures play an important role in encouraging people to participate politically within Mukono district. Religious groups offer social networks where individuals can interact and share ideas concerning matters that affect them.

The results revealed that through the social networks created within the religious groups, members communicate and discuss different aspects of social, economic, and political issues. This is achieved through fellowship, community outreaches, and leadership guidance, which encourages civic engagement among members.

The findings from correlation analysis in chapter four provided evidence of the positive association between religious support systems and political participation because of social interaction in religious communities.

6.2 Conclusions of the study

From the results generated by the study, there are a number of conclusions that could be made on the wider scope of religion in terms of shaping civic engagement and participation in Mukono District.

To begin with, it is clear from the study that religious institutions constitute critical social institutions whose activities shape citizen behavior in terms of being aware of civic obligations in addition to societal obligations.

In addition, it is worth noting from the study that religion has both a social and a moral element when it comes to civic engagement in Mukono. Public religion enables information exchange and community mobilization while private religion instills civic values that motivate people towards responsible governance.

Finally, it is clear from the study that the support networks within religion lead to social cohesiveness as well as collective civic engagement. Such social networks ensure that there is constant communication among members of the community and discussions concerning their problems, hence more engagement with political and governance affairs.

Indeed, religion is seen not just as a spiritual institution, but also a social one that promotes democratic participation and civic engagement.

6.3 Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following practical recommendations are proposed for key stakeholders.

6.3.1 Religious Institutions and Church Leaders

Religion must incorporate civic education within their teachings and civic programs. Religious leaders such as those in the church are in a position to influence responsible citizenship through messages regarding voting in peaceful manner, being accountable, and developing communities.

Religious leaders must also organize such venues within their congregations as seminars, youth forums, and community discussions in which people can be educated on civic rights and duties. These exercises will enhance political awareness without violating the religious nature of these institutions.

6.3.2 Government and Policy Makers

Government structures ought to partner with religion to instill civic education. Because religious organizations wield a lot of power within their community and even beyond their immediate circles, partnering between government departments and religious leaders will be instrumental in promoting citizen knowledge of governance issues and election-related activities.

In the same breadth, the policy makers ought to realize that religious organizations are key stakeholders in the process of community mobilization.

6.3.3 Community Leaders and Civil Society Organizations

The role of community leaders and other civic organizations will be to collaborate with religious establishments in order to organize civic engagement activities, such as dialogue sessions, leadership training, and raising public awareness regarding governance and developmental issues.

Through such activities, the gulf between citizens and public institutions can be bridged, and community members empowered to contribute effectively in developmental decisions.

6.3.4 Educational Institutions

Educational institutions should foster civic education and leadership development initiatives aimed at motivating learners and community members to participate actively in governance activities. Collaboration among educational and religious organizations will go a long way in cultivating a new generation of responsible citizens aware of the virtues of democracy.

Suggestions for further research

While this study has provided critical information regarding the impact of religious observance on political participation in Mukono District, there is still need to conduct further analysis to fill gaps identified.

To begin with, it is important for future studies to evaluate other variables affecting political participation such as levels of education, socio-economic status, media consumption, and political trust to gain a holistic understanding of civic participation in Uganda.

Secondly, future studies may focus on evaluating the contribution of religious leaders in developing political perspectives and tendencies among citizens. Examining the impact of religious leadership on political participation and behavior may help to get better insights regarding the interconnection between religion and politics.

Thirdly, comparative analysis should be done in other districts of Uganda to establish whether similar trends exist concerning the influence of religion on political participation.

6.4 Summary of Chapter Six

Summary of Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations, and Suggestions for Further Research on the Effect of Religious Practices on Political Participation in Mukono District

The findings of the study have revealed that both public religious practices, private religious practices, and religious support mechanisms contribute to enhancing the level of political participation by members of religious organizations. It has been noted in this study that

religious organizations significantly contribute to promoting civic awareness, fostering social networks, and ensuring responsible participation in political affairs.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Study Title. *The Influence of Religious Practices and Political Participation in Mukono District*

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Programme. Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership and Management

Target respondents: Adult religious adherents and congregants in Mukono District

Objective addressed: The relationship between religious practices and political participation in Mukono District.

Section A - Demographic Information

Item No.	Variable	Response Options
1	Gender	Male / Female / Prefer not to say
2	Age group	18-29 / 30-39 / 40-49 / 50+
3	Education level	Primary / Secondary / Diploma / Degree / Postgraduate
4	Religion/Denomination	Catholic / Anglican / Muslim / Pentecostal / SDA / Other
5	Length of membership	< 1 year / 1-5 years / 6-10 years / >10 years

Section B: Public/Organizational Religious Practices

(Objective i: To examine the relationship between public/organizational religious practices and political participation)

Scale:

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

Item No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
6	I attend religious services regularly.					
7	I actively participate in group worship or congregational activities.					
8	Religious leaders in my institution discuss social and political issues.					
9	My place of worship encourages members to take part in civic responsibilities (e.g., voting).					
10	Public religious gatherings influence my views on governance and leadership.					

(Objective ii: To assess how private religious practices influence political engagement)

Item No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
11	I engage in personal prayer regularly.					
12	I follow personal devotional or scripture reading routines.					
13	My private prayers influence my decisions about political matters.					
14	I seek spiritual guidance before making political choices (e.g., voting).					
15	My personal faith strengthens my sense of civic responsibility.					

Section D: Religious Support Systems

(Objective iii: To evaluate the role of religious support systems in shaping voter behavior and political participation)

Item No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
16	Members of my religious community encourage participation in elections.					
17	My religious community provides guidance on responsible voting.					
18	I discuss political matters with members of my religious group.					
19	Support from my religious community influences my political decisions.					
20	Faith-based community activities motivate me to engage in civic or political activities.					

Section E: Political Participation

Item No.	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
21	I am registered to vote.					
22	I regularly vote in national and local elections.					
23	I attend political or community meetings.					
24	I actively engage in discussions about political issues.					
25	I follow political news and current affairs regularly.					

Key Informant Interview Guide

Question No.	Interview Question	Probe / Focus Area
1	What religious activities are conducted by your organization?	Core practices
2	How does your institution address leadership and governance issues?	Values & ethics
3	How do you encourage members to participate in civic or political activities?	Engagement strategies
4	Are political discussions allowed during religious gatherings?	Institutional stance
5	What role do religious leaders play in shaping political attitudes?	Leadership influence
6	Do you collaborate with government or CSOs on civic education?	Partnerships
7	What challenges do you face in engaging in political matters?	Constraints
8	How influential is your organization in promoting political participation?	Perceived impact
9	What ethical guidelines govern political involvement?	Boundaries
10	What recommendations can improve political engagement through religion?	Policy suggestions