



Sudan University of Science and Technology

College of Graduate Studies

Department of English Language

**The Religious Identity as Portrayed in the two Novels
Things Fall Apart by Achebe and The Bamboo Stalk by
Alsanousi**

الهوية الدينية كما صورت في روايتي الأشياء تتداعى لأجيبى و ساق البامبو
للسنعوسى

**A Thesis Submitted to the College of Languages in the Fulfillment of
the Requirements for Ph. D Degree in Intercultural Communication**

Submitted by: Abu-Bakr Muhammad Ahmed Abdul-Hakam

Supervisor:

Dr. Mohamed Elamin Elshingeety

Co-supervisor:

Dr. Wigdan Yagoub Sherif

2020

Dedication

To my dear parents

and

lovely family

Acknowledgment

All praises are due to Allah, the Most-High for His help and guidance. Without His grace, no work can be accomplished.

I am highly indebted to my respected supervisor Dr. **Mohamed Elamin Elshingeety** for his immense help, valuable comments and sustained encouragement throughout my Ph. D thesis.

I also feel the need to express my sincere gratitude to my co-supervisor Dr. **Wigdan Yagoub Sherif** for her good support and kind supervision towards improving my project.

I am extremely thankful to the negotiation committee members' professor **Mahmoud Ali Omer** and Dr. **Fatima Qutbi Salim** who helped me correct my work and improve it.

I pay my deep sense of gratitude to my affectionate guide and source of inspiration Dr. **Helene Fatima Idris** who spares no effort in providing me with all sorts of help. Without her guidance – after God Almighty's- this project would not have become a reality.

Last but not least, my thanks of gratitude go to my colleges **Mohamed Yahya Alrayah** and **Amar Khalid** who were always behind me whenever I was in need of help.

Abstract

*This study aims at investigating illustrations of religious identity in Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Saud Alsanousi's *The Bamboo Stalk* (2015). It explores types of identity dimensions and other cultural factors that influence the formation and maintenance of religious identity portrayed in the novels. It also attempts to study the effect of religious identity on the relations between the characters in the novels. The study takes a qualitative approach for its textual analysis and it adopts the descriptive discourse analysis (DDA) method coupled with the intercultural communication theory (ICT). For the first novel, the study concludes that religious identity is depicted by stereotypical concepts and religious-based actions, i.e. actions that have pure religious motivations. The natives' masculine identity strengthens their religious identity. The personal identity of the protagonist is opposite to the native communal mainstream attitudes. The results also reveal that religion is the base of almost all the characters' actions. However, the results of the second novel reveal weak effect of religion on the social life as the prejudicial communal norms take superior position over religion. The study confirms the validity of applying the ICT on fictive data and reinforces the bidirectional influence between identity and communication as identity is conceptualized through the confrontations between those who have different cultural backgrounds.*

مستخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لبحث الهوية الدينية حسب ما صُورت في روايتي (الأشياء تتداعى) لجينو أجيبي و (ساق البامبو) لسعود السنعوسي. كما تبحثُ الدراسةُ في تأثير الهويات الاجتماعية و العرقية و الإثنية و غيرها من العوامل الثقافية في تشكيل الهوية الدينية و استقرارها. و يمتد مجال الدراسة أيضاً إلى استقصاء الأثر الناجم عن الهوية الدينية على علاقات شخصيات الدراسة في الروايتين. سلكت الدراسةُ منهجَ التحليل الكيفي و سير النص بطريقة استقرائية، مسترشدةً بنظرية التمازج الثقافي. ففيما يخص الرواية الأولى خلصت الدراسة إلى أن الهوية الدينية أظهرت في شكل الميول إلى الحكم على الآخرين و تصنيفهم على حسب المفاهيم المسبقة عنهم، كما بدت أيضاً في صورة تصرفات ذات دافع ديني محض. أسهمت الثقافة الذكورية لدى المجتمع في نصرته دينه المحلي، كما كان للتوجهات الشخصية لبطل الرواية دوراً معارضاً للمعهودات المحلية. و في الجملة، فقد ثبت أن الدين هو أساس أغلب سلوكيات شخصيات الرواية. أما نتائج الرواية الثانية فقد أظهرت تأثيراً ضعيفاً للدين في تشكيل الهوية لقوة تيار الحياة الاجتماعية مما جعل نظرة المجتمع و تصنيفاته خاضعةً لموروثاته المجتمعية أكثر من الدين. أكدت الدراسةُ صلاحيةً نظرية التمازج الثقافي لتحليل العمل الخيالي، مبينةً الرباط المتبادل بين الهوية و التواصل اللغوي، إذ أسفرت عن إمكانية تصور الهوية من خلال المواجهات بين أصحاب الخلفيات الثقافية المتباينة.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1. Background

The term *identity* refers to the concept one has about himself and the others have about him/her. It can be conceptualized by answering the question: how do we come to perceive who we are and how do others see us? Through communication with others one can understand how his identity is presented and perceived. Therefore, identity exploration is closely related to the field of intercultural communication (IC), because identity is shaped, modified, and developed via communication (Hecht and Lu 2014). Thus, the academic field of this study is Intercultural Communication (IC).

The IC field refers to the study of communication when it occurs between people who differ from one another in their cultural backgrounds. According to Allwood (1985), it is the sharing of information between people whose cultural backgrounds are different. The different communicators may belong to two distinctive nationalities or sub-groups within the same unit. Ting-Toomey (1999:17) pointed out that intercultural communication takes place when ‘our cultural group membership factors (e.g., cultural norms and scripts) affect our communication process—on either an awareness or unawareness level.’ The formation of identity is a complex task as it is a set of meanings and a combination of various characteristics each of which has a certain degree of contribution in shaping and maintaining it. Thus, our identity is affected by religion, race, class, social norms, familial disciplines, gender, and nationality. These factors influence human communication, perception, and identity as well. Religion is considered as one of the most influential aspects of identity development (King 2003). This is because a

person's religious knowledge and practices impact his/her worldviews and relations with everything around him. Samovar and Porter (2004:48) identified religion along with family and country as three main 'deep-rooted structures' that help individuals form their identity and influence their perceptions as well.

The religious identity is defined as 'the sense of belonging and commitment to religion and religious society' (Molaiy et al 2016:185). Thus, conceptualizing religious identity is not a simple task if we take into consideration the complexity, which arises from its interrelation with the other identity dimensions such as age, class, ethnicity, gender, profession, and level of education. In addition, the degree of religiosity varies from one individual to another due to their differences in accepting and practicing the spiritual guidance (Mydin et al 2017).

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Previous literature shows that analyses of fiction from the perspective of intercultural communication, in general, and identity, in particular, are scarce (Fox 2003; Liu & Zhang 2011; Wierzbicka 2010; Hirvonen 2014). Therefore, the present study aims to analyze two pieces of literary works from the identity concept perspective in an attempt to come up with new insights in the field. In addition, applying the theory of identity on fictive writings is undoubtedly significant in a number of ways. First, imaginative creative writings play an important role in depicting real life in a way that might not be found in many of the factual stories. That is, some fictive writings provide a fruitful source of corpus for the IC analysis that scarcely occur in a single written real-life story. Second, fiction has its favorable preference and massive impact on the readers, particularly the chosen novels which have attracted the attention of a wide-range of readers and researchers worldwide.

Therefore, the study aims to investigate the religious identity expressed in the above-mentioned novels; a topic that previous research did not give much attention. The two novels were the focus of studies from various analytical fields such as cultural studies: Kenalemang (2013), Belkhasher and Bandurais (2016), literary studies: Elayyan (2016), political studies: Gikandi (1991); and critical discourse analysis: Pitia and Mugaddam (2015). Yet, they were highly touched upon through the religious identity concept.

The two novels, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Saud Alsanousi's *The Bamboo Stalk* (2015) were chosen because they, firstly, depict cultural and societal conflicts taking place in two distinctive communities at different times. The writers enrich the novels' themes with various aspects of cultural clashes that make them serve as fruitful sources for sociolinguistic research. Secondly, they claimed the interest of the readers, gained their appreciation and were translated to several languages. Chinua Achebe's novel was even chosen as educational materials at the stage of the secondary level students here in Sudan. Thirdly, they are in a strong connection with the study topic as religious identity is observed to be centralized in their themes.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

This study aims to:

1. Investigate the religious identity illustration in the dialogues between the characters in the two novels. The focus is on two questions. Do the novels serve as sources for the analysis of the concept of identity, since they depict intercultural differences that occur in the Nigerian and Arab societies in certain periods of

time? How is religious identity expressed in the characters' dialogues?

2. Show what types of identities and other cultural factors that influence the formation and maintenance of religious identity, found in the two novels.
3. Draw attention to the effect of religious identity on the relationships between the characters in the novel.

1.4. Research Questions

1. How is religious identity illustrated in the two novels?
2. What types of identity and social factors that affect the formation and maintenance of religious identity in the two novels?
3. What is the effect of religious identity on the relationships between the characters in the novels?

1.5. Research Hypotheses

This study's hypotheses are:

1. Religious identity is illustrated in the novels in two forms. One is the evident influence of one cultural group's pre-set stereotypical images about the others. The other is the strong belief of a group of people that everyone else must be wrong and/or mad unless he/she shares their own beliefs or belongs to their own ethnic class.
2. The racial, ethnic, gender, class and personal identities have great influence on the formation and maintenance of religious identity, as expressed in the novels.
3. The characters' relations are negatively impacted by the differences in their religious identities to the degree that these

differences became the cause of misunderstanding and various types of conflicts.

1.6. Significance of the Study

The study is significant for the following purposes:

- It contributes to the studies in the field of intercultural communication (IC) by applying the concept of religious identity to fictive writings; a topic which has been scarcely studied previously.
- The study explores the role played by cultural differences in the characters' relations and intercultural understandings.
- It could serve as teaching materials in the IC field in Sudan since Chinua Achebe's novel already is included in the national school curriculum.

1.7. Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study is centered on analyzing how the *religious identity* is shaped, reinforced, and maintained through the characters' dialogues in the novels. It also studies the impact of the other social factors (ethnicity, gender, class, nationality, etc.) on the *religious identity* and its influence on the social relations. The data used for the analysis is taken from no sources other than the two novels, so the study does not include looking into the communal cultural conflicts occurring in the intended communities that are depicted outside the novels under investigation.

1.8. Research Methodology

Since this research is concerned with analyzing particular forms of written texts, it does not need to apply a method of data collection, and it takes a qualitative approach for data interpretation. According to Eskola and Suoranta (2008, cited in Hirvonen 2014), the scientific criteria of the qualitative method are not based on *quantity*, but on *quality* of data. Therefore, the qualitative studies systematically select samples of the data and analyze them as in-depth as possible (Hirvonen 2014). Thus, the qualitative method can serve as an effective tool for data analysis in the current study, since it is mainly concerned with understanding and interpreting the issue under investigation (Mason 2002). The study, therefore, takes extracts from one of the novels, interprets them and does the same with the other novel. The analysis is sub-divided with headlines according to the detailing concepts and the relevant issues of the religious identity that will be discussed in chapter two.

One of the methods used in the qualitative approach is discourse analysis (DA) (Denzin and Lincoln 2011, cited in Hirvonen 2014). According to Gee (2010), there are two types of DA in the field of linguistics. The first one is a descriptive approach that describes how language works and why it works in that way. The other one is the critical approach which 'not only describes how the language works, but also takes a stand on social and political issues and brings up questions of power' (Gee 2010: 9).

The current research mainly applies the descriptive discourse analysis (DDA) and partly uses the critical discourse analysis (CDA). The DDA is limited to the analysis of expressions of religious identity occurring in the characters' dialogues, while the CDA analyses implicit meanings

interpreted from the context of the novel or attempts to make clear the hidden purposes of the writers behind the particular piece of writing. This means that the scope of the study includes the contextual surface analysis of the novels and the critical interpretations of the writers' symbolizations concerning religious identity.

1.9. Research Outlines

The research will contain the following chapters:

Chapter one contains an introduction, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions and hypotheses, significance and scope of the study, the research methodology and the research outline.

Chapter two is divided into two main sections: the first one contains definitions of relevant concepts and the other includes a literature review of previous studies.

Chapter three introduces the research methodology adopted by this study for its data analysis.

Chapter four contains two main sections: a) Analysis of the Religious Identity in the Novel *Things Fall Apart*, and b) Analysis of the Religious Identity in the Novel *The Bamboo Stalk*. Each section is divided into sub-sections according to the chapters of each novel.

Chapter five draws conclusion that includes: a) a summary of the findings, and b) implications and recommendation for further researches.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

Chapter Two

Theoretical Background and Previous Studies

2.1. Section One: Definitions of Relevant Concepts

Since this study is concerned with the analysis of *religious identity*, the first section of chapter two gives a brief definition of (a) the academic field underpinning the study, i.e. intercultural communication, and (b) all the influential relevant concepts including identity with its related multiple types (ethnic, gender, class, personal, religious) and the communicative factors that negatively and/or positively impact religious identity formation, such as stereotyping, prejudice and ethnocentrism.

The study posits that identity is one of the basic concepts embodied in the intercultural communication (IC) academic field (Hirvonen 2014:9). This is because individual identity is formed and perceived through communication (Ting-Toomey 1999, cited in Jung & Hecht 2004: 266). That is, 'we communicate our identities to others' and perceive others' identities via communication (Martin & Nakayama 2010:162). Furthermore, Jung and Hecht (2004) argued that identity is not only influenced by communication, but it is communication itself. This at least shows the close relation between identity and the IC field, which in turn, highlights the significance of having an appropriate brief background about IC as it backs up the study domain.

2.1.1. Intercultural communication

The term *intercultural* is a composite of the prefix *inter* and the adjective *cultural*. The Latin prefix *inter* marks the occurrence of something with something else (Horáková 2007). Being joined with *cultural*, the term refers to the co-existence of two or more distinctive

cultures in interaction. If the two existing distinctive cultures are not involved in interaction, it is multiculturalism (ibid). Samovar et al (2009:2) state that 'intercultural contact occurred whenever people from one tribe encountered members of another tribe and discovered that they were different'. They may differ in language and culture or they may speak one language, but each group has distinctive cultural backgrounds. 'Communication is a dynamic process' (Patel et al 2011:17), in which people attempt to 'share their internal states with other people through the use of symbols' (Samovar et al 2009:16). This definition to the word *communication* is selected from over 126 definitions (ibid) in an attempt to encompass the core that they tried to convey. The definition indicates that communication refers to the process in which two or more individuals interact and exchange understandable messages through a particular symbolic media, whether verbal or nonverbal. Samovar et al (2009) characterize communication as dynamic, symbolic, contextual, and self-reflective. It is *dynamic*, for it does not keep a static picture that never changes. For example, a particular word, sound or gesture may have a specific meaning in a certain context and have another, If not the opposite, in another situation. Besides being dynamic, it also results from the variability of the aspects of cultural knowledge, such as beliefs, values, and social norms (Halloran & Kashima 2006) from which communication takes its shape. It is *symbolic* because every cultural group agrees on certain symbols, such as signs or sounds to refer to certain intended meanings. Symbolism has no natural link between the sign and its meaning, except the communal agreement to consider them as such. Thus, using symbols plays an important role in communication (Patel et al 2011) as it helps people to easily convey meanings, enrich their life and keep special messages for some of them. It is contextual because communication does not occur in a vacuum; rather it takes place

in a physical, social, or psychological context (Patel et al 2011) that impacts its form, manner and choice of words. For example, talking at home differs from dealing with friends and meeting strangers. Therefore, what is appropriate in one situation may not be appropriate in another, and the same word may have different interpretations in different situations. It is self-reflective because a human being possesses the ability of thinking of himself while interacting and can make quick adjustments if he wishes to (Samovar et al 2009).

Culture is thought to be the common feature that characterizes a particular group of people (Allwood 1985). It is 'the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society' (Taylor 1958:22, cited in Shammat 1999:17). The definition indicates that culture includes the whole lifestyle one learns and practices since childhood, so it does not only form the communication context and sources of knowledge, but it is communication itself. Edward T. Hall stated that 'culture is communication and communication is culture' (Hall 1959:186, cited in Rogers et al 2002:7). Samovar et al (2009:22) confirmed this argument by noting that people communicate according to the way they live. This makes clear the close connection between culture and communication. In this respect, encoding or decoding any individual message depends on the degree of understanding the cultural symbols underpinning it. Particularly, this study pays more attention to the religious cultural element as it is the core of the study.

The *Intercultural communication* field was founded by the anthropologist Edward T. Hall (born 1914) during 1951-1955 in the United States. He developed its original paradigm as a result of the intellectual convergence between the linguistic and anthropological perspectives (Rogers et al 2002). He has also demonstrated the influence of Freudian psychoanalytic

theory on his work (Hall 1992; Sorrells 1998, cited in Rogers et al 2002). The influence of these three disciplines is still evident till today. The linguistic field contributed to investigating language and culture relation; anthropology underscored to the understanding of cultural patterns and nonverbal language; and psychology addressed to the realization of the human behavior (Chodzkiene 2014).

Intercultural communication is defined as 'interaction between people whose cultural perceptions and symbol systems are distinct enough to alter the communication event' (Samovar & Porter 2004:15, cited in Patel et al 2011:17; Samovar et al 2009:12). This definition highlights the importance of understanding the cultural values and beliefs upon which the target culture is established. Thus, in leading successful cross-cultural interaction, one needs to avoid falling into cultural traps which result from judging others according to one's own culture (Patel et al 2011). It is also advisable to take into consideration the individual differences arising from the fact that not all individuals share all the 'available cultural knowledge with the other group members (Halloran & Kashima 2006:1). So, you may come in contact with an individual who belongs to a certain group, thought to be say, a strong religious Christian family, but he has never gone to church or appreciated their Sunday prayers. The diversity of the cultural backgrounds, the individual uniqueness together with the dynamic nature of the cultures cause IC practitioners to consider the complexity of the process (Patel et al 2011). Some specialists in communication studies go further to argue that all communication is intercultural, 'because there are micro-cultural differences between every two families or individuals' (Novinger 2001:12). Although this makes the process more complex, it does not mean that all communications are impeded or not fluid enough, because

there is a wide common cultural understanding, and if one masters or shares it, it will simplify communicative interactions.

The intercultural communication field includes or discusses several concepts, among which is the identity concept. Despite the fact that identity is studied from different perspectives in psychology, anthropology and social science, as will be detailed later, it is also closely related to the communicative approach as communication creates and reinforces and modifies it (Hecht & Lu 2014: 7). Identity also has a bidirectional relation with communication, as each of them shapes the other (Golden et al 2002, in Hirvonen 2014:9). Since it is stated that identity is communicative or 'negotiated', as Ting-Toomey (2015:1) put it, the current study, which aims to investigate the religious identity in two fictional multicultural societies, could suitably be positioned in the intercultural communication academic field.

2.1.2. Religious identity

Since the religious identity is the central concept around which the study circles, its definition and conceptualization requires much research and detailed clarification. Each of the two words, *religion* and *identity*, will enormously be discussed in isolation before stating the whole meaning of the term.

2.1.2.1 Religion

Religion is a central force in every life activity and movement, as it motivates and mobilizes peoples' actions (Agbibo 2013). It is an influential factor in forming life and perception (Patel et al 2011). The human being is thought to be, according to the American anthropologist Clifford Geertz, 'meaning-seeking animal'(cited in Agbibo 2013: 4), which indicates that human behaviors and attitudes are underpinned by

knowledge laden worldviews, the most effective of which is religion. Religion links young and old people and provides 'solid answers to the existential questions' (EbstyneKing 2003:201) such as, 'What is the purpose of life? Who am I?' Samovar et al (2009:104) stated that in addition to the functions religion provides to human life: it 'deals with the nature of life and death, the creation of the universe, the origin of society and groups within the society, the relationship of individuals and groups to one another and the relation of humankind to nature'.

2.1.2.1.1. Functions of Religion

Thus, religion plays an important role in determining life's meaning and the way religious adherents lead it. It determines what sort of beliefs, virtues, practices or morals one should obtain. It controls people's relations with each other and to what extent one may build close bonds. Besides, it determines what is allowed or forbidden concerning food, drink, types of commerce, contracts, everyday activities and even the use of polite and taboo expressions. Religion affects human values to the extent that some may choose to kill others or die to show their religious commitment or love (Patel et al 2011). However, the tragic killing of innocent people in contemporary actions, including the 'terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001' (Martin & Nakayama 2010:169) and the disgusting murder of the worshippers in two Muslim mosques in New Zealand on the 15th of March 2019 are two examples, among others, that are thought to have religious motivations, and here exactly, they resulted from misinterpretations of religious texts. This is because the true essence of religion teaches individuals to adhere to benevolence and good mannerism (Zhang 2013:11) and if people applied religions as they were originally taught without deviations from its basic tenets, the world would live in peace (ibid). In sum, religions have their significant role in shaping

our perception of the world and forming the 'most foundational aspects of our identity, including attitudes, beliefs and preferences' (Emmons & Paloutzian 2003, cited in Sachdeva 2016:3).

2.1.2.1.2. Definition of Religion

Previous literature provides a number of scholarly definitions of religion that attempted to combine the aspects of the term, from which the study selects the most relevant to the study domain. According to Carus (1904:767), traditionally, religion is perceived as "man's union with, or relation to God" - or Gods - for those who believe in more than one God. Britannica (2005) pointed out that religion contains some common aspects: relation to God/Gods or spirits, worship or prayers, moral conducts, and religious institutions (Zhang 2013). Sachdeva (2016:3) defined it as a 'set of practices and beliefs built on the idea of a higher being, and on attaining sacred experiences through structured rituals'. Mydin et al (2017) stated that religion tells about the external God and commands actions. Samovar et al (2009) drew attention to the origin of the term, which comes from the Latin stem *religare* meaning "to tie". They regarded this as an implication to the believers' link to what is sacred.

The above definitions clarify that religion commonly refers to a set of beliefs one has of God, practices to perform, values and teachings that organize and control life. These selected definitions only provide a surface meaning of religion fitting the scope of the study, and do not go beyond any irrelevant details. This is because the current study is only concerned with the religious belonging in general, and its bidirectional influence with the other socio-cultural factors, so there is no need in enumerating the differences between religions, since the aim is to

investigate the impact of belonging to whatever set of belief illustrated in the data from the perspective of the intercultural communication theory.

2.1.2.1.3. Religion and Culture

As the present study is positioned in the intercultural communication field, and the conception of religion was made clear, it is important to have insight into the relation between religion and culture.

Previous literature explains the interplay between religion and culture, and the way each of them contributes in shaping and reinforcing the other. Cohen (2011) pointed out that religion shapes, constitutes, includes and transcends culture. It interacts with culture and is influenced by it. For example, the Arab world culture is generally influenced by Islam and impacts it, so does the U.S. culture with Christianity. Samovar et al (2009) considered religion as an element of every culture because it gives the cultural values and activities meanings legitimacy. Most cultural norms and actions have religious roots and causes (Giddens 1998, cited in Molaiy et al 2016). Culture, on the other hand, is thought to be the context upon which religion is situated. The philosopher of religion, Paul Tillich, put it as 'religion is the substance of culture, and culture is the form of religion' (Agbiboa 2013: 5). This highlights the strong interdependences between the two as religion is the meaning-giving source of culture that determines the social aspects religion may have, so each of them cannot be clearly perceived in the absence of the other (ibid).

In sum, beliefs are thought to have the deepest influence on 'every aspect of life or ways of living' - culture- (Agbiboa 2013:3), due to the meanings that they give to views of life and death. For example, most cultures have certain superstitious beliefs, deriving their legitimacy from religious texts or individual religious interpretations. Some may think that

doing or seeing certain things is thought to bring good or bad luck; some others forbid certain behaviors, thinking that they are signs of evil or causing God's anger. The current study thus argues that religion shapes, constitutes and transcends culture. It interacts and it is influenced by it.

2.1.2.1.4. Religion and Intercultural Communication

Based on the argument that intercultural communication occurs when 'people from different cultures come together to interact, communicate, and negotiate with each other' (Groff 2002: 2), and religion is one of the basic units of cultural formation (Samovar & Porter 2004), then the religious effect on the cross-cultural communication will be comprehensible. To put it in slightly different words, the religious diversity which results in cultural variety has an inevitable impact on the communication between cultures. Zhang (2013:9) pointed out that 'religious beliefs are such an influential factor in intercultural communication because they affect our conscious and unconscious minds, as well as the manner in which people communicate.' Particularly, if one takes into consideration the religious conflicts and consequences on the communicative process worldwide like the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Commenting on the American film, *Innocence of Muslims*, that described Islam as "cancer" (Al-Majbari 2012), Zhang (2013:8) stated that the Muslim world's interactions to the film 'hindered different people with different cultures and different religious beliefs from their intercultural communication'.

Based on the above, aforementioned literature shows many research findings stating that religion works as a crucial factor, positively or negatively impacting intercultural communication (Wrench et al 2006; Ameli & Molaei 2012; Holmes & O'Neill 2012; Mydin et al 2017).

2.1.2.1.5 Religious Conversion

Religious conversion is one of the most controversial issues in humanities and social sciences (Cigan 2013). 'The English word “conversion” is derived from the Latin *convertere* which means “to revolve, turn around” or head in a different direction' (Gooren 2010:10). The word conversion thus stands originally for the turning to or from a different direction. 'The end result is supposed to be a change of mind and a change of heart' (ibid: 10). Nock (1933: 7) defined it as 'the reorientation of the soul of an individual, his deliberate turning from indifference or from an earlier piety to another'. He also explained that the turning from the previous religion to the new one is due to the knowledge that the old is wrong and the new is right (ibid). Nock's definition emphasizes the claim that conversion requires knowledge about the new religion, which convince the convert that the old faith is awkward and problematic with inherent flaw.

When the convert turns back to his/her original religion which he/she converted from, this is termed as *deconversion*. Thus 'conversion and deconversion are two sides of the same coin' (Gooren 2010:10).

When it comes to turning back to Islam from any other deity, some Muslims prefer to term it as *deterstion* –apostasy- (Boz 2011). Mydin et al (2017:4) reasoned that as returning to Islam is returning to the 'state of *Fitrah* as the individual regains his state of God-consciousness and submission'. They explained the state of *Fitrah* as the faith of worshipping one God.

Rambo and Farhadian (1999) identified seven-stage process for religious conversion. The seven phases are as follows: (1) *Context*, the environment in which the change happens. It contains the factors that facilitate or constrain change. (2) *Crisis*, a stage in which there is a

sudden breaking or confusion that leads to stage three. (3) *Quest*, a stage wherein the individual becomes a knowledge seeker so as to confront his problem. (4) *Encounter*, a stage in which the convert seeks knowledge with the advocate to fill the empty space in his heart. (5) *Interaction*, a stage in which the convert and the advocate confer changes in thoughts and actions. (6) *Commitment* is the phase whereby the questioner makes up his mind to turn to the new life system and desert his old one. (7) *Consequences*, a stage whereby some factors will contribute to affect the individual's firmness of his new commitment (Boz 2011:5).

Then, Boz (2011) pointed out that it is not necessary that every conversion should go through these phases. That is because, some converts were not intending to change religion, rather they came in contact with adherents of the new religion or sought knowledge for the sake of curiosity and they have been unconsciously led to conversion (ibid).

According to Harun et al (2012), religious conversion has three types: *sudden*, *gradual*, and *socialized*. *Sudden Conversion* occurs in a very short time. The convert turns from being obedient to disobedient to his religion due to an extraordinary event that causes the individual to change his mind. *Gradual Conversion* takes much time and goes through phases (like the seven-stage process identified by Rambo and Farhadian (1999) above). *Socialized Conversion* is a process that takes a long time and the religious values are bred on the adherents since childhood, or since an early time through learning without knowledge.

There are many factors that influence religious change. They differ from one individual to another. Boz (2011) emphasized the effect of the *social interaction* or *contact* with the adherents of the new faith. He also added that relationships, processes, and ideologies play a role in providing a prevailing situation for religious change.

Harun et al (2012) considered *religious conflict* to be the most influential factor for religious conversion. That is, an individual may face difficulties in absorbing or defending his own religious beliefs, or he is unconvinced with his place in community or have conflicts with the religious leaders. Religious conflict also occurs when someone wants to do something that he cannot do, or he ought to do something that he hates. 'These situations lead to the guilty feeling, and then they want to purify their sins' (ibid:4). In addition, they considered *Search of Meaning of Life* to be an influential factor. Religion, as noted earlier, helps individual find answers to the divine questions and provides him with the reasons to live. They also stated that conversion needs *religious support* which comes from congregation members, religious leaders. The financial and emotional support provided by the family, friends or religious brothers play an important role in enhancing conversion.

Beck and Jessup (2004) identified two types of religious motivations for conversion: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*. The first describes the person who believes and practices religion for pure religious purposes, while the latter stands for those who use their religion just to achieve non-religious goals. Religious conversion has a great effect in individual and group identities. This is because all the aspects of one's life which are based on the previous faith will be spontaneously changed after conversion (Harun et al 2012). They exemplified conversion with building: the new building will be established in the same place of the old one which was different from it (ibid). It is important to note here that the other aspects of one's life which do not contradict with the new pattern system, these aspects are not necessarily expected to be changed.

2.1.2.1.6 Religious Pluralism

According to the Oxford Dictionaries the word pluralism means 'condition or system in which two or more states, groups, principles, sources of authority, etc., co-exist' (Fawwaz 2018:7) Therefore, it gives the same meaning as diversity (Ndayambaje 2013). It describes the co-existence of more than one different cultural or religious groups in a single society.

The term religious pluralism (RP) refers to the 'coexistence of religious belief systems in society' (Ndayambaje 2013:2). It is also defined as 'religious response to the fact of diversity that calls for an equal recognition of religious difference' (Roumeas 2015, cited in Fawwaz 2018:7). According to Ndayambaje (2013) RP refers to 'different religious faiths exist within a single society, splinters society, weakening the influence of religion and inhibiting religion from acting as a cohesive force within society. Based on the above definitions, RP occurs in a society that encompasses distinctive religious groups. RP is a concept that makes these groups coexist in harmony and in a degree of acceptance that allows them to exchange peaceful treatment if not they exchange religious knowledge. One of the most remarkable features of RP is that it prevents religion from acting its role as source of power that unifies society (ibid).

According to Roumeas (2015:11-15), RP has four meanings: (a) *Theological Pluralism* assumes that all other religions are equally true or might have part of the true; (b) *Sociological Pluralism* stands for 'the social phenomenon of religious plurality or diversity' (ibid :12). In its modern scope in Europe and the United States it allows the different groups of the society not only to coexist, but it went deeper to allow them to modify the religious faith itself. 'Religion becomes increasingly

subjectivized and individual believers tend to come up with their own *bricolage* — they pick and choose what they find appealing in different religions' (ibid:13); (c) *Philosophical Pluralism* assumes that the liberal state must make sure that societal diversity must not threaten communal stability and the society should benefit from freedom in questioning religions; (d) *Political Pluralism* refers 'to a political ideal of peaceful interaction of individuals and groups of different religious traditions' (ibid:15).

RP with its first meaning is contrasted with two terms: exclusivism and inclusivism. The first confirms that only one religion is true, and the other deities are false, while the second claims that one religion is absolutely true, and the others only have part of the truth' (Huang 1995). Roumeas (2015:11) cited the Christian exclusivists' saying that 'outside the Church there is no salvation'. Ndayambaje (2013) claims that the exclusivist concept threatens social integration.

According to Fawwaz (2018:12), Islam rejects the theological pluralism as it claims that other religions are true. He narrated the saying of Prophet Mohammad (pbuh): “Do not believe the People of the Book, nor disbelieve them, but rather, say, ‘We believe in Allāh, and what has been revealed to us, and what has been revealed to you.’” Then he explained why the theological concept of pluralism is rejected in Islam: 'we cannot accept the concept of religious pluralism which stated that all religions are true, as Islam was revealed as the last and the most comprehensive religion of Allah to human race' (ibid:12-13). However, he explained that Islam allows social pluralism, as, in Madinah, Christians and Jews were let to live peacefully and none of them was obliged to enter Islam by force (ibid).

2.1.2.1.7 *Hybridism and Religious Identity*

The term hybrid is originally used in botany and zoology to describe a plant or an animal that is a product of two different species.' It designates a crossing between two species that give birth to a third one called hybrid' (Al Areqi 2017:2). The term is then projected to human studies to describe those who are the 'product of two races and/or two cultures' (Belkasher and Badurais 2016:6). According to Lazarus (2004), the term hybridity/hybridization has several other synonyms used to give the same sense including diversity, unhomeliness, and multiculturalism. Some other researchers use ambivalence, third space, in-between identity and mimicry to stand for the term hybridization (Al Areqi 2017).

According to Al Areqi (2017), hybridization denotes the state of being torn between two different cultures in the sense of being unable to choose one. He added that ambivalence is considered a health problem rather than being a merit to those who embrace it. The concept of hybridity is thought to be introduced by the colonizers as a phase towards attracting the indigenous people to admit the new sort of culture and values (ibid).

AlAreqi (2015) argues in his article "*Hybridity and Problematic of Identity in Gulf States Narrative*" that the hybrid character in the novel *The Bamboo Stalk* was not accepted by his father's land because the half-Kuwaiti son *Jose* was brought up in his mother's land *Filipino* and assimilated into that culture. He pointed out that the hybrid character could not live in his father's land because his dominant culture was of his mother's as he was raised up there. He added that being hybrid, as presented in this novel, is to be torn between two languages, cultures, and names.

The focus of the current study is on the effect of hybridity on the religious identity. This study is concerned with the form of hybrid character that

results from the mixture of two different races. This study argues that the hybrid character whose father and mother differ in their races, religions and cultures will be affected by this difference in his identity formation as he will find himself torn between two opposing religions and cultures.

According to the Islamic perspective, hybridization refers to the sense of combining two different behaviors or beliefs. The Islamic terminology for the concept of hybridization is *hypocrisy*, which is considered as a kind of disbelief or an evil behavior, and Islam warned the hypocrites from severe punishment after death. This is because hypocrisy is to hide disbelief and act visibly like Muslims (Al Areqi 2017). When hypocrites meet Muslims, they pretend to be Muslims, but when they are alone with the disbelievers, they will show them their internal allegiance (ibid).

The contradiction between what the individual enacts, and his reality will be discussed in depth in the concept of identity gaps as the focus here is on the effect of hybridization, which has arisen due to multiracial combination.

2.1.2.2 Identity

The term *identity* refers to the sense of belonging to a particular group or groups (Song 2003, cited in Hirvonen 2014). It gives an individual a sense of personal location within a group as he shares its members' common characteristics or agrees with them on beliefs. It refers to how one can answer an existential question such as "who are you?" (Vignoles 2017). The expected answer could be quite simple - to tell your name - but if the questioner knows your name, the question would be about the contents of your personality, so the answer could not be simply articulated (Joseph 2004). Due to this, making real knowledge of your identity requires perceptions of how you present yourself and how others see you (Martin & Nakayama 2010).

2.1.2.2.1 Conceptualizing Identity

Identity exploration also implies understanding oneself in comparison to the group he belongs to. Tajfel (1978: 63, cited in Vignoles 2017:1) put it as 'that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups).' Alba (1990:25, cited in Kim 2007:7) described it as 'the subjective orientation of an individual toward his or her ethnic origins', that is, you come to perceive yourself through realizing the similarities and differences between you and your associates.

It is also important to point out that personal 'identity consists of multiple identities, which act in concert' (Samovar et al 2009:156). All individuals are members of multiple groups (Holliday et al 2010), such as 'cultural, ethnic, religious, social class, gender, sexual orientation' (Ting-Toomey 2015:2). This means that an individual's identity is a composite of multitudinous layers or circles of identities, and he enacts any of them in the appropriate situation; the same person plays the role of manager at work, parent at home and a religious man in the mosque. But the degree of belonging to each group is not the same, because some group's memberships are deeply rooted due to the quality of contact (Patel et al 2011). Samovar and Porter (2004) also argued that among the circles of identities, it is the type of identity that is gained through deep-rooted structural formation that acts most. Singer (1998, cited in Horáková 2007) pointed out that the matter of choosing which identity to enact in a certain event depends on the situation.

In addition to being multiple, identity has been described as constructed and fluid (Vignoles2017). The constructive nature of identity is realized through the long process of identity formation (ibid). From the very early days of child-life, parents, family and friends put the foundations to the

personality they expect or prefer to the child by choosing a name, conducting interest and shaping appropriate environment. The individual, thus, is unconsciously positioned in an identity frame that he may choose to be firm about when he gets older or even modify it later on. The fluid nature of identity enables an individual to categorize oneself in a certain position within a group (Turner et al 1987, cited in Vignoles 2017) and this can shift over time according to the social changes or the personal experiences (Haddad 1994; McMullen 2000; Nagel 1995, cited in Peek 2005).

2.1.2.2 Identity and Intercultural Communication

Previous literature shows that several academic disciplines call attention to investigate the identity concept from its own view. For example, psychological studies investigate human self-concepts to give meanings and explore self-image (Hogg 1993; Tajfel & Turner 1979, cited in Jung & Hecht 2004), and the sociological field, according to Stryker & Burke (2000), focuses on how the social role influences individual's self-perception (Schlenker 1985, cited in Jung & Hecht 2004). In addition, social psychology explores the formation of individual and group identity (see Frable 1997; Howard 2000; Sanders 2002; Vryan et al 2003, cited in Peek 2005). Vignoles (2017:1) mentioned a number of studies in various academic disciplines in contemporary psychology that investigated the identity concept including anthropology (Cohen 1994; Sökefeld 1999), psychoanalysis (Erikson 1968) and social (Spears 2011; Tajfel & Turner 1979) and cross-cultural (Smith 2011; Wan 2015) disciplines.

The study undertaken here investigates identity through the intercultural communication perspective as it attempts to analyze cross-cultural pieces of writings. The study sees identity via IC theory because it is claimed

that identity is constructed in discourse and interactions (Mokros 2003; Jung & Hecht 2004), and 'created, maintained, and adapted in communication' (Hecht 1993; Hecht et al 2005; Daniels & Rittenour 2018:1). Ting-Toomey (1999) noticed that identity is formed in communication, so she based her theory, Identity Negotiation Theory (INT) on the argument that identity is created, maintained or, changed in mutual interactions. Collier (1988; 1997; 1998) and Collier & Thomas (1988) confirmed that identity is 'co-created in relationships to others and emergent in communication' (Jung & Hecht 2004:266). In sum, 'identity formation and management occur in communication' (Collier & Thomas 1988:115, cited in Hirvonen 2014:11). Hence, Martin and Nakayama (2010:162) considered identity as a bridge between culture and communication, because we 'communicate our identity to others, and we learn who we are through communication'. Thus, communication with others helps us to understand our identity. 'Issues of identity are particularly important in interactions' (ibid).

2.1.2.2.3 Avowal and Ascribed Identities

From the above it is evident that personal identity is the concept articulated through communication. The close relation between identity and communication is noticeable, especially the communication effect on identity formation (Jung & Hecht 2004). Therefore, identity is shaped in a bidirectional process of influence in communication. It is partly produced by oneself and partly by others. The first part expressed by the individual is termed as *avowal*, and the other is *ascribed*. In the avowal, an individual portrays himself; and in the ascription process others attribute an image to the individual (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Scholars differentiated between these two processes because the individual sometimes could not be able to really express himself for does not want

to show his reality; or the others perceive him differently from the way he sees himself.

2.1.2.2.4 Identity Gaps

The discrepancy arises between what one considers himself and others attribute to him is referred to as *identity gaps* (Hecht et al 2005; Hecht and Lu 2014). These identity gaps are formed in four layers or frames: '*personal, enacted, relational* and *communal* frames' (Hecht and Lu 2014, cited in Hirvonen 2014:9). *Personal* is how we see ourselves; *enacted* is how we express ourselves; *relational* is how are our relations to others and *communal* is what our groups are (Daniels & Rittenour 2018). The inconsistency between any of these layers results in identity gap which causes miscommunication (Jung & Hecht 2004) and/or causes 'depression' to the communicators (Jung 2013; Jung & Hecht 2004; Hirvonen 2014:9).

Identity gaps are unavoidable in every communication because no communication is completely perfect (Jung & Hecht 2004). The two or more individuals engaged in interaction may not share the same degree of mastering cultural knowledge due to the differences between them in the memberships to identity groups. For example, women may not understand some expressions used by men, and the same goes for the old with the young.

Though the focus of the current study is not on the identity gaps, still the deep analysis of the religious identity aimed here requires investigating samples of them that are relevant to the study domain.

2.1.2.2.5 Identity Crisis

The word crisis refers to the time when great change or difficulty happens. The term identity crisis is defined as the situation when the individual is ranging between firm identity to diffused identity

(Baumeister et al 1985). Eriksons (1998; Erikson 1968) defined it as the 'insecurity and worries that teenagers experience when they become youths create a lack of knowledge and confusion about the present and the future in terms of the roles that they will have in future' (Dombrovskis 2016:5). Dombrovskis (2016) also pointed out that identity crises occur in middle-aged people and during the transitional stages of life when young people seek to answer questions concerning what career to choose, what political or religious group to follow. Based on the above definitions, identity crisis emerges when the individual feels fear about his future which seems to him ambiguous or diffused. It also emerges due to the sense of inconsistency the individual feels as a result of wavering between two or more alternatives regarding his racial or religious belonging.

Baumeister et al (1985) stated that identity crisis springs from the lack of bases upon which the person can make consistent decisions about life affairs. They identified two types of identity crises: motivation and legitimation. Motivation crisis arises when the person lacks guiding commitment which helps him to draw goals and establish values. Legitimation crisis emerges when one has several commitments 'which prescribe conflicting behavioral imperatives in some situations' (ibid:2). For example, the legitimation crisis emerges in a case of a child whose parents are committed to two different contradicted religious faiths in a way that the child will not be able to commit to both of them (ibid). It is also assumed that 'motivation crises tend to be caused by internal changes, whereas the conflicts of legitimation crises are brought about by situational changes' (Baumeister et al 1985:4)

With regard to the emergence of identity crisis, Marcia (1980) stated four kinds of identity status: *diffusion*, *foreclosure*, *moratorium* and *achievement*. During diffusion, the person faces no crisis as there is no identity commitment. In the foreclosure status the person also faces no

conflict as he commits to the identity that he has not experienced by himself but was handed to him by the parents or significant others. During the moratorium status, the individual is searching for identity from the available alternatives and has not committed to anyone yet. Here the individual faces the crisis of being confused by the alternatives. In the final status *achievement*, the individual has chosen his identity and became aware of it and aware of why it was chosen. The young person here has undergone a crisis (Nair et al 2015).

2.1.2.3. Religious Identity

Religious identity is defined as an 'ensemble of subject positions' to a particular religious group (Agbibo 2013:7). EbstynKing et al (2013:188) defined it as 'the extent to which an individual has a relationship with a particular institutionalized doctrine about ultimate reality'. It is the 'sense of belonging' to a religious group (Molai et al 2016:185) due to the acceptance an individual has to the group's beliefs. Bradford Wilcox (2004:99) labeled it as religiosity and defined it as 'any kind of religious beliefs and practices that can reflect one's religiousness' (Kim & Bradford Wilcox 2014:3). Mattis & Watson (2008:92) defined it as adherence to the prescribed beliefs and ritual practices associated with the worship of God or a system of gods' (Ajibade et al 2015:3). The above definitions highlighted the conception that religious identity refers to the individual affiliation to a particular group as a result of sharing its members their beliefs. The degree of belonging or commitment to the group varies from one believer to another according to various factors including: the attendance of religious practices (Markstrom-Adams et al 1994; EbstynKing 2003), the quality of contact with the group (Patel et al 2011), the influence of the religious category (Agbibo 2013), the individual preferences, social norms, situations and lifestyles (Molai et

al 2016) as well as some other factors that will be discussed in details later.

Among the social dimensions of identity such as race, ethnicity, gender, political parties (ibid), religious affiliation has its importance in identity formation (Martin & Nakayama 2010) as it serves as a source of meaning and legitimacy for life activities and everything from peace and war to 'notions of morality and issues of sex' (Henera et al 2017). It is also thought to play a significant role in maintaining group identity and strengthening relationships, especially among immigrants (see, for example, Min & Kim 2002 and Peek 2005). The psychologist Alan Roland identified religiosity with individualized and familial identities to be the three universal aspects present in all individuals (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Likewise, Samovar and Porter (2004) identified religious, familial, and historical structures to be deep-rooted institutions that influence human identity and perception.

Despite the great attention given to religious identity in the previous studies, the scholarly measurement identifying it remains problematic. This is due to the dynamic nature of the social and individual identities as well as its conflation with the other identity dimensions such as ethnic or racial categories (Martin & Nakayama 2010).

The measure adopted in the current study for considering the individual or the individual's behavior as being *religious* depends on the motivation underpinning the behavior or the nature of the action itself. That is, every individual behavior is labeled as *religious* if it depends on a religious guidance. The individual himself is considered religious when he acts according to the beliefs of the group he belongs to. The degree of religiosity could be measured by comparing the individual with his associates or/and whether he actually follows the authentic group guidance.

Alston (1975, cited in Mydin et al 2017:27) confirmed that faithfulness, is the 'degree of one's connection or acceptance of their religious institution, participation in church attendance and activities, as well as one's regard for the leaders or the religion and church'. This highlights that the measure includes the accepting beliefs, practicing activities and respecting leaders and sacred things. However, the forms of religiosity differ from one religion to another and from one culture to another within the same religion, so the bidirectional impact of distinctive cultures makes religious identity fluctuate and have dissimilar sense in different situations (Abdel-Khalek 2013). Although, the present study is guided by the Communication Theory of Identity, CTI, its qualitative analysis approach allows the potential of exploring new measurement forms the data may show.

Some people visibly express their religious commitment and preserve group cohesion by wearing similar (in color or style) unique set of clothes (Williams 1988, cited in Peek 2005). These distinctive clothes serve as visible signs that mark the group. The remarkable type, color, or style of clothes could be beneficial to know what religious group the individual belongs to (Martin & Nakayama 2010). For example, Muslim women are often veiled (ibid), wearing *hijab* or *burqa* (Patel et al 2011), though, the size, shape or style of Muslim *hijab* vary from one Muslim society to another according to the societal heritage and the borrowing of modern fashions. However, not all religions are identified with special kinds of clothes (Martin & Nakayama 2010).

In addition, some religious beliefs and practices are thought to have a considerable influence on the religious identity consolidation. For example, Jews claim that they are the chosen people of God. 'Being the covenant people of God has always been at the core of Jewish identity' (Furman 1987, cited in EbstynKing 2003:200). Within the Christian

tradition some believe that they are the sons and daughters of God (ibid). Both beliefs give believers a sense of being beloved by God, which make profound implications for identity (ibid). Besides, participating in congregation gives individuals a feeling of security and that they are members of a faith community connecting them with the history. For Muslims, they practice a number of congregational worships that bind them together and tie the individual within the religious community. One of the most visible rituals is the prayer (*salat*). By meeting Muslims five times a day, the Muslim builds solid cohesions with others (ibid) and strengthens the sense of belonging to his religion as well. In sum, it is clear that religions, in general, provide believers with promises, promotions and motivations to be firm and maintain their religious identity. Showing and reinforcing religiosity may have social, political, or personal functions and do not only stick for meeting spiritual needs (Peek 2005). Colonizers, government rulers and terrorist leaders struggle to modify people's religious identities according to their political interests. Therefore, much research has been done on the nexus between religion and politics (Agbibo 2013). Some individuals belong to a religious organization to offer them social, economic, and psychological benefits (Peek 2005). Some others use religion to accomplish personal goals such as being distinctive (ibid) in terms of social position. In the communities where minorities of non-religious people or disbelievers live among majorities of believers, the minority may be forced to cave to the social pressure and pretend to adopt the dominant culture identity (ibid). Due to these, not everyone that has any sort of visible religious commitment could really be regarded as an actual faithful individual. The discrepancy between what one pretends to be and his reality, has its influence on the individual relation and interaction as well.

2.1.2.3.1. Factors Affecting Religious Identity

It is pointed out above that identity is constructed by oneself and in interactions with the larger group (Ting-Toomey 1999). Our view of ourselves is greatly influenced by cultural, personal, social, and relational factors (ibid). Thus, identity formation is a process accomplished by a multitude of factors including family, gender, cultural, ethnic, and individual socialization (Samovar et al 2009). Every individual, then, is a member of different social and cultural groups (ibid), hence, 'everyone's identity is formed and influenced by all identity groups he or she participates in' (Horáková 2007:12). Religious identity formation, maintenance and modification depends on the influence of the other identity dimensions such as parenting, social pressure (Loewenthal 2010), cultural norms (Cohen 2011), race, ethnicity (Martin & Nakayama 2010) and personality (EbstyleKing 2003).

Religious identity, for example, often is conflated with ethnic and racial dimensions to the extent that it would be difficult to view it separately (Martin & Nakayama 2010). That is, the religious category is linked with an ethnic group, meaning that each individual belonging to the ethnic group is expected to be a member of the religion adopted by the larger group. Hence, the one who views himself as, say, Jewish, or has a Jewish last name, does it mean that he belongs to Judaism as an ethnic group or a religious group? (ibid). The notion is problematic, especially in contexts when the whole community is divided into two or three major ethnic or racial groups each has its own religion, as is the case in Nigeria, for example, where there is an almost equal split between Islam and Christianity (Agbibo2013). Islam spread among the Hausa, while Christianity is dominant among the Ibo (ibid), so confusion arises

when it comes to view Islamic identity separately from the ethnicity of Hausa.

Similar confluences may occur with religious identity and gender, class, national, regional, age or personal dimensions. Therefore, the study argues that the above-mentioned identity dimensions influence religious identity construction, so it is desirable to have a brief background about each of them as well as some knowledge about the way they impact religiosity as shown in the literature.

2.1.2.3.2. Gender

Gender identity refers to the social notion that clarifies the characteristics to be a man or a woman. It is the social meaning ascribed to male and female social categories in a particular society (Wood & Eagly 2009). It socially specifies what roles are associated with men and women in a particular time and space (Ting-Toomey 1999). It refers to how a particular culture differentiates masculine and feminine social roles (Samovar et al 2009:158). To understand the nature of gender differentiation, it is essential to refer to the cultural values and institutions that determine the masculine and feminine roles (Wood 1997; Ting-Toomey 1999). Culture, then, determines dress, colors and clothe styles, the expressions associated with each gender, and the communal role each plays and even activities and sports (Martin & Nakayama 2010). The family and society start breeding gender sense on children very early in life by choosing names for boys different from girls as well as the color of clothes (pink for girls and blue for boys) (ibid). Then, through parenting with reward and punishment, children learn what is "proper" or "improper" concerning gender-related behaviors" (Ting-Toomey 1999:97). As the construction of the masculinity and femininity notion depends on cultural norms, it continuously changes according to the

cultural forces (Martin & Nakayama 2010). One of the most influential sources that affect the formation of gender identity is religion (Klingorov & Havlicek 2015). King (1995, cited in Klingorov & Havlicek 2015:3) argued that 'gender roles are primarily constructed through religion, culture, lifestyle and upbringing'. This highlights the close influential relations between religious and gender identities. Since it is claimed that culture and religion are two main sources of gender identity formation, some gender specifications may look more religious while others look more cultural. The cultural characteristic of gender identity highlights its dynamic nature as it is often influenced by the day-to-day changes in lifestyles. The gender differentiations impact religious identity in the IC context when individuals from two or more distinctive societies encounter in interaction and they do not have exact knowledge with regard to their differences in gender-related behaviors. This may occur within the same community if the interacting individuals differ in the degree of acceptance to their gender-related norms (Wood & Eagly 2009).

2.1.2.3.3. Race and Ethnicity

Racial and ethnic identities seem the same to many people and the differentiation between them is 'unclear or confusing' (Samovar et al 2009:156). Broadly speaking, racial identity is tied to the group connection based on having distinguishable biological characteristics (ibid) such as color and other physical heritage. While ethnic identity refers to one's sense of sharing a group heritage, history, homeland, language (ibid), traditions, costumes, values, and behaviors (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Although both share the sense of belonging to a racial group, ethnic membership has a wider sense than racial identity as it

includes self-identification and knowledge about the group's history and values (ibid).

Religious identity is closely related in its formation to ethnic identity (Peek 2005) and sometimes they conflate to the extent that it would be difficult to view them in terms of belonging (Martin & Nakayama 2010). For example, in Nigeria, Islam spread in the north among the Hausa tribe till it is assumed that every Hausa man is a Muslim by virtue of ethnicity, and in the south, Igbo people are assumed to be Christians. This close nexus between religion and ethnicity in Nigeria made many people think that being Muslim means assimilating Hausa ethnicity (Anthony 2000). From this perspective, the current study argues that ethnicity has its strong influence on religious identity formation and maintenance as the members of a particular group may be forced to adopt religion as part of their ethnic heritage. On the other hand, some people from a various ethnic group may refuse to believe in a religion of a different group because it is thought to be exclusive to the particular group. This was the reason that drove Anthony (2000) to conduct his study titled "*Islam Does not Belong to Them*", investigating the nexus between religion and ethnicity. Fox (2002:70) argued that 'religion is an aspect of ethnicity, with its importance varying over time and place'. This confirmed the assumption that religion is a 'significant aspect of ethnic culture' (Williams 1988:12, in Peek 2005:218) and its importance varies according to the situations. Yang and Ebaugh (2001) pointed out that some communities emphasize religious commitment to preserve cultural and traditional boundaries, while others stress ethnic identity to keep their religious identity (Peek 2005). Here, one notices the bidirectional influence between religion and ethnicity that each one of them plays a crucial role to strengthen the other.

2.1.2.3.4. Class Identity

Each society has its own way of classifying its sub-cultural classes.

Some societies base the categorization on racial, religious or political dimensions. The social reactions and practices are, therefore, shaped on the bases of these social classes. Martin and Nakayama (2010: 194) report that 'the magazines we read, the food we eat, and the words we use often reflect our social class position'. This classification leads us to the notion of majority and minority groups. Buryánek (2005, cited in Horáková 2007:10) states that the culture of the majority group is consciously or unconsciously the one which dominates the society: 'It is taught at schools and referred to in the media'. Such class discrimination often results in intercultural misunderstanding and cultural clashes as we will see in the novel under study.

2.1.2.3.5. Personality

It is stated above that individual identity has two facets of self-concepts, one is derived from an individual's knowledge of his group membership (group identity) and the other is derived from the other kinds of personal attributes (personal identity) (Vignoles 2017). The personal or individual identity dimension is thought to be a sum of all identity dimensions (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Personal identity includes the personal preferences and choices. It was stated so far that individuals, who are members of a particular group can not be typically similar to each other in accepting and practicing the group values and behaviors (Jung & Hecht 2004). Each group member differs from the other in the extent to which he or she identifies with the larger group (Vignoles 2017).

According to the scholars of communication, some people might be caught between the communal norms and the personal desire of being

something else (Martin & Nakayama 2010). The strain between the parents' culture and the personal desire for change varies from one society to another according to the particular group's collectivity and individuality as well as the nature of the group's beliefs. With reference to the religious identity, not all religions oblige the followers to believe in the same set of beliefs. Christianity, for example, emphasizes the individual sense of freedom in choosing the aspect of his or her relation to God (EbstynKing 2003). However, Islam determines and sets a fixed belief in God - the most high - as stated by Omar (2007:78), the center of Islam is God, not Mohammad, Muslims should pray to God alone, "*tawheed*", and this is 'the single most central concept in Islam', which denotes staying away from "*shirk*," disbelief which is associating Gods or partners to Allah (Mydin et al 2014: 369). Islam and Christianity also differ in their political perspectives. Unlike Christianity, which allows its followers to freely adopt any sort of political conceptions (may be secularization), Islam has general and specific political rules (Agbiboa 2013).

The comparison between Islam and Christianity shows that religion itself determines the aspect of the relation between the individual and the religious group he or she identifies with. This denotes that some religious groups are more individualized than others.

2.1.2.4. Stereotyping

According to Lippman (1922:16), stereotypes are 'pictures in our heads' (Whitley & Kite 2006:9). Stereotypes refer to the 'beliefs and opinions about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of various groups' (ibid). It is a mental picture held by individuals about a particular group on the bases of oversimplified opinions and bias judgment (Patel et al 2011). Mai (2016:2) defined it as 'fixed, over-

generalized belief about a particular group of people or a co-culture'. It could be concluded from the above definitions that a stereotype is a mental picture, which an individual forms about a certain group and generalizes it to all the group members. Stereotyping is formed as a result of lacking accurate knowledge about others in situations where there is not enough time to search the truth (ibid). Another reason for holding stereotypes is the cultural prejudice (Holliday et al 2010). This is because, prejudice is - as it will be explained- a negative attitude formed as a result of lacking the accurate knowledge about the others, so it serves as a bases for stereotyping.

Stereotyping is a natural human phenomenon (Fiske 1998; Mai 2016) based on national, religious, ethnic (Martin & Nakayama 2010) or gender identities (Whitley & Kite 2006). For example, blacks are stereotyped of having limited ability in swimming compared to other ethnic group members (ibid); Muslims are portrayed as terrorists whereas Christians are nonviolent (Martin & Nakayama 2010).

Stereotyping is picked up from TV shows, movies (ibid), mass media, schools, families, and friends (Patel et al 2011). Stereotypes may be negative or positive (Martin & Nakayama 2010), and the negative ones have great impact on intergroup relation and communication (Patel et al 2011). This is because the stereotypic knowledge about the other group makes the individual treat all the target group members similarly, regardless to the individual differences. The clearest example to cite here is the stereotypic image portrayed to Muslims after the terrorist attacks on the 11th of September (ibid). Arabs and Muslims were accused to be responsible of that, although not all Arabs are Muslims (Martin & Nakayama 2010) and not all Muslims are terrorists.

Positive and negative stereotypes affect people's relations and communication, because they apply to all the group members in some

fixed set of characteristics (Mai 2016), such as, Italians are erotic and chaotic, Germans are uptight in emotional expressions (ibid) and Asian Americans are hard-working people (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Although the stereotypes are held on some reality (Mai 2016), it is incorrect to apply the stereotypic image on all the group members. Thus, stereotypes might be realistic with the whole group and inaccurate for each individual (Whitley & Kite 2006). Therefore, basing communication on stereotypic knowledge can be damaging as it creates unrealistic expectations about individuals (Martin & Nakayama 2010), because not every person shares the groups cultural or religious aspects. Thus, the current study argues that identity formation and maintenance are impacted by the cultural stereotypes concerning religious beliefs, especially when it comes to investigate its impact on cross-cultural communication.

2.1.2.5. Prejudice

Prejudice is ‘a negative attitude toward a cultural group based on little or no experience’ (Martin & Nakayama 2010:207). It refers to the unfavorable attitude towards a particular group and its members (Patel et al 2011). It differs from stereotyping in the fact that it is not based on some over-generalized fact, as the case with stereotyping, rather it is based on preconceived judgment without any ground (ibid). In addition, unlike stereotyping, prejudice is a negative attitude as it shows a group's view about others (Martin & Nakayama 2010). Therefore, prejudice can be a base for stereotypes (Holliday et al 2010) as people sometimes tend to hold stereotypes on how they are likely to feel about the intended group. Thus, prejudice is considered as the dark side of discrimination and one of the communication barriers (Patel et al 2011).

2.1.2.6. Ethnocentrism

Ethnocentrism is one of the barriers that impedes effective intercultural communication (ibid). It is defined as the notion in which 'one's own culture is superior to any other' (Samovar et al 2009:180). Ethnocentrism perceives the others' religion, language and values as being inferior to that of one's own (Patel et al 2011). The ethnocentric person tends to judge others according to his or her own cultural norms. Everyone could rarely be able to set himself free from ethnocentrism because everyone has some degree of association to his or her cultural issues (ibid). Ethnocentric individuals consciously or unconsciously see that, for example, the way they eat is normal, the way they behave is rational and their set of beliefs is the only true religion that everyone else would be mad if he/she does not be as such. This ethnocentric view opposes being tolerant and open-minded (ibid) and, hence, creates communication barrier.

Samovar et al (2009) stated that ethnocentrism works most in religious and moral contexts. This is because ethnocentric religious groups center their own religion and give the members the feeling that their religion is the only true religion. Thus, ethnocentrism contribute in forming a sense of belonging and commitment to the particular group (ibid).

2.2. Section Two: Previous Studies

This part is divided into three sub-sections. The first introduces the previous researches in the general field of intercultural communication (IC), in particular those that use fiction (stories, novels, films, TV shows) as data. The second poses the most relevant researches on the first novel under investigation, *Things Fall Apart*, while the third explores the studies on the second novel *The Bamboo Stalk*.

2.2.1. Previous Studies Using Fiction as Data

Previous literature has shown that much research has been carried out in the field of intercultural communication particularly with the development of globalization, which facilitated the interactions between various societies that have different cultural backgrounds. The literature also revealed that most of the studies take the researchers' observations, the personal experiences, the different social events, and some other real-life stories as their analysis data. For example, some researchers explored the IC approach through their university students' experiences (Martin and Nakayama 2010), or school students in and outside their homeland (Kobayashi 2009), or front office personnel working in a hotel abroad (Inkaew 2016), or through classroom discussions that analyze short stories via online web-based interactions (Myers & Eberfors 2010). Some other studies apply IC analysis on expatriate experiences outside their countries (Peltokorpi 2007), or on the cultural misunderstanding that occurred between refugees and native people (Fantahun 2009). In addition to the exploration of the IC competence among organizations and their employees who live in a multicultural environment (Naidoo 2011). Thus, the previous literature showed that the IC field is rich in studies that took real life events and experiences as their data

However, only a few studies used fiction as analysis corpus (Fox 2003; Liu & Zhang 2011; Wierzbicka 2010, cited in Hirvonen 2014). The current study, as mentioned so far, attempts to explore one concept, the IC approach, i.e. religious identity, on two pieces of fictive writings despite the scarcity of previous literature in the same area. Nevertheless, the current study considers the lack of previous research to be a possibility rather than a problem because it could be a chance for this study to add something new to the field.

Previous IC studies that explore fictive data, such as films (Zhang2013), TV shows and radio programs (Liu and Zhang 2011; Hecht et al 2002) and novels (Hirvonen 2014; Abu Baker 2008; Mydin et al 2013; Kuryleva and Boeva 2010; Bowers 1993; Stoute 2015; Johnson 2006; Tundawala 2012), are presented below.

2.2.1.1. Hirvonen (2014)

The most relevant work to the current study is Hirvonen (2014). Sarianna Hirvonen carried out her MA thesis under the title *Cultural Identity Gaps: A Study of Zadie Smith's Novels White Teeth (2001) and On Beauty (2006)*, in the academic field of intercultural communication. Her study aims to investigate identity gaps in two of Zadie Smith's novels: *White Teeth* (2001) and *On Beauty* (2006). She highlighted the fact that not much research has been done with IC concepts using fictive data. She, therefore regarded this as a possibility rather than being a problem, though she could not find much literature to back her up.

The study aims to see how cultural identity concepts are illustrated in the data, how the identity gaps affect the characters' relations, and if the novel could be used as educational material. The study does not state any hypothesis rather it attempts to answer the following research questions:

- ‘1. How are different aspects of cultural identity represented in the data?
2. How are the chosen identity gaps illustrated in the data?
3. How do the chosen identity gaps affect the characters’ communication and social relations?’ (Hirvonen 2014:20).

The study focuses on testing the illustration of the three identity gaps: *Personal-relational*, *Personal-enacted* and *Relational-enacted*, using a qualitative method as its research tool. It deductively employs discourse analysis as an inquiry tool with the help of the Intercultural Communication Theory (ICT) for researching the data. It reveals the

following results: (a) these cultural identity gaps have 'significant impact on the characters' relationships (ibid:62), (b) the identity gaps also caused 'many rows and misunderstandings in communication, and how identity gaps functioned as identity sources' (ibid:65), (c) identity gaps also 'functioned as a more negative identity source'(ibid:68). This study concludes that it adds its own contribution into the field of IC studies by applying the ICT theory on a new area, fictive writing (ibid:75). Beside testing the ICT in fiction, the study shows that the two novels under study, *White Teeth* (2001) and *On Beauty* (2006), serve as good examples for illustrating the theory and its concepts (ibid:76), and therefore the study could be welcomed as one of the first steps towards more researches on IC using fictive data.

Hirvonen's (2014) study is the work most relevant to the current study, as both aim to analyze two long novels through the identity concept and adopt the same analysis tool, that is, descriptive discourse analysis (DA) with the help of the ICT theory. Unlike Hirvonen (2014), which focused only on analyzing the characters' dialogues in the novels without looking into writer's symbolization, the present study investigates the data both descriptively and critically according to the two approaches of DA. In addition, this study also analyzes novels written by two different authors in two distinctive societies and times.

2.2.1.2 Liu and Zhang (2011)

Liu and Zhang (2011) conducted a study titled: *Self and Counter-Representations of native Americans: Stereotypical Images of and New Images by native Americans in Popular Media*. The aim of this study is to examine the 'American-Indian cultures and its interaction with white culture through Sherman Alexie's works in different media' (ibid:107). Alexie is a pureblooded native American writer. His goal is to

decentralize whites, relocate native Americans and correct the corrupted image depicted by the Hollywood films about native Americans. The study investigates the stereotypical images he portrays about both native Americans and whites through his novels, film, TV and radio shows, books, etc. This study also focuses on exploring only one IC concept, *stereotyping*. Unlike Hirvonen (2014), Liu and Zhang (2011) focus on linking the analysis of the stereotypical pictures in the writer's works to the context of the data. That is, they (ibid) connect the pieces of fiction under study to what is happening between the two cultural groups in reality. For example, they sometimes comment on the effect of the writer's works on the readers or the audiences in real life, e.g. 'The white readers will often find that they are laughing at themselves. That laughter is part of the desired outcome of Alexie's artistic strategy' (ibid:112). Here, they also comment on the writer's hidden agenda. Like what the current study aims to do, Liu and Zhang (2011) use, what Gee (2010) terms as, critical discourse analysis (CDA), which does not stick to the characters' dialogues, rather it gives an elaborated picture including the analysis of the messages that the author may or would like to convey. The study concludes that Alexie's works have a clear impact on both cultural groups, native Americans and whites. They state that native Americans have been changed from being 'passive receptacles' to active social individuals (Liu and Zhang 2011:116). Finally, they draw some limitations of their study, the most obvious of which is the concentration on only two ethnic groups, namely native Americans and whites. It leaves apart touching on other racial groups such as 'African Americans or Chinese'(ibid:117).

2.2.1.3 Hecht et al (2002)

According to Hirvonen (2014), one of the few studies that preceded her own in the field of applying the IC approach on fiction is Hecht et al (2002). The study of Hecht et al (2002) investigates the Jewish identity through the television show *Northern Exposure*. It results that TV shows have great influence on people's identity development. The study concentrates on analyzing only one character through the communal identity frame. Like the current study, Hecht et al (2002) focus on the religious identity in literary work. They found that the fictive TV shows served as corpus for investigating the religious identity concept.

2.2.1.4. Abu Baker (2008)

The study of Ahmad M. S. Abu Baker (2008) was conducted under the title *Religious Identity in Michael Ondaatje's The English Patient*. The study aims to make clear the effect of the war experience and the problems of identity development depicted in Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*. It investigates the impact of racism on identity formation. The novel told the story of four characters, who lived outside their homeland and suffered from the aftermath of war, including the physical destruction of land and the psychological destruction of characters. It concludes that war contexts have traumatic effects on identity formation, and that racial discrimination has its impact of religious assimilation, that is, the racial connections between the group members cause them to connect mostly with their 'own' people and disconnect with the others only because they do not belong to their tribe. Racism also causes them to consider their own customs to be acceptable and normal whereas those of the others are strange. Abu Baker (2008) applied DA analysis to research the data.

2.2.1.5. Mydin et al (2013)

Mydin et al (2013) aim to explore the Muslim identity formation through the fictive works of four writers, who belong to the group of diasporic Muslim fiction writers. Diasporic works are concerned with searching issues of identity construction in and out of the Muslim majority context. The study chose the works of four writers namely are Palestinian Egyptian-Australian Randa Abdel-Fattah, Ethiopian-Yemeni Mohamad Abdul Wali, Greek-American Jamilah Kolocotronis and Afghani-American Khalid Hosseini. The study also aims to investigate the causes and effects of the multicultural contexts that contribute to the fracture in the Muslims sense of self.

The first novel *Ten Things I Hate About Me*, written by Randa Abdel-Fattah (2006), is about telling a story of a 14-year-old girl named Jamilah. She is an Australian-Lebanese Muslim living within a Muslim minority with the majority of non-Muslim Caucasians. Jamilah is depicted in the novel in a way that she is always trying to change her character. When she is outside, she changes her name to Jamie, dyes her hair blond, changes her eyes to blue in order to attach herself to the majority culture. The study concludes that the protagonist Jamilah is influenced by the other culture to the extent that causes her to have inner conflict, which makes her to appear like the 'others' even in her own community.

The second novel, *They Die Strangers* (1972, 2001) by the Yemeni-Ethiopian writer Mohammad Abdul-Wali, depicts the experiences of the Muslim emigrants to Christian majority in Ethiopia (Muslim immigrants like Yemenis going to Ethiopia). The study aims to discuss the causes and impacts that contribute to the writer's identity fracture. The protagonist Abdu Sa'id is caught between two religio-cultures, his Arab-Muslim and

the host Christian-Ethiopian culture. To escape tax charges and assimilate in the dominant culture, the protagonist conducts sexual relationships with local women, and performs acts that are forbidden in Islamic teaching. His illicit relationships develop into a state of crisis with the birth of his illegitimate son, which can serve as a sign of his Islamic identity fracture. The study concludes that the writer Abdul-Wali depicts the characters in the novel in a way that shows them losing their religious sensibility as a result of economic reasons and due to intercultural influence by the Christian majority.

The third novel, *Thousand Splendid Suns*, is written by Khalid Hosseini (2007), who imaginatively depicts the tragic life in Afghanistan during the rule of the Taliban. It tells a story of two girls, who live a life of sadness and torture under the Taliban regime, which is described as led by fanatic rulers, who treat women harshly. The study concludes that Hosseini portrays the Islamic government in Afghanistan in such a cruel way in treating women in order to spread the view of Islam as barbaric regarding women's rights. The study considers the novelist Hosseini as one of those, whose narrative fits the exoticist writing style, which attracts the western readers, especially after the events of 9/11. This is because he depicts his homeland rulers using inhumane treatment and that causes the readers to view Islam as barbaric. All in all, according to Hosseini, Islam (as a religion) is viewed as cruel to women due to what the Taliban did (Mydin et al 2013).

The fourth novel is Jamilah Kolocotronis's (2006) *Echoes*. The novel depicts the story of non-Muslims, who embraced Islam after the tragedy of 9/11 in America. The study aims to explore the "principles and practices of reversion to Islam within the theme of Muslim religious identity development" (Mydin et al 2013:368). The methodology of this study is taken from the dichotomy of Being-Becoming. "Being" is the

first stage of the identity formation process in which an individual attains knowledge regarding the world (Mydin et al 2013:368). "Being" is the innate knowledge which distinguishes between good and evil. However, this sense is not strong enough to ensure correct behavior (ibid:368). The second stage is "Becoming", which is influenced by the parental teaching, environment, and friends. Kolocotronis (2006) depicts the protagonist Joshua at the "being" stage as losing his innate sense ('fitrah'). Later on, Joshua embraces Islam with the help of his Muslim friends. The study sees Joshua's reversion to Islam as a journey back to Islam. By returning to the state of 'fitrah', the study concludes that Joshua—among other findings—can distinguish between Allah and the Prophet. He realizes that Allah is the center of Islam and not Mohammad; therefore Muslims pray to God and believe in Him as the only true God that deserves worship. Joshua perceives that 'tawhid' is the single most central concept in Islam, which denotes staying away from 'shirk' or associating other beings with God, 'which is labeled as the gravest sin in Islam' (ibid:369). The study also concluded that the protagonist after reverting to Islam becomes free to find a new measure of hope. 'a zone of comfort, and above all a sense of striving for self-fulfillment. which helps transform and modify his earlier traditions of being, believing, acting, and thinking' (ibid: 369).

Mydin et al (2013) conclude that the discussion of the four writers' works revealed that each writer presents the Muslim identity in a one-directional construction that they themselves experience. The theme discussions also include problematizing identity, confronting identity crisis and challenging fractured identity of the minority migrants.

The present study will similarly explore religious identity and the factors that cause or affect its development.

2.2.1.6. Kuryleva and Boeva (2010)

Kuryleva and Boeva (2010) conducted the study *Literary Texts by H. Murakami in Terms of Intercultural Communication* to explore the cultural influences on the works of the Japanese novelist H. Murakami. The study is positioned in the IC field and takes the qualitative approach as a method of data analysis. The study results show that Murakami's literary works are influenced by the western style of writing as well as the usage of a considerable number of loan words and expressions of non-Japanese origins. This shows that the influence by the European on Japan includes language and culture as well (ibid). The study suggests that Murakami's works could be studied from the cultural identity perspective. It also suggests that future researches may compare Murakami's works to some of the writers that Murakami refers to in his writings.

Like the present study, Kuryleva and Boeva (2010) studied fictive works in light of the IC perspective, though they have nothing specific on religious identity as this study aims to do.

2.2.1.7. Bowers (1993)

Margaret Ann Bowers (1993) carried out a study under the title *Crossing cultures: Self Identity in the writing of Suniti Namjoshi*. The study aims to explore the works of the Indian fictive writer Suniti Namjoshi from a cross-cultural perspective. The study focuses only on one part of her fictive writings, prose, and evaluates the political debates with regard to the concept of self and social identity. The study concentrates on the issue of lesbian women's identity as portrayed in Namjoshi's prose, specifically in colonial or intercultural contexts. Like the current study, Bowers (1993) takes extracts from the writings of Namjoshi and investigates them. However, it does not focus on specific

fictive stories or novels, as this study does, it rather broadens the sources of data, a thing which may give a full picture about the writer's perspective. However, the focus in the present study is the two novels, as mentioned earlier, because the purpose is to analyze these fictive works in greater depth with regard to the religious identity concept rather than investigating the writers' perspectives in their works. The study concluded that Namjoshi is a 'feminist' (ibid:99) and her work could not be categorized within a single style, Indian, North American or European, because she is influenced by each of these cultural perspectives (ibid:98). Like the current study, Bowers' (1993) research is placed in the IC academic field, and it analyzed the identity concept, but it has nothing specific on religious identity as it is the purpose of this study.

2.2.1.8. Zhang (2013)

Zhang (2013) conducted a qualitative study under the title *Intercultural Communication and Religious Beliefs. A case study of the American Film 'Innocence of Muslims.'* It aims to analyze the serious impacts caused by the film *Innocence of Muslims*, around the world. It also aims to investigate the important influence of the religious beliefs on cultural development and intercultural communication. It argued that film- in general- is 'one of the major bridges for intercultural communication' (ibid).

The study concludes that the film, *Innocence of Muslims*, which was an Israeli-American production, hurt Muslim people and caused serious events all over the world that disturbed the peace (Zhang 2013:1). For example, the film raised 'violence in seven countries that killed at least 28 people, including the US ambassador to Libya' (ibid:2). 'The incident made the world unstable and hindered different people with different cultures and different religious beliefs from their intercultural

communication' (ibid:2). 'People should be aware of the differences, show understanding and respect to different religious beliefs and most importantly, build bridges across misunderstanding among different religious beliefs or different culture' (ibid:6).

It also concluded that literary works, films or any other genre should respect others' beliefs, because religious beliefs are important components of cultures and it is the role of films (or fiction in general) to convey cultures and not to change them. The study also highlights the great effects that film has on intercultural communication and that if the filmmakers respect others' beliefs this will contribute in the harmony of the world.

Like the current study, Zhang (2013) analyzed a fictive work through the IC concept and focused on the religious beliefs. However, the present study aims to go deeper in analyzing the religious identity and the factors that influence its structure, development, and maintenance.

2.2.1.9. Stoute (2015)

Stoute (2015) carried out a research titled *A study in Intersexuality and Religious Identity in Selected Novels of Egyptian Arabic Literature*. The study aims to investigate how the religious identity is portrayed in the chosen novels. The novels include the English translations of *Lā aḥād yanām fī lskandriyya* [No One Sleeps in Alexandria] by Ibrahim Abdel Meguid (1996), *Turābuhā Za'farān* [City of Saffron] by Edwar al-Kharrāt (1986), Bahaa' Taher's (1991) *Khālī Safiyyawa-al-dayr* [Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery], and the short story *Al-Mahdī* by Abdel-Hakim Qāsim (1984) (Stoute 2015:4). Some other works were also discussed to provide additional examples pertaining to certain concepts, such as *Qandīl Umm Hāshim* [The Lamp of Umm Hashim] by Yehia Haqqi (1944), Naguib Mahfouz's novels *Awlād Ḥaritna* [Children of the

Alley] (1959) and *Al-Liṣṣwa-al-Kilāb* (1961) [The Thief and the Dogs], as well as *asal-Harām* (1959) [The Sinners] by Yūsuf Idris (ibid:4). The study is not concerned with analyzing the religious identity of the writers, rather it aims to explore the function of the religious identity as portrayed in their works. The study argues that employment of religion impacted on the state of inter-faith relationship and the Egyptian religion-based identity. The study stresses the importance of noting the political climate and the serious events in the twentieth century, which had a great impact on Egyptians and on the authors of the literary works (ibid). It concludes that the events of the 1940's-1960's influenced Egypt's literature to the extent that literature was used as a vehicle for social and political change in Egypt. According to Haqqi (1944, cited in Stoute 2015:19), 'there should be no science without religion'. That is, Haqqi sees that religion and science coincide in the same community, whereas writers like Naguib Mahfouz reached a different conclusion. He has a socialist and secular view.

2.2.1.10. Johnson (2006)

The study of Johnson (2006), *Tribalism and Religious Identity in the Works of Richard Wright*, aims to examine Wright's use of the concept of tribalism (Johnson 2006:2). The study focuses on exploring the works of Wright and analyzes them deeply through the concept of religious identity. Unlike the current study, Johnson (2006) does not concentrate on certain works, rather he takes a large number of data as the purpose of the study is to investigate the perception of the writer rather than to study the religious identity concept in a particular fictive work as this study attempts to. Moreover, Johnson (2006) investigates Wright's fictive and non-fictive works. Johnson (2006) also aims to explore the communal religious and tribal problems as depicted in Wright's works as

well as the contradictory trends of Wright himself. The study concludes that 'Wright's critique of religious identity and differences is ultimately helpful for ongoing scholarly studies of religion in America' (Johnson 2006:2).

2.2.1.11. Tundawala (2012)

Tundawala (2012) carried out a qualitative comprehensive interpretive investigation research under the title *Multiple Representatives of Muslimhood in West Bengal: Identity Construction Through Literature*. The research aims to study the religious identity through the literary works of two Muslim linguistic traditions (Bengali and Urdu). The researcher adopted the descriptive qualitative method of data analysis with the help of face to face interviews that she made with some of the famous West Bengal authors, such as the writers *Afar Ahmed* and *Kammal Hussein* and the poet *Aguil*. The research is not about all the Muslim literacy works in West Bengal, but it focuses on the dominant and most famous ones. These novels include Jabbar's (1959, 2009) *Ilishmarir Char* and Bashar's (1990) *Surer Sampan* from the works of Bengali Muslims literature. The study concludes that, although, both Bengali and Urdu writers are Muslims, their works show different affiliations to Islam. 'The Bengali Muslim writers seem less convinced of and less acquainted with the exclusive truth and greatness of Islam' (ibid:18), whereas the Urdu writers seem more affiliated to Islam and they employ their literati to maintain Islamic identity (ibid).

2.2.2. Previous Studies on *Things Fall Apart*

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* served as a corpus that attracted massive scholarly studies from various fields and approaches, such as sociological, feminist, post-colonial (Foster & Nwiyor 2017),

linguistic (Pitia& Mugaddam 2015), and cultural approaches (Kenalemang 2013). Here, the study introduces the most relevant works to its domain.

2.2.2.1 Kenalemang (2013)

Kenalemang (2013) aims to explore the impacts of European colonization on Ibo culture (the dominant ethnic Nigerian group depicted in the novel that encountered British colonialism). It attempts to figure out Achebe's purposes behind writing the novel. The study does not only rely on the literary text as the only source of its analysis data, rather it reports more related information from Achebe's other works, beside the other historical sources. Kenalemang (2013) investigates the impact of the British colonialism on the Ibo societies via the interaction depicted in the novel and results to the conclusion that the fall of the Ibo culture and lifestyle were mainly due to their inability to learn English, because they thought that would not be useful to them (ibid:17).

2.2.2.2. Fischer (2004)

From the cultural point of view, Fischer (2004) conducted a research under the title *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: Bridging Cultural Differences*. It seeks to investigate the linguistic mechanisms that can help the reader understand the cultural differences in the novel. It poses that the reader can access the text without having knowledge of the context, this is, understanding the language without having knowledge about its culture. This study uses discourse analysis to make clear how the reader can make sense of what he or she reads in the text (ibid:3). The focus of this study is on the linguistic analysis of the text via the discourse analysis tools (cohesions and coherence) to interpret the data.

2.2.2.3. Hamad (2017)

Hamad (2017) conducted a comparative qualitative study in the IC field under the title: *Contrastive Analysis of Intercultural Communication in the Novels “Things Fall Apart” by Chinua Achebe and “Season of Migration to the North” by Tayeb Salih*. It aims to identify and describe the cultural identities in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*. It also aims to make clear the aspects of similarity and difference between the two communities depicted in the novels, the Nigerian and the Sudanese respectively, concerning the cultural identities. In addition, it aims to explore how the sharp differences between the society members can cause them to conflict and whether the novels' analysis could serve as data for IC analysis, like the existing study. Hamad (2017) uses descriptive discourse analysis with the help of the communication theory of identity (CTI). The study concluded that the two communities in the novels differ in some types of identities and are the same in others. Its results also show that fiction could be taken as data for IC studies, so it suggested more future studies that may analyze the same novels through stereotyping and prejudice concepts. Hamad (2017) is closely related to the current study as it takes extracts from the novels and deductively explore them. However, this study focuses only on one of the cultural identities, i.e. the religious identity.

2.2.2.4. Adegbite (2016)

Adegbite's (2016) paper *Masculinity and Cultural conflict in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* aims to x-ray the viewpoint of masculinity and femininity in the two cultural groups, traditional Igbo society and the European society, before and during the colonial era as portrayed in the novel. It attempts to compare the two groups conception

pertaining to masculinity and cultural clash. The study methodology is an analytical descriptive approach. It scrutinizes the reflected events and actions in the novel in a comparative manner. The study concludes that there are visible differences between the African and the British in their viewpoints about the positions and roles of male and female. Precisely speaking, the study reveals that the character of Okonkwo (the protagonist of the novel) presents the African masculine culture, whereas the white colonizer represents the 'Western effeminate culture' (Adegbite2016:7). The study claims that Western infiltration among the Africans contributed to social alteration and led to religious cultural and ideological clashes (ibid).

2.2.2.5. Aden (2018)

Aden's (2018) study, *The Politics of Masculinity in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Arrow of God* is related to Adegbite's (2016) work in the sense that both investigate the concept of masculinity. But each reads the novel from a slightly different angle. In addition, Aden investigates two of Achebe's novels, as mentioned above. Aden aims to focus on the implication of the nuances of masculine viewpoint on the power struggle between the indigenous society and the colonizers. It focuses on what is termed as "Hegemonic Masculinity", which stands for the form of masculinity, which is represented by the protagonist Okonkwo and others, that lost its favor in the local society as a result of the alteration of power to the colonizers. The local society is intrigued by the Western culture and forced to fracture their cultural identity.

2.2.2.6. Pitia and Mugaddam (2015)

Pitia and Mugaddam (2015) scrutinized part of Chinua Achebe's novel under the title *Power Relation Between Colonial Administration and Obierika Character in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart*. The study

seeks to explore the exercise of power between the English District Commissioner and Obierika (Okonkwo's best friend) in their face-to-face dialogue. The researchers used critical discourse analysis as a method for data analysis. With the help of the contextual background of the text, CDA studies the accurate details of the linguistic structure like the use of pronouns and the dialogue interruption to demonstrate the power relation. The results show that most of the linguistic expressions used by the English administrator substantiate the favors of colonialism.

2.2.3.7. Saber (1976)

Saber (1976) conducted a qualitative study titled *The Conflicts of Cultures in the African Novels of Chinua Achebe, Cheikh Hamidou Kane and Ferdinand Oyono*. The study seeks to analyze Achebe's novels *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease* (1960) and *Arrow of God* (1964); Kane's (1961) novel *Aventure Ambiguë* and Oyono's novels *Une Vie de Boy* (1966), *Le Vieux Nègre et La Médaille* (1956) and *Chemind' Europe* (1960). It aims to read these novels within the context of cultural conflicts. The focus of the analysis is not centered only on the investigation of the cultural conflicts, but it includes how the authors have handled these conflicts and to what extent they have impacted the different themes of the novels. The study is based on the descriptive analytic method and the comparative approach. With regard to Achebe's novels, the study posits that the conflicts are basically cultural, and it also confirms that Achebe's main concern is to correct and defend the image of his own people, which is corrupted by the foreign occupation.

Although the study discusses cultural identity and points to religious identity, it did not deeply explore the latter. Saber's (1976) study could serve as a basis that the present study can benefit from regarding the factors that influence the development of religious identity.

2.2.3. Previous Studies on *The Bamboo Stalk*

The Bamboo stalk is considered as one of the works that explores the ramifications of the class discrimination and ethnic prejudice in the Kuwaiti society (Al-Mutairi 2016). Many researchers have discussed the complicated themes and the identity conflict as depicted in the novel. The previous reaches investigated the novel from various angles. The current study will review the ones that are the most relevant to its domain.

2.2.3.1. *Belkhasher and Badurais (2016)*

Belkhasher and Badurais (2016) conducted a research titled *Third Space Identities: Hybridity in Saud Alsanousi's Sag Al-Bamboo (2015) – Bamboo Stalk*. The research purpose is to explore the concept of hybridity as reflected in the actions, events and dialogue of three of the novel characters. The hybrid characters are Jose (the protagonist), Merla (his cousin) and Ghassan (the friend of Jose's father). The aim of the study is not only to analyze hybridity but also to explore how the author tackles the negative societal impact of hybridity. The study argues that the three hybrid characters were 'persecuted and alienated just because they are hybrids although it is their fate to be so' (Belkhasher and Badurais 2016:32). The concept of hybridity, referred to here, stands for the 'amalgamation of two races and/or cultures' (ibid:32). The study posits that its significance lies in the fact that the novel under study belongs to a new horizon in Arabic literary canon, termed as the literature of the marginalized (ibid). One of the main issues discussed in the study is the protagonist's religious identity. His religious affiliation is wavering between his father's religion (Islam) and his mother's (Christianity), due to his fluctuation between the two groups. Similarly, the current study aims to analyze religious identity but in greater depth.

2.2.3.2. Al-Mutairi (2016)

Al-Mutairi's (2016) *Reconciling Two Opposing Cultures: The Bamboo Stalk and the Arabic Bildungsroman* is a qualitative research that seeks to read the novel *The Bamboo Stalk* from the angle of tracing the protagonists' journey of age with reference to the Arabic Bildungsroman. Bildungsroman is a type of genre that firstly appeared in Germany. It is concerned with recounting the life of a young protagonist, who is sensitively in quest of the philosophy of life or in search of self-identity. This German term could be translated as "novel of formation" or "novel of education". By tracing the protagonist's coming of age, and the consequences of the social rejection he faced from his father's community, the study concludes that Jose succeeds in overcoming these difficulties and realizes his identity through reconciling two cultures. The study also reveals that the key point of its results is that it could demonstrate that the novel *The Bamboo Stalk* 'resonates with sufficient affinities to warrant its classification as an Arabic Bildungsroman' (ibid:1). Although the study painstakingly searches the protagonist's life and his identity construction, it does not analyze his religious identity in particular.

2.2.3.3. Elayyan (2016)

Elayyan (2016) selected three novels from among the Arab literature that discussed the issue of expatriation. He chose these novels as a corpus through which to trace the experiences that face the expats in the Gulf countries. The novels are Ibrahim Nasrallah's (1993) *Prairies of Fever*, Ibrahim Abdel Meguid's (1994) *The Other Place* and Sanousi's *Bamboo Stalk*. The study points out to the impact of the post-colonial political situation in the Gulf countries. It argues that the exploration of oil in the 1950s attracted expats from Arab and non-Arab countries in

search for quick money. Due to this, the Gulf communities changed from closed societies to open multicultural communities that have joined a spectrum of people from different colors and backgrounds. The diversity that the Gulf societies witness inspired the writers to depict the experiences of multiculturalism. The study drew attention to the social and individual conflicts that arose as a result of the discrepancies between the personal choices and the social imposed behaviors, a thing which prevented the protagonist Jose (in *The Bamboo Stalk*) from achieving his dream (living in his father's land and be treated as an equal citizen). The study could be relevant and useful to the current one since it highlights the factors that cause Jose's identity conflict. The most noticeable of these factors is the social rejection Jose faces due to his Filipino features.

2.2.3.4. *Hezam (2017)*

The study of Hezam (2017) *A Dismembered Dream: A Critical Study of Alsanousi's Bamboo Stalk* attempts to analyze the novel as a quest of the protagonist's dream to live in Kuwait (the homeland of his father). The study's goal is to examine the cultural barriers that dismembered the protagonist's dream. It argues that the protagonist Jose/Isa has fallen in the dilemma of being torn between two languages, double cultures and two opposing religions. Due to this, he found himself in the 'grey area of belonging and unbelonging, torn between two cultures' (ibid:1) as a result of the rejection he faced from his father's Kuwaiti society. The study considered the protagonist successful in his search to understand his identity and that he could finally form his own religious trend, compared with other characters in post-colonial novels who failed to overcome their identity crisis and concluded to a dead end of committing suicide like Okonkwo in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. The study analyses the novel from the following angles: title, language,

religion and cultural identity. The study concludes that the quest for religion is one of the main themes of the novel. Although Hezam (2017) explored the religious conflict that Jose experienced in an excellent way, the brief scope of his study did not enable him to provide a full picture of the religious crisis depicted in the novel as the present thesis tries to do.

2.2.4 General Background of the Novel *Things Fall Apart*

Chinua Achebe's first novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958) can be counted, without exaggeration, as 'one of the most outstanding literary works in the modern time' (Salami and Tabari 2018:19). Therefore, it has caught the attention of a wide range of the readers both inside and outside Nigeria (ibid).

Chinua Achebe's (1930-2013) parents converted to Christianity, but his grandparents were still firm believers in their traditional culture (Kenalemang 2013). This was useful for him, that is, to possess a rich knowledge of both the British culture as well as Nigerian culture. This novel was written in his response to what the Europeans depicted of African culture. He, therefore, portrayed the African society in a fictional district in Nigeria, presenting the actuality of Igbo society. The novel aimed to reflect the influence of European colonialism from African perspectives. It also aimed to reflect on positive and negative influence of the Europeans on the lifestyle of the Igbo society (Kenalemang 2013). The novel gives a vision of the Igbo life and an insight in the differences and conflicts in their cultural, religious and political traditions (Fischer 2004).

2.2.5 Summary of the Novel *Things Fall Apart*

The setting of the novel is in a small fictional district in Nigeria. It is centered on the life of its protagonist *Okonkwo*. Okonkwo is a brave,

famous man and is respected by all the nine villages of the district Umoufia. Unlike his father, who was known to be weak, afraid of blood, lazy and poor, because he does not like work. Okonkwo has three wives and a number of children, among them is *Nwoye*, the eldest son of the first wife, who converted to the new religion. For this purpose, conflict arose between Okonkwo and his son. His 10-year-old daughter *Ezinma* is beloved to him, because she has similar ideas in life to her father. The people of Umoufia belong to the same cultural clan and know nothing about the world around them. The clansmen have many different gods that they worship. They have strong rules and customs that they believe are the core foundation to pleasing the gods and none can disobey these rules and if anyone does so then they believe he must be mad. Okonkwo did so by killing his foster son *Ikemefuna*, who was given to him as a compensation for the spilt blood of an Umoufia clanswoman. Therefore, Okonkwo was punished by the gods for this. As the novel develops, he is exiled from his land (Umoufia) as a result of accidentally killing a young man. When he returns to his village, he finds that the whites changed the village's lifestyle by introducing their religion (Christianity) and the new European culture, so 'Things Fall Apart'. He tries to drive the missionaries out of his land, so he kills one messenger in a meeting. He discovers that his people would no longer join him to fight the white man, because they let the other messengers escape. As the white man's justice is searching for him, Okonkwo, once known as the bravest man of Umoufia, is found dead (Achebe 1958).

2.2.6 General Background of the Novel *The Bamboo Stalk*

Saud Alsanousi is a Kuwaiti novelist was born in (1981) and he is an important figure of the literary writers in the Arabian Gulf region (Hezam2017). His famous novel *The Bamboo Stalk* won the International

Prize of the Arabic Fiction 2013 (Belkhasher and Badurais 2016). The novel is counted as one of the literary works that are concerned with discussing the consequences of the of the social, ethnic and class discrimination in Kuwaiti society, as stated so far (Al-Mutairi 2016). Due to this feature, among others, the novel attracted the attention of many readers, literary critics and social researchers.

2.2.7 Summary of the Novel *The Bamboo Stalk*

The novel is centered on recounting the tragedy of a young Kuwaiti-Filipino boy *Jose* who was born as a result of illegitimate marriage (it is called illegitimate marriage in Islam as it is based on the acceptance of the couple without the permission of their families and without being declared to the public) between his Filipino mother, *Josephine*, and the son of her Kuwaiti employer *Rashid Al-Taroof*.

The themes of the novel are set in the protagonist's father's and mother's lands as he migrates between the two in quest of identity and stable life. The story traces Jose's fluctuation between two races, three religions, three languages and cultures. The boy was born in his father's land, but he could not live long there as his father was forced to cast him out of Kuwait as the father divorced his mother due to the pressure of Rashid's mother *Ghanima*, who feared social criticism. By returning to Philippines, his mother lost her job, which was to be a source of income to the family, a thing that stirred the anger of his mother's father *Mendoza* who, in turn, started to hate the boy regarding him as the cause of losing his mother's job. Grandfather's harsh treatment to Jose and his cousin *Merla* reached the extent of cursing them as illegitimate children, though Merla really is, but this is her fate not her fault. This treatment has massive effect on the two children and played a passive role in breeding a sense of belonging and national identity on them.

From the very early days of his life, Jose experienced a sense of identity fracture as he found himself confused in the pronunciation of his name, which is pronounced as Jose in Filipino and Isa in Arabic. Moreover, he found himself waving between more than one nationality, religion and race. With regard to religion, which is the focus of the current study, Jose was born as Muslim and given a Muslim name, and his mother was not serious in teaching him Christianity during their stay in the Philippines as she was influenced by his father's promise to take him back to the Kuwaiti Muslim society. Unfortunately, the news of his father's death came to them. Sometime later, Ghassan, the intimate friend of Rashid, came to take Jose to Kuwait in fulfillment of his dead father's will.

Surprisingly, Jose was encountered by the saddest kind of treatment, especially from his grandmother Ghanima, who drove him away of being considered as a family member in fear of the communal prestigious norms that condemns having a half-Filipino son. Jose's two aunts *Noriah* and *Awatif* supported their mother's viewpoint and the youngest one, *Hind*, was waving between her mother's stance and her social duty in defending the rights of the *Bidoon* (*bidoon* literally means “without” in Arabic. The term comes from “*bidoon jensiyya*”, which is Arabic for ‘without citizenship’ and is used to refer to the stateless in Kuwait (Belkhasher and Badurais 2016:6). His half-sister *Khawla* is the only one family member, who welcomes him, stands with him and tries to settle down Ghanima's anger and severe treatment towards him.

Although Jose was not deprived of his financial rights in Kuwait, he was denied of his social and familial intimacy. During his stay in Kuwait, he concluded that he will no longer bear to live there with the social refusal he faces, so he decided to return to the Philippines, where he joined his beloved cousin Merla and got married. Eventually, he succeeded in adapting himself to an acceptable kind of life (Al-Sanousi2015).

Chapter Three

Methodological Framework

Chapter Three

Methodological Framework

3.1 The Corpus

Since the present study is completely concerned with investigating the religious identity concept in the events and dialogues between the characters in two literary works (Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Saud Alsanousi's *The Bamboo Stalk* (2015)), no mean for data collection is needed. The novel *Things Fall Apart* was first published by William Heinemann Ltd in 1958 in Oxford. The novel *The Bamboo Stalk* was published firstly in Arabic in 2012 by the Arab Scientific Publisher and translated to English by Jonathan Wright in 2015 and published by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing.

3.2 The Qualitative Analysis Approach

As this study aims to analyze written literary texts, it takes the qualitative approach as a means for analyzing its data. According to Creswell (2009), the identification of the appropriate research method (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed) is influenced by the type of the philosophical worldview (post-positivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory or pragmatism) which underpins the research method. For example, our research leads us to follow the procedures of the constructivist worldview as it assumes that it is concerned with the case when the researcher seeks to *understand* a phenomenon or search for an explanation to a problem. The explanation of this phenomenon can only be found in the minds of those who lived the experience, so the study has systematically been led to choose the qualitative method as its tool.

According to Perry (2005), a qualitative method can be defined as a means of research that enables the individual to understand a phenomenon through observations done in real life and mostly contains verbal inductive analysis. Eskola and Suoranta (2008, cited in Hirvonen 2014:24) point out some distinctive features that characterize the qualitative method. Firstly, the collected data often takes the form of a written text or transcribed speech (our corpus is a good example). Secondly, the researcher has to objectively analyze the data and avoid providing his/her own personal implications as far as possible. However, the intended objectivity is often impossible to achieve as any researcher in one way or another is influenced by his culture or personal attitudes. Thirdly, compared with the quantitative method, the qualitative focuses on the deep analysis of a specific sample, rather than choosing representative samples to generalize their results to a large population. This points out that the qualitative is concerned with the quality not the quantity. Fourthly, qualitative tends to use words while quantitative tends to use numbers (Creswell 2009). The sort of questions used in qualitative research are open-ended, compared with the close-ended questions used in quantitative studies. The open-ended questions help the researcher to explore the meanings that the participants ascribe to the social problem or phenomena under study and, thus, the final written report in qualitative research is more flexible in structure (ibid). Fifthly, the qualitative method freely explores the data to find new facts rather than focusing on proving preexisting claims (Hirsjärvi et al 1997, cited in Hirvonen 2014).

The above-mentioned distinguishing features of the qualitative method lead the study to choose this method as its purpose is understanding and explaining how religious identity is illustrated in the written data. Hirvonen (2014) points out that her choice of the qualitative method was due to the nature of the data. This is because, the appropriate

method, according to Barbour (2008, cited in Hirvonen 2014:25), for analyzing pre-existing data is the qualitative one.

3.2.1 Deductive, not inductive

The deductive and inductive manners of research analysis can be described as follows: when the investigation of the data is directed by a predetermined hypothesis or theory the data is deductively searched, whereas when the goal of the search is to develop a theory or to freely search for what might be found in the data, this is an inductive manner (Perry 2005). The qualitative research method is mostly assumed to use the inductive manner of analysis as it is concerned with understanding the data (Perry 2005; Eskola and Suoranta, 2008, cited in Hirvonen 2014:24). Like Hirvonen (2014), this study is guided in its data search by the communication theory of identity which indicates that the data has to be deductively analyzed. Hirvonen (2014) justifies her choice of the deductive manner by confirming that the data analysis is guided by the 'solid theoretical base' of the IC theory.

3.3 Discourse Analysis

According to Gee (2010:10) 'discourse analysis (DA) is the study of language-in-use'. This means that DA does not only include analyzing what people say, rather it includes what they do. Discourse analysis is closely related to the study of intercultural communication as they both seek to understand the phenomena via explaining them (Alasuutari 2011, cited in Hirvonen 2014:25). Discourse analysis is also perceived as one procedure of qualitative studies. Thus, DA is considered as one means used in qualitative research beside case study and ethnography (Perry 2005).

Some linguists report two types of discourse analysis (Gee 2010). One of these kinds is termed as descriptive and the other is critical. According to Gee (2010), the descriptive approach is concerned with describing how the language works to understand it. That is, it concentrates on the function that language plays to convey meanings. The work of the descriptive practitioners has a potential of application in the world. However, these discourse analysts are not interested in this application. It seems that descriptive analysts focus only on the explicit meanings portrayed in the form of language (written or spoken) and they pay no attention to the meanings and actions hidden behind what is written or spoken. This kind of discourse analysis does not attempt to intervene in the problems related to language. The discourse analysts, therefore, aim to deeply explain how language works and why it works that way (Gee 2010:9). This study employs this type of discourse, descriptive discourse, as it seems appropriate in analyzing the dialogues between the characters in the chosen novels with the guidance of the IC theory.

The other approach, which the critical discourse analysis elaborates its analysis area to include, investigating 'who is saying what, 'what' is he trying to do and what is he saying' (Gee 2010:2). Gee (2010:9) points out that this type of discourse analysis intervenes in 'social or political issues, problems, and controversies in the world'. He argued that any discourse analysis has to take in consideration the surrounding environment or the context in which the language is enacted. However, this study is not interested in any surrounding political issues not portrayed in the characters' conversations and the events of the novels, rather it analyzes the written texts via the IC theory.

3.4 Communication Theory of Identity (CTI)

A theory is defined as 'a set of ideas drawn from systematic study in order to explain a phenomenon' (Issa and Unusa 2015:1). The communication theory of identity has been developed in the psychological and sociological academic fields (Hamad 2017). It was 'developed by Michael L. Hecht during the 1980's and early 1990's after several studies on African American and Mexican American ethnic cultures' (Hecht et al 2005, in Hirvonen 2014:15).

The theory highlights the interplay between identity and communication. That is, people communicate their identities with each other, and their identities could be perceived through communication. Martin and Nakayama (2010:162) stated that 'we communicate our identity to others, and we learn who we are through communication.' Thus, identity is created through negotiation with others. Thus, CTI assumes that identities are shaped, reinforced, and modified in communication with others (Hecht et al 2005). When communication occurs between people of different cultures or of different sub-categories of the same culture it is *intercultural communication*. The theory argues that identity has personal and social aspects (ibid). The social is defined as a social psychological analysis of the role of self-conception in group membership, group processes, and intergroup relations (Hogg 2006, in Hamad 2017: 27). The social identity is based on the group's preferences where the individual is to follow the social norms and has no right to choose his own way. Whereas, the personal identity deals with identity features that are personal and not derived from the social group (Tajfel & Turner 1979).

The theory also argues that the individual has multiple identities (e.g. racial, ethnic, national, religious, sexual, gender, etc.). Each of these

identities affects the individual's personal identity to a certain degree and that the effect of some of them may be greater than the other (Martin and Nakayama 2010).

If the aim of the study is to come up with a new theory, it searches the data freely without any pre-determined guidance. However, the present study's purpose is to apply the Communication Theory of Identity (CTI) in an area that has not been much explored by this field (Hirvonen 2014). Therefore, the investigation is led by the CTI concept.

According to Martin and Nakayama (2010) identity is formed part by the self and part by the relation with others in the society. This indicates the importance of studying identity formation through communication and the interactions with the societal groups.

This study adopts the interpretive approach which is used in DA and CTI as well. According to Gee (2010), DA is interpretive (Hamad 2017), which means that there is no single truth, 'since different researchers can find different truths from the same data' (Hirvonen 2014:26). Collier and Thomas (1988) pointed out that the interpretive approach is related to the IC field as both are concerned with describing and giving explanations to a phenomenon (ibid).

3.5 Four Layers of Identity

The most important contribution provided by CTI is the layered identity perspective. The theory posits that identity is perceived at four multiple layers: personal, enacted, relational and communal (Hecht and Lu 2014).

Since the theory argues that identity is formed maintained and modified in communication, then communication itself is conceptualized as identity (ibid).

Personal Identity is defined as the 'self-concept or self-image' (ibid:7) that includes the attributes that one derives from the social group he or she belongs to (Ting-Toomey 2015). The personal identity consists of multiple dimensions taken from his membership to ethnic, religious, class, regional, gender, age, etc. groups (Ting-Toomey 2015:2).

Enacted Identity occurs when individuals act differently from what they really are (Hirvonen 2014). That is, the person appears to be something that differs from his reality. The theory posits that identity is formed in internalized and externalized perspectives in interactions with others (Hecht and Lu 2014). The enacted identity shows discrepancy in the individual's self as he or she externally acts in a way that contradicts with his internality. This inconsistency creates unhealthy feelings and miscommunication (ibid).

Relational identity is created through relations with others in communication (Hirvonen 2014). It has three (Hecht and Lu 2014:5) or four levels (Jung and Hecht 2004: 3). The first is *ascribed identity*, which is shaped by internalizing how others view the individual. That is, how the individual is perceived by the others. The second is the *sense of self*, gained by the relations with others, such as someone's friend, spouse, religious leader, etc. Thus, one could perceive himself or could be perceived by others through his relations. That is, the individual is somewhat like his friend, and the wife mostly sees things like her husband. If you want to understand someone, look at his friend. The third considers *relationship* itself as identity (Hecht and Lu 2014). 'Identities exist in relationship to other identities' (Jung and Hecht 2004:261). The person can be a parent and a lawyer, a lover, and a member of a hateful group (ibid).

Communal identity is a group identity that is formed by the whole group and bonds them together (Hecht and Lu 2014). The group identity

can be manifested by the social stereotype which is ascribed to the ethnic or religious group by media (ibid). These four identity layers do not exist separately from each other. They work together and sometimes oppose one another. Some identity layers sometimes intersect, interpenetrate or conflict with the others or some of them (ibid).

As the personal identity is a composite of multiple layers, they sometimes contradict each other. In case of contradiction or discrepancy among the four layers, the individual has what is called an "identity gap" (Jung and Hecht 2004; Hecht and Lu 2014:5).

The identity gap is thought to be problematic to the communicator and the communication process. For the communicator it leads to 'negative health outcomes such as stress and depression' (Hecht and Lu2014:7). It also creates a low communication process (ibid). This is because the identity gap can emerge due to the lack of mastering the target culture, which is one of the communication barriers. The inconsistency between the identity layers of the same person can cause confusion to the individual, so that he or she cannot be able to form a clearly defined identity. For example, a person may be confused if he/she wishes to act in a way that differs from the way of the larger religious or social group s/he belongs to, or s/he has to choose one opinion out of two or more alternatives provided by the multiple groups s/he is affiliated to. For example, a person is a member of a religious group that sees smoking as unhealthy and prohibited, and, at the same time, he is a member of a local gang where he is encouraged to smoke. He will be caught by the two contradicting sides and this discrepancy may cause him to desert one group or maintain two opposite identities and enact each of them in the suitable context.

3.6 The Method of Choosing Data

As the researcher is interested in exploring intercultural communication in fiction, he kept looking for the appropriate work or works among fictive novels that depict cultural interactions. The search for suitable data concentrated on types of fiction that deal with treating social conflicts that occur between two or more interacting cultural groups. The search, then, narrowed down to look for novels that depicted cultural clashes that have religious bases and/or influence. For this purpose, the selected novels, *Things Fall Apart* and *The Bamboo Stalk*, seemed to be, among others, a good corpus.

The novels under study are chosen for the following reasons:

First, both novels recount the life story of a protagonist, who has been, throughout the novel, in search for identity and in continuous clashes with his own people and with strangers as well.

Second, both tackle the issue of religion and drew attention to the interrelation between language, religion and culture in identity formation and maintenance.

Third, both depict the cultural conflicts taking place in two high-context communities, i.e. the Nigerian Igbo society and the Kuwaiti Arab society, where strong social and religious interaction takes place. In a high-context community, the culture is made by the group, taught to children, deeply rooted and not easily changed, compared with the low-context culture where 'each person should have the right to develop him or herself according to personal choice, whether or not that suits the society' (Mclaren1998:22, cited in Hamad 2017:25).

Fourth, both novels have been awarded regional and international prizes, as mentioned above, and have been the corpus of many studies from literary and social science perspectives.

Fifth, each one of the two novels is based on two of the main factors of multiculturalism, i.e. colonialism and migration, as *Things Fall Apart* is categorized among the anti-colonial works (Foster and Nwiyor 2017) and *The Bamboo Stalk* is classified among the novels of expatriation (Elayyan 2016).

The study does not aim to compare the two works, rather it aims to investigate the religious identity in both. In other words, the purpose of the study is to read the two works from the religious identity perspective. It chose two novels, not one, as data to give a bigger picture and more reliable findings that may contribute to the field of intercultural communication studies. Therefore, the goal of taking two novels as data is not to compare them, but to have a wide source of data that may enrich the investigation with various samples for analysis.

Chapter Four
Analysis of Religious
Identity in the Novels
Things Fall Apart and The
Bamboo Stalk

Chapter Four

Analysis of Religious Identity in the Novels *Things Fall Apart* and *The Bamboo Stalk*

This chapter is divided into two main sections, the first is concerned with the analysis of religious identity in the novel *Things Fall Apart* and the second, the novel *The Bamboo Stalk*. Each section is then divided into sub-sections according to the chapters of each novel. I therein take extracted citations from the novels and analyze them as in depth as possible. The quoted citations are written in italics, indented and the page numbers are added.

4.1. Analysis of Religious Identity in the Novel *Things Fall Apart*

The novel is divided into three parts, each one of them narrates a part of the protagonist's life story. The first describes the Ibo lifestyle before the coming of the European colonialism; the second recounts the beginning of the interactions between the new religion (Christianity) and the local Ibo religion during the exile of Okonkwo in his motherland (Mabanta) and the third narrates the events of the final destructions of the Ibo's way of life and their identity fracture.

4.1.1. Analysis of Religious Identity in Part One

The Ibo people had their own way of life that took its bases and causes from their own religion. Unlike Christianity, the white man's religion, which is a well-known religion, widely acknowledged and followed by so many people worldwide, the Ibo local religion is something different that many people may not have heard of. Therefore, the study attempts to highlight some of its features in part one. It mainly

focuses on the influential marks that impact the identity formation in the coming events.

4.1.1.1 The Clansmen, Earth Goddess and the Fathers

The native people in the novel lived in small groups, each one of them representing a separate clan. Every clan had its own customs and laws. The clansmen worshipped different Gods, some of these Gods were more important than others and each had its role in the people's life and in their relations. The most respected God was the Earth Goddess, which was responsible for protecting their crops and conducting their behaviors. Their religious identity, therefore, was closely linked to the laws of *Ani*, the Earth Goddess, as everyone's behavior was thought to be directed by *Ani's* wishes. Moreover, the clan set severe punishment for everyone who ignored *Ani's* will.

The Feast of the New Yam was approaching, and Umuofia was in a festival mood. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess, and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in the life of the people than any other deity. She was the ultimate judge of morality and conduct. And what was more, she was in close communion with the departed fathers of the clan whose bodies had been committed to earth. (Achebe: 32)

It is also noticeable that *Ani* was closely related to their former fathers and both impacted the clan's morals and activities. The ethno-religious backgrounds had influenced the clansmen's identity as their behaviors were to adhere to the God's laws and inherited from their departed fathers (ancestors).

4.1.1.2 The Clansmen and the Oracle

One of the important deities of the clan was the Oracle. The Oracle's name was *Agbala*, the god of the Hills and the Caves.

And in fairness to Umuofia it should be recorded that it never went to war unless its case was clear and just and was accepted as such by its Oracle – the Oracle of the Hills and the Caves. And there were indeed occasions when the Oracle had forbidden Umuofia to wage a war. If the clan had disobeyed the Oracle they would surely have been beaten, because their dreaded agadi-nwayi would never fight what the Ibo call a fight of blame. (Achebe: 11-12)

Fighting and war were remarkable brands for the Ibo people, especially the people of Umoufia, who were feared by all the neighboring clans. In this crucial issue, going to war, Umoufia did not dare to wage it without the permission of one of the Gods. This shows how their society was religiously collective and religion was the bases of their actions. Any kind of disobedience to the Oracle was considered a cause of loss and a sign of abomination.

The Oracle was called Agbala, and people came from far and near to consult it. They came when misfortune dogged their steps or when they had a dispute with their neighbors. They came to discover what the future held for them or to consult the spirits of their departed fathers (Achebe:15)

The clan's belief in *Agbala* exceeded the issue of consulting it about war, rather it went further to ask its order concerning their fate, future events and even the hidden reasons behind their bad harvest. The relation between the clansman and his God, then, affected the way a man

perceived himself and also influenced the others' treatment of him. *Unoka*, Okonkwo's father, was considered to be an unsuccessful man and a cause of shamefulness to his son, who was well-known for his bravery and prosperity, which made him a leader of his clan. Unoka had ill-treated his Gods so this was believed to have affected his life and his children's lives as well.

Unoka was an ill-fated man. He had a bad chi or personal god, and evil fortune followed him to the grave, or rather to his death, for he had no grave. He died of the swelling which was an abomination to the earth goddess. When a man was afflicted with swelling in the stomach and the limbs, he was not allowed to die in the house. He was carried to the Evil Forest and left there to die (Achebe: 16)

The personal God was perceived to stand by the clansman in his personal affairs and it was believed that the personal God succeeds according to the man's effort. In such cases, they mentioned the proverb: *'When a man says yes his Chi says yes also'* (Achebe: 24). The clan's religion was related to people's work and achievement. Unoka's miserable life and abominable death were due to his laziness in work, wasting his time in music and being afraid of fighting.

Unoka, the grown-up, was a failure. He was poor and his wife and children had barely enough to eat. People laughed at him because he was a loafer. (Achebe: 5)

Unoka's maltreatment of his Gods was believed to have formed his disdained identity. Unoka's undesirable character among his kinsmen had substantial influence on his son's identity as we will see later on.

4.1.1.3 The Week of Peace

Among the clan's beliefs was their custom to keep a Week of Peace before planting any crop, thinking that their God, the Earth Goddess, thereby will protect their yams and it will grow well. In this week, everyone ought to live in peace with everyone in the family and the whole community. Wives and children should not be beaten even though they were mistaken. If anyone dared to do so, he and the whole clan would suffer from the consequences of this evil deed. The clan set a severe punishment to anyone, who broke the Week of Peace, and it seldom occurred.

A man who broke the peace was dragged on the ground through the village until he died. (Achebe: 28).

Okonkwo broke the Week of Peace by beating his youngest wife *Ojiugo* as she had not cooked his meal, so *Ezeani*, the priest of the Earth Goddess, paid a quick visit to Okonkwo so as to punish him for his evil deed. Ezeani refused to eat in the house of Okonkwo:

'Take away your kola nut. I shall not eat in the house of a man who has no respect for our gods and ancestors', said Ezeani.

This shows that the respect of the clansmen was gained through the obedience of the local religious rules, which were set by their Gods and respected as customs inherited from ancestors. Ezeani, then, gave the following speech:

'Listen to me', he said when Okonkwo had spoken. "You are not a stranger in Umuofia. You know as well as I do that our forefathers ordained that before we plant any crops in the earth, we should observe a week in which a man does not say a harsh word to his neighbor. We live in peace with our fellows to honor our great goddess of the earth without whose blessing our crops will not

grow. You have committed a great evil.' [...] 'The evil you have done can ruin the whole clan. The earth goddess whom you have insulted may refuse to give us her increase, and we shall all perish'. (Achebe: 27)

This showed the high respect the clansmen gave to their Gods and former fathers as well. They believed that life will be difficult without the help of their Gods. Therefore, to please the earth goddess, Okonkwo was ordered to bring a gift to the God's shrine as punishment for his evil.

'You will bring to the shrine of Ani tomorrow one she-goat, one hen, a length of cloth and a hundred cowries.' (Achebe: 27)

'Okonkwo did as the priest said. He also took with him a pot of palm-wine. Inwardly, he was repentant. But he was not the man to go about telling his neighbors that he was in error. And so, people said he had no respect for the gods of the clan.' (Achebe: 27)

After Okonkwo submitted to Ezeani's order and brought all the things he was told to bring, and even added to them a pot of palm-wine. His kinsmen were in doubt if Okonkwo was inwardly sorry for his deed. This shows the great respect the clan had to their Gods and the strong regard it accorded to the local customs. The clan identity, therefore, was highly influenced by their local religion as the individual was evaluated according to his religious commitment. Although Okonkwo was internally sorry for his fault, he did not show that to the others, as it was his habit, for he always wanted to appear strong and tough, so as not to be seen weak and lazy. This personal attitude developed as a result of the fact that he did not want to resemble his father, who was blamed as a lazy coward and worthless. As Okonkwo wished to be one of the clan's leaders, he thought that he always had to be seen strong and tough. This

had its impact on Okonkwo's identity and caused him to contradict his religion, clansmen and even himself as well.

Okonkwo enacted that he had not been affected by the evil he had done, while he felt sorry internally. The discrepancy between what he showed to others and his reality caused misunderstanding in his relations with his people as they were in doubt if he was really sorry for his mistake.

4.1.1.4 The Superstitious Beliefs

The clansmen had a set of beliefs in things that if one conducted them, something good or bad would happen to him. Some of these beliefs had their effect on changing some of the clan members' opinions towards their local religion when they were made sure that these beliefs were not correct. This happened after the coming of the white man, who challenged their local customs and rituals and practically proved to them that their beliefs were nothing but falsehood. Furthermore, some of these superstitions provided the strangers with reasonable evidence to criticize the local religion and convince many clansmen that they worshipped false Gods and believe in lies.

One of these customs was throwing twin babies alive in the evil forest. The evil forest was a sinister place, where every clan buried those who died of bad diseases. It was believed that the evil forest was full of evil spirits and everyone who lived there would soon die. Delivering twin babies was thought to bring bad luck to their parents, so they were ordained to cast them in the evil forest.

As soon as his father walked in, that night, Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed, and something seemed to give way inside him, like the snapping of a tightened bow. He did not cry. He just hung limp. He had had the same kind of feeling not long ago, during the last harvest season [...] Nwoye had heard that

twins were put in earthen ware pots and thrown away in the forest, but he had never yet come across them. A vague chill had descended on him and his head had seemed to swell, like a solitary walker at night who passes an evil spirit on the way. Then something had given way inside him. It descended on him again, this feeling, when his father walked in that night after killing Ikemefuna.(Achebe:54)

Nwoye was the elder son of Okonkwo, who eventually deserted his local religion and converted to Christianity, the new religion, as it filled the empty space in his heart. Despite the effort that Nwoye's father pooled to keep him firm to his fathers' religion, Nwoye found his way to the new religion as a result of some customs in the native religion that caused him to desert it. One of these customs was throwing innocent twins in the evil forest for fear of bad luck, together with some other reasons (as will be discussed later) that contributed to make Nwoye change his identity.

Nwoye's conversion developed into several phases (see: 2.1.2.1.5) and was influenced by some factors, such as his effeminate character which did not fit the native masculine customs, his father's bad treatment with him to make him a tough boy, together with the violent customs of killing innocent fellows, as we will see later in details.

Before the coming of the new religion, Nwoye did not enter the *context phase*, i.e. contact with the new religion's advocates, however, he was *searching for the meaning of life*. Since he was not convinced with local violent customs, he did not find himself among the natives, so the coming of the new faith seemed as a new orientation that might fill to him his empty heart space:

It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something

felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul--the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. (Achebe:128-129)

This was one of the factors that later led him to convert. Nwoye's conversion was, thus, a *gradual type* of religious change that took a long time and went through several stages.

Obierika, Okonkwo's best friend, was grieved by this custom as his wife was forced to let her twin children die. He expressed his misery in words that bore some criticism to the God's will, as was his habit.

He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed. And if the clan did not exact punishment for an offence against the great goddess, her wrath was loosed on all the land and not just on the offender. As the elders said, if one finger brought oil it soiled the others. (Achebe: 109)

Obierika criticized his local religion of injustice because the Earth Goddess ordered the abandoning and death of innocent children, who had committed no crime, and it grieved their parents. The Earth Goddess' punishment would overwhelm the whole clan if the twins' parents refused to cast them away. Throwing twins, then, was not a personal matter that one could take responsibility for alone, but it was a social issue that concerned the whole community. The effect of killing twin children will be discussed in greater depth later with the events of the murder of *Ikemefuna* (a boy from another clan) and the exile of Okonkwo to his mother's land.

4.1.1.5 The Murder of Ikemefuna

Ikemefuna was a boy of fifteen, who was brought to Umuofia as a compensation of the Umuofian woman, who was killed by men in Mbanta as she went shopping. Umuofia held a quick meeting and decided to send Okonkwo to the people of Mbanta to offer them a choice of two things: to go to war or to compensate them with a young boy and girl.

At the end it was decided to follow the normal course of action. An ultimatum was immediately dispatched to Mbaino asking them to choose between war - on the one hand, and on the other the offer of a young man and a virgin as compensation [...] and two days later he returned home with a lad of fifteen and a young virgin. The lad's name was Ikemefuna, whose sad story is still told in Umuofia unto this day. (Achebe:11-12)

Here is one of the points, through which the voice of the writer is heard. The writer describes the story of Ikemefuna as a sort of sad story that has been told and repeated till the time of writing. By narrating Ikemefuna's story in such a tragic way, the author attaches his opinion to the new religion, which later came to employ such offensive customs to condemn the local religion. The message seems to me as if this is one of the weaknesses of the local religion that gave the strangers an excuse to refute it.

For three years Ikemefuna lived in Okonkwo's household and the elders of Umuofia seemed to have forgotten about him. He grew rapidly like a yam tendril in the rainy season and was full of the sap of life. He had become wholly absorbed into his new family'...' Okonkwo was inwardly pleased at his son's development, and he knew it was due to Ikemefuna. (Achebe: 46)

Ikemefuna was given to Okonkwo to look after him. Some weeks after his arrival, he became absorbed into the new environment and became like a real son to Okonkwo and elder brother to Nwoye. Okonkwo was afraid of Nwoye's future as the latter had effeminate and loafer attitudes like his grandfather. Fortunately, Ikemefuna impacted Nwoye to the degree that made his father wish that Nwoye would grow up to be a tough young man, who is able to control his family. Therefore, Okonkwo himself became inwardly fond of his foster son, but he did not let anyone notice that, as it is his personal habit.

Okonkwo sat in his obi crunching happily with Ikemefuna and Nwoye, and drinking palm-wine copiously, when Ogbuefi Ezeudu came in [...] "That boy calls you father. Do not bear a hand in his death." Okonkwo was surprised and was about to say something when the old man continued: "Yes, Umuofia has decided to kill him. The Oracle of the Hills and the Caves has pronounced it. They will take him outside Umuofia as is the custom and kill him there. But I want you to have nothing to do with it. He calls you his father."(Achebe: 50)

The writer keeps criticizing the customs of his own people concerning the issue of Ikemefuna. The news of the clan's intention to murder the boy came in a time that Okonkwo and the two boys were sitting happily eating and drinking. Everyone reading the story will normally be affected by the tragic event and predict that Okonkwo would oppose the clan's order or at least would not take hand in it. The writer is paving the way for the consequences of this event, for it will cause Nwoye to lose his love for his father and to eventually desert his clan's religion.

Ikemefuna was not the only innocent victim, who lost his life without committing any crime, as a result of such customs, but there were so many others that preceded him.

The murder of Ikemefuna had its religious and communal bases. It was ordered by the *Agbala* and agreed to by the fathers of Umoufia. This ethno-religious custom was blindly observed by the whole clan without questioning. The membership of the clan, then, was characterized by accepting all the local religious customs, so *Okonkwo* had no choice other than submitting to the clan's law.

As the man who had cleared his throat drew up and raised his machete, Okonkwo looked away. He heard the blow. The pot fell and broke in the sand. He heard Ikemefuna cry, "My father, they have killed me!" as he ran towards him. Dazed with fear, Okonkwo drew his machete and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak. (Achebe: 53-54)

The writer narrates the story of Ikemefuna's murder in a sympathetic way. A large number of armed men, who took a young boy alone in a horrible forest, where everything is dreadful. The boy was told that he was to be taken home. The only sign of life and source of hope was his foster father, with whom the boy felt no fear. Unfortunately, the whole crowd contributed to kill the innocent boy and the worst thing was that he was murdered by the hand, which he was sure would protect him from any harm. What a tragic murder!

All those who bore hand in this event had no hatred for the boy, nor did they know anything about him that caused him to deserve death. In fact, they just performed their religious custom as the Oracle pronounced it.

Before the last moment of killing Ikemefuna, the author keeps repeating the harmonious existence of the boy among the new family, and how he was loved by Okonkwo and Nwoye. The writer repeats that over the pages (see: 25-38-46- 502-553) to remind the readers of the boy's issue so that they may rethink about the bases of such customs.

Okonkwo's treatment to Ikemefuna showed some discrepancies between Okonkwo's layers of identity. He enacted that he was strong and strict with the boy to make his children grow up like strong men. He moreover killed the boy with his own hand though he inwardly did not like to do so, and the Oracle had ordered him not to do. The contradiction in Okonkwo's personal identity layers affected his relations with his own people and influenced the balance of his own identity. Okonkwo felt depressed and he could not eat for days since he had done something he was not internally encouraged to do.

As soon as his father walked in, that night, Nwoye knew that Ikemefuna had been killed, and something seemed to give way inside him, like the snapping of a tightened bow. He did not cry. He just hung limp. (Achebe: 54).

This event had its substantial effect on the relation between Nwoye, his father and the whole clan. Although Nwoye did not talk to his father, he met him when the latter came back home, but the event would never leave his memory. Moreover, he immediately and unconsciously connected it with the custom of throwing twins in the Evil Forest to die. The two customs have religious bases, and both seem to Nwoye to be cruel actions against innocent people.

Although Nwoye started to move towards the way of his father as a result of Ikemefuna's presence near him, the killing of his intimate friend turned him away, to remain with his father and kinsmen only by his body. His

heart seemed ready and empty to be filled with satisfaction by the new religion as we will see later in Part Two.

The inconsistency between what Okonkwo enacted to be, his reality and communal perspective influenced Nwoye's relation with his father. This emphasized the argument (see: 3.5) that identity gaps create negative health outcomes for the individual and low communication process.

4.1.1.6 Okonkwo's Personal Attitude

From the quotation above (Achebe: 50), *Ogbuefi Ezeudu* visited Okonkwo to inform him that Umoufia decided to kill the boy and that he should not bear hand in the murder as the boy called Okonkwo father. When Okonkwo later paid a visit to his best friend Obierika, he blamed him of not taking part in the killing.

"I cannot understand why you refused to come with us to kill that boy," he asked Obierika. "Because I did not want to," Obierika replied sharply. "I had something better to do." "You sound as if you question the authority and the decision of the Oracle, who said he should die." "I do not. Why should I? But the Oracle did not ask me to carry out its decision." "But someone had to do it. If we were all afraid of blood, it would not be done. And what do you think the Oracle would do then?" "You know very well, Okonkwo, that I am not afraid of blood and if anyone tells you that I am, he is telling a lie. And let me tell you one thing, my friend. If I were you, I would have stayed at home. What you have done will not please the Earth. It is the kind of action for which the goddess wipes out whole families.' (Achebe: 58)

In the beginning of their conversation, Okonkwo pretended to be unaffected by the killing, as he said '*that boy*' to show that he is not weak. Actually, he was affected to the degree that he could not eat for three

days. This was an example the contradiction between Okonkwo's personal and enacted identity layers. This contradiction created misunderstanding between the two close friends.

Okonkwo did not taste any food for two days after the death of Ikemefuna. 'He drank palm-wine from morning till night, and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail.(Achebe: 55)

Okonkwo tried to show that he killed the boy to fulfill the Oracle's will, though he was told not to participate. Actually, Okonkwo did so to appear tough and strong. Here, Okonkwo broke the clan's religious instructions for the second time (the first was the breaking of the Pace Week), because his personal identity contradicted with the communal identity. The source of his personal contradicted identity was his fear of failure:

Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper, and so did his little children. Perhaps down in his heart, Okonkwo was not a cruel man. But his whole life was dominated by fear, the fear of failure and of weakness. It was deeper and more intimate than the fear of evil and capricious gods and of magic, the fear of the forest, and of the forces of nature, malevolent, red in tooth and claw. Okonkwo's fear was greater than these.(Achebe: 12)

Okonkwo's fear of failure affected his relations with his children, family, and kinsmen. He wanted the people around him to perceive him in a way that differs from his real personality. He always chose to be seen as strong and unaffectionate, so he forced himself to perform actions that contradicted his religious and social norms. The religious identity seemed to be superior to the personal one in almost all of the themes of this novel.

However, the personal identity here appeared to challenge the religious, a thing which is seldom to occur in such a high-context society.

Even Okonkwo himself became very fond of the boy - inwardly of course. Okonkwo never showed any emotion openly unless it be the emotion of anger. To show affection was a sign of weakness- the only thing worth demonstrating was strength. He therefore treated Ikemefuna as he treated everybody else – with a heavy hand. But there was no doubt that he liked the boy. Sometimes when he went to big village meetings or communal ancestral feasts, he allowed Ikemefuna to accompany him, like a son, carrying his stool and his goatskin bag. And, indeed, Ikemefuna called him father (Achebe:25)

Okonkwo's real identity was kind and emotional- as he was really affected by the killing of Ikemefuna for he did not taste food for a couple of days and his body kept shivering whenever he was reminded of him- while his enacted identity was tough and hard. This was because he wanted to be one of the respected leaders of the clan and it would not be accomplished -according to his ideas- unless he escaped from all of his father's weak features by which he was seen as an unworthy man. So, the great fear of failure Okonkwo developed, formed part of his personal identity that put him in conflict with his religion, people and even with himself.

Father, will you go to see the wrestling?" Ezinma asked after a suitable interval."Yes," he answered. "Will you go?" "Yes." And after a pause she said: "Can I bring your chair for you?" "No, that is a boy's job." Okonkwo was especially fond of Ezinma. She looked very much like her mother, who was once the village

beauty. But his fondness only showed on very rare occasions.

(Achebe: 39)

Okonkwo, the protagonist of the novel, was one of the characters that represented the local people as he was still firm in his religion and way of life till the end of the novel, while many others of his kinsmen converted to the new religion. His character was shown as a tough man, even with his little sons and daughters, compared with the people of the new religion who would call for love and non-violence as we will see later. The message here was that violence and toughness were linked with the local lifestyle whereas love and sympathy were found in the new religion and culture. The message extended to the local people was that one of the reasons behind their identity fracture was the association between their traditional religion and violence. This will be clearer when this study comes to discuss how the local people would become less interested in wrestling and bravery than they were in the past.

4.1.1.7 Male and Female Crimes

In the centre of the crowd a boy lay in a pool of blood. It was the dead man's sixteen-year-old son, who with his brothers and half-brothers had been dancing the traditional farewell to their father. Okonkwo's gun had exploded, and a piece of iron had pierced the boy's heart. The confusion that followed was without parallel in the tradition of Umuofia. Violent deaths were frequent, but nothing like this had ever happened. The only course open to Okonkwo was to flee from the clan. It was a crime against the earth goddess to kill a clansman, and a man who committed it must flee from the land. The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female because it had been inadvertent (Achebe: 108-109).

During his father's funeral, *Ezeudu's* son was accidentally killed by Okonkwo's old gun. The clan considered such kind of crime as a female crime, as the doer had no intention to act it beforehand. To categorize crimes into male and female reveals the association between religion and gender differentiation. Men were thought to be strong and brave, so they were expected to do things intentionally, whereas women act inadvertently for they ought to be soft and sensitive.

Anyone who killed a clansman would be cast out of his land. This law would have its great effect when it came to the issue of the converts who would leave their clan's local religion and cause troubles to the natives, but no one could dare to kill any of them because they still belonged to the clan.

As soon as the day broke, a large crowd of men from Ezeudu's quarter stormed Okonkwo's compound, dressed in garbs of war. They set fire to his houses, demolished his red walls, killed his animals and destroyed his barn. It was the justice of the earth goddess, and they were merely her messengers. They had no hatred in their hearts against Okonkwo. His greatest friend, Obierika, was among them. They were merely cleansing the land which Okonkwo had polluted with the blood of a clansman.(Achebe: 109)

The group of men, who came in wearing war clothes to destroy Okonkwo's belongings, aimed to achieve the God's will. Their action had a religious base. They were religiously convinced to treat their friend in a way that had no social or logical excuse. This shows that the clan's men followed the religious customs blindly and the religious effect on people's treatment to each other was great. When religion was in contradiction to individual wills and preferences, it was the religious-based action which

was the strongest. Although Obierika was the most intimate friend to Okonkwo, his religious commitment pushed him to bear hand in the destruction of his friend's compound.

Obierika was a man who thought about things. When the will of the goddess had been done, he sat down in his obi and mourned his friend's calamity. Why should a man suffer so grievously for an offence he had committed inadvertently? But although he thought for a long time, he found no answer. (Achebe: 109)

Though Obierika obeyed the God's will as all of his clan did, he kept thinking about the calamity of his friend. He asked himself a question that criticizes the customs of his clan: Is it justice to exile a man out of his land because he committed a crime accidentally? If a man was participating in the funeral of his friend using his gun in the way everyone else used it and it happened to kill a boy by an unexpected explosion, is it his fault? The question Obierika kept asking himself seems logical and denoted some sort of criticism to local religion.

Obierika's personal identity thus did not agree with all the native customs, but the strength of the main communal identity made him to hide his own preferences and follow his people without internal consent. This showed that the local customs were supported by the communal identity not the personal.

The writer describes Obierika as '*man who thought about things*' in an attempt to express his own idea through Obierika's voice. Such kinds of religious-based customs, which do not seem logically acceptable, belittled the native religion's honor in the eyes and hearts of its adherents when they later encountered the new religion. Obierika's implicitly regarded this religious custom as one of the weaknesses of the local religion. Thus,

the new religion found its way to the native's hearts through such weak points in their local customs.

But although he thought for a long time, he found no answer. He was merely led into greater complexities. He remembered his wife's twin children, whom he had thrown away. What crime had they committed? The Earth had decreed that they were an offence on the land and must be destroyed. (Achebe: 109)

Obierika found no answer for his question because the clan did not allow its members to question the Gods' will or to cast doubt on their justice, so Obierika sat alone with his questions. Then, Obierika linked between the custom of exiling a man for committing a female crime and throwing twin babies in the Evil Forest, because both actions seemed to be unacceptable for both were cruel punishments for those who did not deserve them.

Obierika saw that it was not logical to punish a clan's man due to what he committed inadvertently. Obierika's personal thought (personal identity) thus contradicted the opinion of the clan which preferred to obey the God's wish (communal identity). The personal communal identity gap affected Obierik's personal identity as he kept thinking and felt unconvinced. However, the strength of the communal layer made Obierka to keep thinking silently and follow the mainstream, but his thoughts remained disturbing him whenever he was stirred by a new similar action. Likewise, Okonkwo was caused by the same identity gap to be depressed and sad as he had failed to accomplish his big wish, to be a clan's leader, because he was forced to leave his own land for seven years.

4.1.2. Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Two

Part two is dedicated to the narration of the events that took place during Okonkwo's stay in his motherland Mbanta. This part of the novel

witnesses the coming of the white man to the African land with their new religion, culture and power.

4.1.2.1 The Story of Abame

"Have you heard," asked Obierika, "that Abame is no more?" "How is that?" asked Uchendu and Okonkwo together. "Abame has been wiped out," said Obierika. "It is a strange and terrible story. If I had not seen the few survivors with my own eyes and heard their story with my own ears, I would not have believed" [...] "During the last planting season a white man had appeared in their clan." "An albino," suggested Okonkwo. "He was not an albino. He was quite different." He sipped his wine. "And he was riding an iron horse. The first people who saw him ran away, but he stood beckoning to them. In the end the fearless ones went near and even touched him".(Achebe: 121)

Okonkwo was visited by his closest friend Obierika in his exile and told him about the terrible story of the village Abame, where the white man had come some months earlier. The story showed that the native people of that quarter did not know anything about the world around them. When they were told about the white man, they considered him to be an *albino* (a person with very white skin, white hair and pink eyes- Oxford Dictionary). Those who saw him for the first time ran away from him and some others approached him to touch his body to see what sort of skin color he had. They had not heard of bicycles, so they called it an *iron horse*. After killing him, they tied his bicycle to a tree for fear that it might run to tell his friends. The ignorance of the local people of the world seemed to simplify the white man's mission to defeat their local customs and spread the new religion and culture among them.

The elders consulted their Oracle and it told them that the strange man would break their clan and spread destruction among them.(Achebe: 121)

This Oracle prophecy could be read as an attempt from the clan's father to keep their people firm to their religion and way of life. The local community was highly religious as they immediately ran to consult the Oracle, and when it warned them against the stranger, they quickly made up their minds to get rid of him, thinking that they will be safe.

“The three white men and a very large number of other men surrounded the market. They must have used a powerful medicine to make themselves invisible until the market was full. And they began to shoot. Everybody was killed, except the old and the sick who were at home and a handful of men and women whose chi were wide awake and brought them out of that market.” He paused.” Their clan is now completely empty. Even the sacred fish in their mysterious lake have fled and the lake has turned the color of blood. A great evil has come upon their land as the Oracle had warned.”(Achebe: 122)

This terrible story was one of the means used by the white colonizers to let their religion spread without any forceful opposition. The story spread among the village to pave the way for the new religion and to weaken the native religious identity, because the new religion had powerful guns and strong magic powers that could not be confronted by the villagers' ways. The way Obierika told the story reveals a message that the clans' men would not be able to defend their land and they would no longer be able to confront the strangers.

This event revealed the initial steps of the religious conflict between the natives and the strangers. Obierika, concluding the narration of the story,

told them that the evil came to the village of Abame as the Oracle had warned them. He tried to convince his audience that the Oracle was true when it warned them, so they needed to keep close to it and follow its orders to be safe in the coming events.

From the concept of *religious conversion*, the coming of the white man served as the context, in which the change would happen. The white man generally used the policy of gradual conversion, so he took some steps whereby to make the natives reach the phase of committing to the new religion and lifestyle.

For the concept of identity conflict, the natives had not yet practiced any of the conflict phases but the confrontation with the strangers showed the aspects of their identity. They had the chance to understand themselves, as one may not make sense of his own orientation until he is made to deal with others who differ from him. When the natives were confronted by the colonizers, they ran to consult the Oracle and immediately took actions based on the Oracle's words. This showed the religious aspect of their identity as they started to fight for the sake of their religion. This emphasized the argument of the CTI that identity is communication as identity is conceptualized, shaped and modified in communication.

There was a long silence. Uchendu ground his teeth together audibly. Then he burst out: "Never kill a man who says nothing. Those men of Abame were fools. What did they know about the man?" He ground his teeth again and told a story to illustrate his point. (Achebe: 122)

Uchendu, the uncle of Okonkwo, Obierika and Okonkwo felt angry and agreed that the people of Abame were foolish, but each one of them had his own different reason for their foolishness. For Uchedu, who was an old man, the elder member of Okonkwo's mother's relatives, the white

man did not say anything offensive that may cause them to kill him. While Okonkwo, who always kept representing the traditional views of the natives, expressed his rage after a long silence by blaming the people of Abame for not getting ready to fight back the white man as they were threatened some days earlier:

"They were fools," said Okonkwo after a pause. "They had been warned that danger was ahead. They should have armed themselves with their guns and their machetes even when they went to market". (Achebe: 123)

Obierika kept thinking (as he was described as a man of thought) about the many stories told in the villages about the white men, among which, the story of Abame was a living example:

"They have paid for their foolishness," said Obierika, "But I am greatly afraid. We have heard stories about white men who made the powerful guns and the strong drinks and took slaves away across the seas, but no one thought the stories were true"(Achebe: 123)

Obierika told the story and thought about it in a regrettable way, which indicated that his own people would not be able to fight back for the white man, had strong guns and magic. It also shows that the white man obliged the poor villagers to follow his new way of life and religion by force. The differences in these three men's viewpoints about the proper way for the native people to defend their lives, demonstrated that there will be many different views among the natives and that they would not act like one as they used to do before the coming of the strangers.

Before the coming of the colonizers, the communal identity was so dominant that the personal attitudes did not find their way to the life of the natives, as no one dared to confront the common mainstream of

lifestyle. When it comes to the time when a new lifestyle emerged the personal attitudes appeared accordingly as a result of the loss of the dominant communal identity.

4.1.2.2 The Missionary in Umoufia

The missionaries had come to Umuofia. They had built their church there; won a handful of converts and were already sending evangelists to the surrounding towns and villages. That was a source of great sorrow to the leaders of the clan, but many of them believed that the strange faith and the white man's god would not last. None of his converts was a man whose word was heeded in the assembly of the people. None of them was a man of title. They were mostly the kind of people that were called efulefu, worthless, empty men. (Achebe: 125)

Obierika visited his friend for the second time with interesting news. Based on the fear raised by the story of Abame, the white man settled himself peacefully among the clan's men and started to spread his new religion. The leaders of the clan got angry because some of their own people began to leave their religion and follow the new one. The religious conflict started between the two opposing religions and the adherents of each one began to employ all available means to maintain their religious identity. Although the natives noticed the danger approaching them, they attempted to convince themselves that all the converts were worthless people that would not break the unity of the clan. One of their religious leaders was called *Chielo*, the priestess of the Oracle. Chielo tried to keep the clan's people firm in their religion by giving an abusive description of the new religion and those who converted to it:

Chielo, the priestess of Agbala, called the converts the excrement of the clan, and the new faith was a mad dog that had come to eat it up. (Achebe: 125)

Chielo's words clarified that the religious cohesion between the people of the same clan was the strongest element that tied the people together. This was because she described the converts with a disgusting word (*excrement*), although they still had the same race, nationality, language, and family relations as the natives. The religious change thus affected the native relationships to the degree that made the priestess use such disgusting words about those who have the same race when they changed religion. These words back up the argument that religion was the most effective identity component and it played the most influential role in shaping identity. Chielo also illustrated the new faith as a dog eating up human waste. This illustration may stand as a barrier that makes people flee from embracing the new faith.

Some of the clan's customs provided some sort of help to the strangers to put a knife on the rope that tied them together. One of these customs was their disrespect to those, who did not have honorable titles among them. They are called, *efulefu*, worthless people, who were unimportant people according to the clan's classification. The new religion profited from these neglected people and easily attracted them to its camp.

The social class categorization of having some natives who were considered worthless has emanated from religious thoughts. That is, classifying native people into high and low classes had its religious root. They believe that the poor man whose farm did not produce much harvest had ill-treated his personal God. Their Gods were thought to encourage work, so the man who was lazy was not God-fearing man and thus he was not respected by the clansmen. This was the case of Unoka (Okonkwo's

father) who was ill-fated due to laziness in work. When he visited the Oracle to consult him, he was told by the priest that his laziness was the cause of his bad harvest and it also offended Gods and fathers:

"You have offended neither the gods nor your fathers. And when a man is at peace with his gods and his ancestors, his harvest will be good or bad according to the strength of his arm. You, Unoka, are known in all the clan for the weakness of your machete and your hoe. When your neighbors go out with their axe to cut down virgin forests, you sow your yams on exhausted farms that take no labor to clear. They cross seven rivers to make their farms, - you stay at home and offer sacrifices to a reluctant soil. Go home and work like a man."

Since the title of honor in the village was gained by having good harvest, and the harvest itself needed God's acceptance, then the title had religious base.

4.1.2.3 The Missionary in Mbanta

The arrival of the missionaries had caused a considerable stir in the village of Mbanta. There were six of them and one was a white man. Every man and woman came out to see the white man. Stories about these strange men had grown since one of them had been killed in Abame and his iron horse tied to the sacred silk-cotton tree. And so everybody came to see the white man. It was the time of the year when everybody was at home. The harvest was over. (Achebe: 126)

Although the arrival of the white man was preceded by the dreadful news of Abame's destruction, still the village people were curious to learn more about this stranger. The story of Abame formed a basis to the stereotype

that the white man is violent and strong. This stereotypical view helped the white man in his mission as it stopped the natives from molesting him for fear of his friends' revenge. However, this stereotype also had a negative effect because it built a cultural barrier between the two groups as the natives got afraid of the strangers for fear of being taken overseas as slaves.

When they had all gathered, the white man began to speak to them. He spoke through an interpreter who was an Ibo man, though his dialect was different and harsh to the ears of Mbanta. Many people laughed at his dialect and the way he used words strangely. Instead of saying "myself", he always said "my buttocks." But he was a man of commanding presence and the clansmen listened to him. (Achebe: 126)

Some of the great difficulties that stood before the new faith resulted from the differences in the language, race and culture. These difficulties caused obstacles between the new religion and the clansmen's hearts. The white man could not address them directly because he spoke English while they spoke their local Ibo language. The white man was obliged to talk to them through an Ibo interpreter, who, in turn, was not mastering their dialect, so his tongue seemed harsh to them. The interpreter also lacked the knowledge of their culture, so they ridiculed him when he used the phrase 'my buttocks' instead of saying 'myself'. This miscommunication, which resulted from the misunderstanding of the native culture, established a cultural barrier that negatively affected the acceptance of the message. The natives, then, thought that the stranger must be ignorant in the knowledge of the correct belief as well as he ignored how to introduce himself.

The coming of the new religion inaugurated the first phase of the religious conversion, *context*. In this stage, the advocators (the Christians) came to the land of the Ibo people and they started preaching their religion. The contact with the new religion was the most influential factor for change as the Ibo people would not have turned to Christianity unless they were colonized or contacted by them in their own society. This confirmed the argument that being in touch with adherents of the new religion is the most effective factor of conversion (see: 2.1.2.1.5).

He said he was one of them, they could see from his color and his language. The other four black men were also their brothers, although one of them did not speak Ibo. The white man was also their brother because they were all sons of God. (Achebe: 126)

The interpreter first tried to set up a common ground that joined the white man, his Ibo Christian brothers, the natives and himself together. From their colors and tongues, the natives learned that they were Africans like them, so the interpreter attempted to draw close to them by highlighting the racial similarity between them. Moreover, he began to establish a wider sense of belonging that included even the white man with them. He told them that they are all sons of God, so that there must be no racial or cultural differences to separate them. This indicated that the oneness in religion unites the people of different races, nationalities and cultural backgrounds, whereas the oneness in race, nationality and culture could not unite the people.

And he told them about this new God, the Creator of all the world and all the men and women. He told them that they worshipped false gods, gods of wood and stone. A deep murmur went through the crowd when he said this. He told them that the true God lived on high and that all men when they died went before Him for

judgment. Evil men and all the heathen who in their blindness bowed to wood and stone were thrown into a fire that burned like palm-oil. But good men who worshipped the true God lived forever in His happy kingdom. (Achebe: 126-127)

The white man started directly to talk about religion, although he differed from the natives in race, language and culture. This gives evidence to the argument that religion is the most influential factor in identity formation. If people agree with each other in religion, it will form a base, from which the whole way of life will spring. The one who accepted the new faith was one who could adopt all the customs that belonged to it. Therefore, the white man believed that changing identity should start from changing the faith in God, as it was the soul of the whole lifestyle. When the white man introduced his new God to the audience, he highlighted the main differences between his God and their Gods, which he described as false Gods. One of the differences is that his God is the one, who created the whole universe, and the second is that his God is alive, where theirs are figures of stones. He also talked about the Day of Judgment, which is not mentioned in the local religion.

"We have been sent by this great God to ask you to leave your wicked ways and false gods and turn to Him so that you may be saved when you die," he said. "Your buttocks understand our language," said someone light-heartedly and the crowd laughed. "What did he say?" the white man asked his interpreter. But before he could answer, another man asked a question: "Where is the white man's horse?" he asked. The Ibo evangelists consulted among themselves and decided that the man probably meant bicycle. They told the white man and he smiled benevolently. "Tell them," he said, "that I shall bring many iron horses when we have

settled down among them. Some of them will even ride the iron horse themselves." This was interpreted to them but very few of them heard. They were talking excitedly among themselves because the white man had said he was going to live among them. They had not thought about that. (Achebe:127)

He explained, then, that the main goal of his mission was to convert the native people to the new faith so that they would be among the successful. He also attached their wicked customs to the result of obeying the false Gods. The response of the joker denoted that the cultural barrier still held back the communication process and the religious message had not found a way to the natives' hearts. Some other men were totally uninterested in what the white man had said about the new faith, but their curiosity urged them to stay in the crowd, so one of them asked about the white man's bicycle, which they thought to be an iron horse. Profiting from this, the white man politely explained to them about it and promised them that he would bring them some to ride themselves. Even though the white man answered them politely and promised them some bicycles, the natives were angry to know that he would come to live with them. The difference in faith was still putting a barrier between the hearts of the two groups.

It was argued that religious conversion might occur due to the curiosity of the convert without being a religious seeker. Some of the natives here had learned some knowledge about the new religion though they had not come for that, rather they were persuaded by their eagerness for learning something new.

At this point an old man said he had a question. "Which is this god of yours," he asked, "the goddess of the earth, the god of the sky, Amadiora, or the thunderbolt, or what? "The interpreter spoke to

the white man and he immediately gave his answer. "All the gods you have named are not gods at all. They are gods of deceit who tell you to kill your fellows and destroy innocent children. There is only one true God and He has the earth, the sky, you, me, and all of us.(Achebe:127)

The white man's answer to the old man's question came quickly and in clear-cut words that showed the necessity of the faith for the white man's mission. To prove to them that their Gods were false, he cited an example of their Gods' orders that even some of them agreed with that these customs were not justice. He mentioned two examples: the killing of innocent fellows like Ikemefuna and throwing twin children to die in the evil forest. In Part One we have seen how the killing of Ikemefuna had impacted Nwoye's heart and made him lose intimacy with his father. The destruction of newborn twin children was criticized by one of the titled men, Obierika. These two weakness points in the local religion, among others, helped the Christians to refute the local faith and fracture the native religious identity.

If we leave our gods and follow your god," asked another man, "who will protect us from the anger of our neglected gods and ancestors? "Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm," replied the white man. "They are pieces of wood and stone. "When this was interpreted to the men of Mbanta they broke into derisive laughter. These men must be mad, they said to themselves. How else could they say that Ani and Amadiora were harmless? And Idemili and Ogwugwu too? And some of them began to go away.(Achebe:127-128)

The natives were shocked by the white man's answer that their Gods were harmless, so the communication barrier rose to its peak and some of them

began to leave thinking that they must not waste their time with a mad group of men. The local religious faith was deeply rooted in the natives' lives for successive previous generations, so they believed that the one who opposed it must surely be mad. Therefore, when the missionaries discovered that the discussion would be of no value, they tried to soften the meeting by singing some seductive songs to seduce the Ibo hearts. Benefiting from the inter-religious dialogue, the white man began to learn more about the others and himself as well. This confirmed the argument that intercultural communication helps the individual to make sense of his own identity through learning how he differs from the others. That is, identity is conceptualized in communication.

The natives' stereotypical concept towards the strangers rose and they made sure that the white man must be mad to think that their Gods were harmless. This stereotypical image took its bases from the local prejudice that everyone who was different from their way had to be wrong.

The local society also was ethnocentric since it considered its culture as the only proper one and their religion was the only one true religion. Like the natives, the white man was religiously exclusive, as both thought that the only way of salvation was one's own religion and all the other ways of worshipping were wrong. According to the exclusive thought of the two opposing religious adherents, no religious pluralism was expected to take place in the village society. The two opposite religions did not have the potentiality of coexisting with another different religion. That is, none of the two faiths believe in what was termed as theological pluralism which assumed that all religions were similarly true or at least one of them is true but the others also have part of the truth (see: 2.1.2.1.6).

After the singing the interpreter spoke about the Son of God whose name was Jesus Kristi. Okonkwo, who only stayed in the hope that

it might come to chasing the men out of the village or whipping them, now said, "You told us with your own mouth that there was only one god. Now you talk about his son. He must have a wife, then." The crowd agreed. "I did not say He had a wife," said the interpreter, somewhat lamely. "Your buttocks said he had a son," said the joker. "So, he must have a wife and all of them must have buttocks."(Achebe:128)

The evangelists' mission became more difficult after Okonkwo's question, which seemed logical and gained the acceptance of the crowd. The interpreter got confused and tried to justify his last words, but he was not successful, so the joker profited from the communication mistake the interpreter made in the beginning and made fun of him. Okonkwo's participation in the meeting gave the natives a superior position and feeling that they may remain firm in their religious identity.

The pre-set stereotypical concept the white man had about the natives, that they were primitive as their way of life and their limited knowledge about the world showed, made him treat them in a simplified way that put him in confusion. Had he thought that they might have been clever and provided him with difficult questions, he would have changed the way of negotiating with them. The white's man exclusive perception let him to assume that all that the heathens would say is false and the only true was found in his own religion. Therefore, the white man was stunned by Okonkwo's question, to which he found no answer, so he started singing so as to make the audience forget about the question:

The missionary ignored him and went on to talk about the Holy Trinity. At the end of it, Okonkwo was fully convinced that the man was mad. He shrugged his shoulders and went away to tap his afternoon palm wine.(Achebe:128)

The missionaries' reasoning seemed weaker when they ignored the question, so the indigenous stereotype that the white man was mad became more evident to the crowd. Therefore, the missionaries turned to use ways other than conversing to attract the natives to the new faith. The lack of knowledge about the target culture and religion remained an obstacle for the white man and it restrained his mission of converting natives.

4.1.2.4 Nwoye and the New Faith

But there was a young lad who had been captivated. His name was Nwoye, Okonkwo's first son. It was not the mad logic of the Trinity that captivated him. He did not understand it. It was the poetry of the new religion, something felt in the marrow. The hymn about brothers who sat in darkness and in fear seemed to answer a vague and persistent question that haunted his young soul—the question of the twins crying in the bush and the question of Ikemefuna who was killed. (Achebe:128-129)

Nwoye's captivation to the new religion was not due to his satisfaction with its faith, for he did not understand it either. The new religion actually rescued him from the native customs of the clan that he considered violent and unjust. It was stated earlier that the murder of Ikemefuna was the last event that put a sharp knife on the rope tying Nwoye to his kinsmen. Without thinking of the new religion's belief, Nwoye absorbed it for it coincided with his nature. Nwoye was much like his grandfather Unoka, who feared fighting and war.

The coming of the new religion constituted the first step in Nwoye's identity crisis. Although, Nwoye was not pleased with the local way of life, which was masculine and violent, he was one of them only because there was no other alternative. However, after the arrival of Christianity,

he found the opportunity to free himself. Nwoye's identity seemed to move from firm to diffused due to the emergence of Christianity, which agreed with him in condemning the native customs of killing twins and innocent fellows. From identity commitment, Nwoye had changed to identity diffusion, which is assumed to be a stage of identity crisis (see: 2.1.2.2.5)

"Too much of his grandfather," Obierika thought, but he did not say it. The same thought also came to Okonkwo's mind. But he had long learned how to lay that ghost. Whenever the thought of his father's weakness and failure troubled him, he expelled it by thinking about his own strength and success.(Achebe:58)

Both Okonkwo and his friend Obierika believed that Nwoye resembled his grandfather Unoka. Unoka was not respected by the clan's men for his effeminate characteristics and laziness. The native society was very serious and sensitive in the gender issue. They appreciated a man when he was a man in thought and behavior. Since the effeminate characteristics were associated with the unworthy people, they were later linked with the new religion. As a result, Nwoye was not expected to stay longer with his clan's ways for his soft nature that did not put up with their harsh customs:

So, Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his obi, and he told them stories of the land -masculine stories of violence and bloodshed. Nwoye knew that it was right to be masculine and to be violent, but somehow he still preferred the stories that his mother used to tell, and which she no doubt still told to her younger children -stories of the tortoise and his wily ways, and of the bird eneke-nti-oba... (Achebe:46).

Though Okonkwo did his best to make his son a man, Nwoye's nature dragged him towards the female world. Nwoye pretended to like the violent stories his father used to tell him only for fear of his father's anger and beating, but, rather, he inwardly liked the soft stories of his mother. Nwoye enacted to be strong in the eyes of his father while his personal identity layer was not. This identity gap positively strengthened his relationship with his father, who felt pleased that his son had grown up in the way he wished. However, the enacted identity did not last as Nwoye was weakened by his soft personal attributes. The identity gap made Nwoye feel upset and worried about his future so the coming of the new religion seemed to fill the space in his heart and led him to fill his identity gap.

Nwoye's personal attitude had been held down by the dominant native culture, which he could not confront, although he was not pleased with it. Thus, in the high-context society, the personal identity is enacted when the communal became weak due to the emergence of the new alternative, because the dominance of the communal identity had restrained the individuals from enacting their personal preferences.

However, the emergence of the new faith encouraged him to activate his personal attribute and fill his identity gap. This confirmed that the identity gaps occur more in the high-context society where the individual seemed to be obliged to follow the mainstream way of life. The personal identity frame appeared to be held down by the communal dominant layer.

I am worried about Nwoye. A bowl of pounded yams can throw him in a wrestling match. His two younger brothers are more promising. But I can tell you, Obierika, that my children do not resemble me. Where are the young suckers that will grow when the old banana tree dies? If Ezinma had been a boy I would have been

happier. She has the right spirit'...I have done my best to make Nwoye grow into a man, but there is too much of his mother in him.(Achebe:57)

Okonkwo represented the traditional native view, as he was still firm to his local ways and fought for them to the end. However, none of his children was like him. Okonkwo is pleased with Ezinma, who had similar ideas to those of her father, but, unfortunately, she was not a boy.

Okwonkwo's thought was caught by the social ethno-gender view. He kept regretting that he would be pleased if Ezinma was a boy, because she resembled him and agreed with him in his ideas. Nevertheless, Ezinma would not be valuable for him because she could not fill the space of the boy in the masculine society, which did not provide a considerable space for women to represent it. According to the native gender-based point of view the effeminate men are not respected:

At the beginning of their journey the men of Umuofia talked and laughed about the locusts, about their women, and about some effeminate men who had refused to come with them. (Achebe:51)

Here their gender-based differentiation was linked to their religious-based customs. They blamed those who refused to bear hand in the killing of Ikemefuna of being cowards and effeminate. This view has a positive effect in strengthening their religious identity as they associated femininity to the new religion and masculinity to their local one:

To abandon the gods of one's father and go about with a lot of effeminate men clucking like old hens was the very depth of abomination. (Achebe:134)

The white man and all his followers are seen by the natives as effeminate, so it is an abomination to follow them.

“What are you doing here?” Obierika had asked when after many difficulties the missionaries had allowed him to speak to the boy. “I am one of them,” replied Nwoye. “How is your father?” Obierika asked, not knowing what else to say. “I don’t know. He is not my father,” said Nwoye, unhappily. And so, Obierika went to Mbanta to see his friend. And he found that Okonkwo did not wish to speak about Nwoye. It was only from Nwoye’s mother that he heard scraps of the story. (Achebe:125-126)

Nwoye had completely changed his identity to a Christian boy and he declared to Obierika that he no longer belonged to the clan. Changing faith meant changing identity, because Nwoye disowned his father and deserted his family and land. He broke all the clan's rules as he left the land of their exile and came back to Umoufia before the fixed date of their return. This proves the argument that religion is the most influential component in shaping identity and the religious link is the strongest in people's relations (see: 2.1.2.1.1). This can be clearer with the new position of Nwoye among the strangers. Although Obierika is the closest friend of Nwoye's father and they share the same race, Obierika found difficulty to meet the boy and he could not do so without the permission of the missionaries.

Changing religion was the turning point that changed Nwoye into a new character that had nothing to connect him with his natives, neither his race nor his family relation.

Nwoye had reached the semi-final stage of the religious conversion, i.e. commitment (see: 2.1.2.1.5). He had made up his mind to desert his family's local religion and adopted the new one. By reaching the commitment stage, Nwoye had got rid of all the customs that were based

on the previous religion, so he confidently replied Obierika that Okonkwo was no longer his father that he knew nothing about him.

Obierika was eager to learn the story of Nwoye's change, and it is as follows:

One morning Okonkwo's cousin, Amikwu, was passing by the church on his way from the neighboring village, when he saw Nwoye among the Christians. He was greatly surprised, and when he got home, he went straight to Okonkwo's hut and told him what he had seen. The women began to talk excitedly, but Okonkwo sat unmoved. It was late afternoon before Nwoye returned. He went into the obi and saluted his father, but he did not answer. Nwoye turned round to walk into the inner compound when his father, suddenly overcome with fury, sprang to his feet and gripped him by the neck. "Where have you been?" he stammered. Nwoye struggled to free himself from the choking grip. "Answer me," roared Okonkwo, "before I kill you!" He seized a heavy stick that lay on the dwarf wall and hit him two or three savage blows. "Answer me!" he roared again. Nwoye stood looking at him and did not say a word. The women were screaming outside, afraid to go in. "Leave that boy at once!" said a voice in the outer compound. It was Okonkwo's uncle, Uchendu. "Are you mad?" Okonkwo did not answer. But he left hold of Nwoye, who walked away and never returned. (Achebe:133)

This time Nwoye decided to totally leave his clan, family and their ways and he left them and their ideas as early as the white man held the first meeting in Mbanta, but his fear of his father held him back from declaring his new faith at that time.

As Nwoye used to go secretly to attend the Christian congregations, he was in the stage of *encountering*, which is the phase when the convert has trusted the advocator and started getting knowledge from him (see: 2.1.2.1.5). Okonkwo did not want his son to come near the Christians for fear of changing his mind. This confirmed the assumption that the most influential factor in change is relationship with the new religion's adherents.

When Okonkwo punished his son for approaching the Christians, Nwoye has reached the peak of the identity crisis by which he made up his mind to change religion and abandon the previous one. This incident was the turning point moment when Nwoye entered the *interaction* stage, when he went to Mr. Kiaga to consult him about moving to Umoufia to learn the new religion away from the touch of his father.

He went back to the church and told Mr. Kiaga that he had decided to go to Umuofia where the white missionary had set up a school to teach young Christians to read and write. Mr. Kiaga's joy was very great. "Blessed is he who forsakes his father and his mother for my sake", he intoned. "Those that hear my words are my father and my mother." Nwoye did not fully understand. But he was happy to leave his father. He would return later to his mother and his brothers and sisters and convert them to the new faith. (Achebe:133-134)

This point clearly shows that once one changes faith, he/she changes identity, because the new faith will change all of the individual views about everything based on the previous religion. One starts to change his mind about the things he loves and hates, for the criteria would be the new thought, which is based on the new faith. Harun et al (2012: 2) pointed that: 'All aspects of the person's life which previously follow his

own patterns based on his religion, after a religious conversion, will be spontaneously changed'.

This argument seemed to me generally true for many converts in this study but not for all. Some converts abandoned all the native customs and challenged them, like the overzealous convert Enoch who appeared to be more Christians than the Christians themselves. The analysis will show some more examples of native converts who deserted the whole local life style such as the titled man who threw his titles away and the group of converts who came back to the village and boasted rude words to the clan's Gods and the village people cursed back to them and their mothers too (see 4.1.2.7).

However, the study has shown that some other converts still maintained some of the old native customs and some of their old identity aspects (see 4.1.2.7). These old identity aspects remained for sometimes and later began to faint, as it was the case of Nwoye who converted to the new religion without knowing anything about its reality in the beginning. So, he had some aspects of his old identity, as he got afraid of visiting the church for it was built in the Evil Forest. But later when he began to be somewhat a strong convert, he appeared more courageous to join the Christians everywhere.

The new converts in the church, as we will see later in details, were disturbed by the coming of the Osu people (outcast people who have different God and way of life) to the church. The new converts refused to join them in the beginning, but they later accepted due to the effort Mr. Kiaga made to convince them.

One can conclude here that the aspects of the old identity are expected to be changed after conversion, but the degree of change differs from one individual to another. Some converts change all the aspects, others gradually change them or only change a few of them.

The criteria of love and hate would be in agreement with the new religion, so the father's position in Nwoye's heart would be filled with Mr. Kiaga, his master and guide to the new faith. Changing religion caused Nwoye to forsake his relatives and tear himself away from all of the previous religion's customs.

As Okonkwo sat in his hut that night, gazing into a log fire, he thought over the matter. A sudden fury rose within him and he felt a strong desire to take up his machete, go to the church and wipe out the entire vile and miscreant gang. But on further thought he told himself that Nwoye was not worth fighting for. Why, he cried in his heart, should he, Okonkwo, of all people, be cursed with such a son? (Achebe:134)

Although Okonkwo was angry of his son since his childhood and kept beating him for his effeminate behavior, Okonkwo did not totally disown him until he joined the new religion. This showed that the difference between the boy and his father in the masculine and feminine behaviors has its effect on their relations, but it did not reach the point of separating them. That is, the effect of the religious identity on the family relation was greater than the gender identity, as the former made Okonkwo disown his son while the effect of the latter was less than that. However, when it came to adopt a new faith, Okonkwo could not bear to deal with him and so did Nwoye.

He, Okonkwo, was called a flaming fire. How could he have begotten a woman for a son? At Nwoye's age Okonkwo had already become famous throughout Umuofia for his wrestling and his fearlessness. He sighed heavily, and as if in sympathy the smouldering log also sighed. And immediately Okonkwo's eyes were opened, and he saw the whole matter clearly. Living fire

begets cold, impotent ash. He sighed again, deeply.(Achebe:134-135)

The native gender-based conception regarding how a respected man should look like effected Nwoye's position in the eyes of his father. A serious part of the native customs was that a worthy man should be a man of war and bravery. To be a respected man in the clan was to be a warlike worrier. The new religion's adherents were thought to be effeminate, so the native view of disrespecting soft men led them to hate the new religion. Therefore, Okonkwo regarded his son's conversion as a change into a woman. Thus, religion took some support from the gender-based conception.

Okonkwo said to himself: '*Living fire begets cold, impotent ash*'. This proved the argument that Nwoye represented the new religion, which was begotten by the native one that was represented by his father. That is, the weaknesses of the native religion caused a considerable number of its people to flee to the new faith. Nwoye was driven to the new faith by, among other reasons, his father's actions, which were mostly based on the local religious customs and partly based on his father's own thoughts. This indicated that the personal interpretations of the native religion and some of the religious customs provided some excuses to those who criticized it and those who deserted it.

4.1.2.5 The Evil Forest

An evil forest was where the clan buried all those who died of the really evil diseases, like leprosy and smallpox. It was also the dumping ground for highly potent fetishes of great medicine men when they died. An evil forest was, therefore, alive with sinister forces and powers of darkness. It was such a forest that, the rulers of Mbanta gave to the missionaries. They did not really want them

near to the clan, and so they made them that offer which nobody in his right senses would accept. (Achebe:130)

When the missionaries asked the permission of Mbanta's leaders to take a piece of land where they could set up their worship house (a church), the leaders offered them a plot of land from their evil forest. The clan did so because it did not want the missionaries to settle near them for fear of converting some of its children. This confirmed the assumption that changing religion is mainly caused by contacts with the new religion's advocates. This is also one of the actions that was based on religious references.

The natives thus expressed their religious identity through that treatment. In light of the intercultural communication theory of identity, the natives were caused to understand themselves by the coming of the strangers, that is, they began to understand the reality of their religion via comparing it to that of the strangers. Thus, one's identity is conceptualized through contact with others, who are different.

The clan also wanted to practically convince the strangers who doubted the effect of their local Gods. The clan decided to give them a battlefield by which it would be visible to all the people how the strangers would be destroyed in a couple of days:

The next morning the crazy men actually began to clear a part of the forest and to build their house. The inhabitants of Mbanta expected them all to be dead within four days. The first day passed and the second and third and fourth, and none of them died. Everyone was puzzled. And then it became known that the white man's fetish had unbelievable power. It was said that he wore glasses on his eyes so that he could see and talk to evil spirits. Not long after, he won his first three converts.(Achebe:131)

Unexpectedly, all the clan's thoughts that the strangers will soon be dead, all these expectations, would not come true. As a result, the new religion won the challenge and gained the first three converts. This challenging example allowed the people in the clan, who had rebellious thoughts to think that many of their local religious customs were wrong.

The intercultural context provided a battle field where the two opposing faiths could face each other and the natives found the opportunity to learn something new about the word and to learn that their local religion was not completely perfect as they used to believe. This was a cause of great deal of modification in the native religious identity. This reinforced the validity of the current study's method, which is to investigate the religious identity in light of the ICT of identity.

It was well known among the people of Mbanta that their gods and ancestors were sometimes long-suffering and would deliberately allow a man to go on defying them. But even in such cases they set their limit at seven market weeks or twenty-eight days. Beyond that limit no man was suffered to go. And so, excitement mounted in the village as the seventh week approached since the impudent missionaries built their church in the Evil Forest. The villagers were so certain about the doom that awaited these men that two converts thought it wise to suspend their allegiance to the new faith. At last the day came by which all the missionaries should have died. But they were still alive, building a new red-earth and thatch house for their teacher, Mr. Kiaga. That week they won a handful more converts. (Achebe:132)

The natives were still believing that their Gods will destroy the missionaries in not more than twenty-eight days. For the second time, the appointed time passed, and nothing happened, so some natives who were

delaying their declaration to the new faith to see what will happen to the missionaries, courageously announced their allegiance to the new religion. This event has practically supported what the white man had said to the natives in the first meeting:

“Your gods are not alive and cannot do you any harm,” replied the white man. “They are pieces of wood and stone”.
(Achebe:128)

This weak point in the local religion served as an influential factor in the native religious identity fracture. Those who converted followed the *sudden* type of conversion. It was stated earlier that *Sudden Conversion* occurs in a very short time. The convert turns from being obedient to disobedient to his religion due to an extraordinary event that causes the individual to change his mind. Those who converted due to this action were caused by the effect of the challenge, which was won by the Christian man.

4.1.2.6 The First Woman Convert

And for the first time they had a woman. Her name was Nneka, the wife of Amadi, who was prosperous farmer. She was very heavy with child. Nneka had had four previous pregnancies and child-births. But each time she had borne twins, and they had been immediately thrown away. Her husband and his family were already becoming highly critical of such a woman and were not unduly perturbed when they found she had fled to join the Christians. It was a good riddance.(Achebe:132)

After it became clear to some of the natives that their own people believed in wrong things, numbers of them fled to the new faith. One of these new converts was *Amadi's* wife *Nneka* (another sample of sudden

conversion). According to the clan's customs, the name Nneka was given to children meaning: 'Mother is supreme', that is, mother is most important of all. This is because, they believed when life is bad and sad, one needs to go to one's mother land to find help, as Okonkwo did when he was exiled. Therefore, Okonkwo gave the first baby born for him during his exile, the name Nneka –*'out of politeness to his mother's kinsmen'* (ibid:143).

After the conversion of the first woman, carrying the name Nneka, a sign by the writer that the local religion had lost the most important member of all. This also illustrates that strong influence of religion in people's identities, as the clan got rid of the most respected member for the sake of their faith. The conversion of Nneka was due to the wicked thoughts of the local faith. She suffered a lot from the custom of throwing children alive to die in the Evil Forest as she lost four couples of twins. Moreover, her in-laws had been cursed by her, so they regarded her conversion a good riddance. Her husband and his relatives were influenced by their religious and social custom to ill-treat her. Thus, how the individual perceives himself and how the others see him depend on racial, cultural, and religious factors in which religion is the most influential one of them all. This confirmed that the religious identity could be expressed in such religious-based actions.

The communal identity preferred to see the woman, who bore couples of twin babies as an abominable woman, who brings bad luck to the family. Since this communal thought was deeply rooted in the natives, Nneka's in-laws saw her in a different way (ascribed identity) from what she preferred to see herself (avowal identity). The discrepancy between these two layers of identity caused them to exchange ill-treatment and she felt depressed, so she preferred to free herself from the native lifestyle so that

she could form her identity in the way that she wished. Thus, the identity gap was a cause of depression and bad relations with the others.

As the village's society was a high-context type of society and the communal identity takes a superior position over the personal. The individuals did not find the chance to apply the personal preferences so that they were put in a choice of two things: to agree with the native customs even if they did not ring true for them or to free themselves from the whole native manner of living. Had the native way was somewhat flexible and allowed the natives to choose what suited them, the number of converts might be smaller than this. That is, the natives' religiosity did not accept *sociological pluralism*, which is assumed to allow the adherents to come up with their subjective interpretations and or allow them to choose what they prefer from the available religions.

On the other hand, one could also say that the strength of the communal identity positively supported the maintenance of the native religious identity as the communal bonds prevented many of them from converting for fear of what their kinsmen would say about them. The effect of the contradiction between the communal and the personal layers of identity could depend on the personal nature of every individual. It could be negative or positive: If the individual takes account of the communal system in his life it would make him firm to the native manner. But if it was the contrary, he would flee.

4.1.2.7 Religious-based Clashes

But on one occasion the missionaries had tried to overstep the bounds. Three converts had gone into the village and boasted openly that all the gods were dead and impotent and that they were prepared to defy them by burning all their shrines."Go and burn your mothers' genitals," said one of the priests. The men

were seized and beaten until they streamed with blood. After that nothing happened for a long time between the church and the clan.

(Achebe:136)

After the coming of the white man, the Ibo land had become interreligious and intercultural as it embraced two conflicting religions and cultures. Before the arrival of the Christians, all the clan's men were acting like one as their orders, customs and opinions spring from a single source, their Gods and leaders. However, when the Christians came, they attracted some of them to the new faith and culture, so their identity varied, as those who converted have a new sense of belonging and they no longer followed the local customs. That is, not every Ibo believed in the local Gods as it was before the arrival of the missionaries.

Some clashes rose among the clan's men. These clashes resulted from the differences in their faiths. Some of the new converts visited the village and started showing their allegiance to the new faith by cursing the local religion, which was theirs before converting. Being Ibo in race and having relatives in the village did not hold them back from refuting the clan's Gods. This shows that the effect of religion in one's identity is superior to race, culture and nationality. On the contrary, the natives cursed back to the converts, even with words that rebuked their mothers, who were their relatives. In addition, the converts were given a beaten till they bled. The religious identity was stronger than the ethnic one, so the natives took stance of the converts though they were their relations.

Another religious-based clash that inspired the infant church was the coming of the Osu people. The Osu could be introduced as follows:

He was a person dedicated to a god, a thing set apart-a taboo forever, and his children after him. He could neither marry nor be married by the free-born. He was in fact an outcast, living in a

special area of the village, close to the Great Shrine. Wherever he went he carried with him the mark of his forbidden cast-long, tangled and dirty hair. A razor was taboo to him. An osu could not attend an assembly of the freeborn, and they, in turn, could not shelter under his roof. He could not take any of the four titles of the clan, and when he died, he was buried by his kind in the Evil Forest. How could such a man be a follower of Christ?
(Achebe:138)

The calamity of the Osu people was due to the native ethno-religious custom. The Osu were deprived of all their rights and were thought to be abominable their whole life. They were convinced that if any of them tried to live like the ordinary people, he or she would die. When the Osu saw that the new religion broke the local customs and took care of twin children, they thought they would similarly be welcomed:

These outcasts, or osu, seeing that the new religion welcomed twins and such abominations, thought that it was possible that they would also be received. And so, one Sunday two of them went into the church. There was an immediate stir, but so great was the work the new religion had done among the converts that they did not immediately leave the church when the outcasts came in.(Achebe:137)

Although the converts had embraced the new religion and they were no longer taking religious knowledge from the natives, still some of the local beliefs remained in their hearts. Their ethno-religious identity was still rooted, so they refused mixing with the Osu people according to the local custom. This confirmed the argument that the conversion of the natives was a *gradual* type of conversion because they did not get rid of all their native customs at once. They turned to the new religion in stages. The

final conversion stage was the *consequence stage*, where the converts faced difficulties that were about to weaken their allegiance to the new faith. One of these consequences happened because they were to mix with the Osu people, who were thought to be outcast. This conflict rose as a result of some remaining native customs after converting.

It could be noticed that the native dogmatic rules drove some of those who suffered from it to join the new faith, which profited from these limitations.

The coming of the Osu to the church put the Christian teacher and guide of the congregation into a great confusion. He could not refuse them, though the new converts wanted to, because his religion considered all people equal, and if he, in turn, accepted them he might lose the first converts, who believed that mixing with them was impossible. Mr. Kiaga chose to welcome the Osu and began to clear up the ethno-religious remains of the converts' previous faith. He did his best to explain for his students a wider sense of belonging under the Christian umbrella that included even the Osu. The new converts ought to know that their identity had changed, and the local thoughts should no longer conduct their activities. The new faith caused them to change the criteria of making social relations where they were made to befriend the Osu people who were treated as outcast people.

"Before God," he said, "there is no slave or free. We are all children of God and we must receive these our brothers. "You do not understand," said one of the converts. "What will the heathen say of us when they hear that we receive Osu into our midst? They will laugh." "Let them laugh," said Mr. Kiaga. "God will laugh at them on the judgment day".(Achebe: 137-138)

The converts remained affected by the native customs to the degree that some of them decided to return to the village if their teacher insisted on accepting the outcasts among them. The converts kept reasoning with that social view. That is, they feared of what might be said about them by the natives. This highlights the interplay between religion and ethnicity. However, the effect of religion was superior to the ethnic norms as the angry converts finally agreed to accept the Osu when their teacher insisted on that. This confirmed what had been pointed out earlier that the some of the converts had not abandoned all the local customs at once, rather some custom remained even after conversion.

The converts thought that the outcast could not be followers of the new religion. Here, they wanted to conduct the new faith with their previous ways of life, which were based on the local thoughts. Therefore, Mr. Kiaga stood firm to root out the concept of categorizing people into either being free or a slave.

Mr. Kiaga stood firm, and it was his firmness that saved the young church. The wavering converts drew inspiration and confidence from his unshakable faith. (Achebe:138)

A third clash rose when Mr. Kiaga asked the Osu converts to have their hair cut like the ordinary people, because they were no longer to be distinguished. The Osu refused to do so as they were convinced that they would die if they shaved their hair off:

He ordered the outcasts to shave off their long, tangled hair. At first, they were afraid they might die. "Unless you shave off the mark of your heathen belief, I will not admit you into the church," said Mr. Kiaga. "You fear that you will die. Why should that be? How are you different from other men who shave their hair? The same God created you and them. But they have cast you out like

lepers. It is against the will of God, who has promised everlasting life to all who believe in His holy name. The heathen say you will die if you do this or that, and you are afraid. They also said I would die if I built my church on this ground. Am I dead? They said I would die if I took care of twins. I am still alive. The heathen speak nothing but falsehood. Only the word of our God is true. (Achebe:138-139)

During the first steps of the Osu into the new faith, they were asked to wipe out the mark of the heathen belief. The Osu's long curly hair and dirty clothes were related to the native religious view. Thus, changing religious identity is the main factor and a base in changing many of the aspects of one's life. It is argued that religion is the most effective factor in shaping social and individual identities. It is the 'most foundational aspects of our identity, including attitudes, beliefs and preferences' (Emmons & Paloutzian 2003, cited in Sachdeva 2016:3).

Mr. Kiaga profited from the previous events, from which the society knew that the local religion was wrong in such claims that whoever looked after twins or lived in the Evil Forest would soon die. Mr. Kiaga and his fellows did both and nothing happened to them. Benefiting from these limitations, Mr. Kiaga could convince the Osu that the natives lied to them.

A third clash occurred between the converts and the natives when one of the new Osu converts was accused of killing the most respected animal in the village. The holy snake or python was thought to emanate from the God of Water, and it was held in high reverence as it was called 'Our Father' and it was allowed to go everywhere it wished:

The royal python was the most revered animal in Mbanta and all the surrounding clans. It was addressed as "Our Father" and was

allowed to go wherever it chose, even into people's beds. It ate rats in the house and sometimes swallowed hens' eggs. If a clansman killed a royal python accidentally, he made sacrifices of atonement and performed an expensive burial ceremony such as was done for a great man. No punishment was prescribed for a man who killed the python knowingly. Nobody thought that such a thing could ever happen. (Achebe:139)

The natives were provoked by the news of the killing the royal snake and they thought that the Christians had overstepped their boundaries. Okonkwo angrily said that:

Until the abominable gang was chased out of the village with whips there would be no peace. (ibid:139)

During the clan meeting, some people seemed ready to fight back for the sake of their faith. Okonkwo, who began to take part in the affairs of his motherland, strongly replied to *Okeke*, who preferred to take no action in the incident:

"Let us not reason like cowards," said Okonkwo. "If a man comes into my hut and defecates on the floor, what do I do? Do I shut my eyes? No! I take a stick and break his head. That is what a man does. These people are daily pouring filth over us, and Okeke says we should pretend not to see." Okonkwo made a sound full of disgust. This was a womanly clan, he thought. Such a thing could never happen in his fatherland, Umuofia.(Achebe:140)

Okonkwo uttered some disgusting words to show his anger and make others ashamed of not punishing the undesirable Christians. This response showed aspect of the native identity that they were ready to fight for the sake of their religion as they agreed with Kowtow's opinion to punish the

strangers. Okonkwo's view was also affected by his masculine identity, so he considered Okeke's opinion to be womanish and a sign of cowardice that could not happen in his father's land.

“Okonkwo has spoken the truth,” said another man. “We should do something. But let us ostracize these men. We would then not be held accountable for their abominations. “Everybody in the assembly spoke, and in the end, it was decided to ostracize the Christians. Okonkwo ground his teeth in disgust.”(Achebe:140)

Okonkwo's opinion gained the preference of the meeting and the crowd decided to exclude all the Christians from the village activities. Although Mbanta is not Okonkwo's land, it is only the homeland of his mother's relatives, Okonkwo was allowed to co-operate with them against the converts, who were ethnically children of Mbanta. This means that the religious link was stronger than the ethnic one. The converts, on the other hand, had joined the Christian camp, although they differed from the missionaries in race, culture and nationality. This highlights the essential role religion plays in forming people's sense of belonging (identity).

4.1.2.8 Family Meeting

When the seven years of exile were over, Okonkwo invited all the descendants of his grandfather *Okolo* to a large meal that he had prepared to express his gratitude to his mother's relatives for their good treatment to him. During the festival meeting, some of the elders expressed words of thanks to their son Okonkwo and addressed the gathering with some advice:

“Aman who calls his kinsmen to a feast does not do so to save them from starving. They all have food in their own homes. When we gather together in the moonlit village ground it is not because

of the moon. Everyman can see it in his own compound. We come together because it is good for kinsmen to do so. You may ask why I am saying all this. I say it because I fear for the younger generation, for you people." He waved his arm where most of the young men sat. "As for me, I have only a short while to live, and so have Uchendu and Unachukwu and Emefo. But I fear for you young people because you do not understand how strong is the bond of kinship. You do not know what it is to speak with one voice. And what is the result? An abominable religion has settled among you. A man can now leave his father and his brothers. He can curse the gods of his fathers and his ancestors, like a hunter's dog that suddenly goes mad and turns on his master. I fear for you, I fear for the clan." He turned again to Okonkwo and said, "Thank you for calling us together."(Achebe:147).

The speaker explained that the real value of such a family gathering was not merely to eat or sit under the moon light, for that could be done at home, rather the meeting was to help the family maintain its bond. He drew attention to the appearance of the new religion, which threatened their family's unity. This shows the positive effect of the family to keep its members firm in the religion of their fathers. This also indicates that the family and tribal bonds (ethnic identity) would not be influential in case of having a new religion, because when a family member converted to a new faith, he/she would surely abandon his kinsmen and the family would no longer act like one. Therefore, the religious effect on identity formation was more influential than the familial one, as one could desert his brother and leave his fathers' way of life for the sake of his new faith. The fear about the family future due to the emergence of the new religion is an aspect of the identity crisis. The old man predicted that the young

children would be in confusion. He would not have become afraid for his children if the Christians had not come to live among them. The most influential factor thus for identity crisis is the intercultural and inter-religious context in the village. This confirms the argument that the most effective factor for religious conversion is to come in contact with the new religion.

4.1.3 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Three

Part three recounts the events that occurred in Umoufia after Okonkwo's return. It narrates the aspects of change that took place in the clan's life because of the white man's religion, culture and government.

4.1.3.1 Okonkwo's Advice to his Children

He sent for the five sons and they came and sat in his obi. The youngest of them was four years old. "You have all seen the great abomination of your brother. Now he is no longer my son or your brother. I will only have a son who is a man, who will hold his head up among my people. If any one of you prefers to be a woman, let him follow Nwoye now while I am alive so that I can curse him. If you turn against me when I am dead, I will visit you and break your neck." Okonkwo was very lucky in his daughters. He never stopped regretting that Ezinma was a girl. Of all his children, she alone understood his every mood. (Achebe:152)

Okonkwo feared that his young children may follow their elder brother, who had joined the Christians, so he gathered them to give them a strong warning by informing them that what their elder brother had done was an abomination and that he was no longer a member of their family. To keep his children firm in their native identity, Okonkwo reminded them about the necessity of the family bonds and the ethnic norms. Thus the family

relation positively affect the religious identity. Okonkwo's thoughts had been captivated by the native masculine view, so he considered that everyone who had forsaken the local way of life was no longer a man. Thus, he warned his younger children from growing up in the new faith lest they grew into women. The natives' masculine viewpoint then served as a factor that strengthened the local religious customs.

For his misfortune, Okonkwo's daughters seemed more masculine than his sons, so he was regretting the whole of his life for not having a boy of Ezinma's ideas.

4.1.3.2 The Role of Trade in Change

But apart from the church, the white men had also brought a government. They had built a court where the District Commissioner judged cases in ignorance. He had court messengers who brought men to him for trial. Many of these messengers came from Umuru on the bank of the Great River, where the white men first came many years before and where they had built the centre of their religion and trade and government.

(Achebe:154)

The white man started with building churches to change the local faith. Then he set up courts that judged those who broke the law or molested the evangelists who preached for the new faith. The white man provided religious support for his men to keep them firm to his religion. By establishing the court, he protected his men from being molested by the natives so the new converts would feel no fear from their relatives when they turned to the new faith. He also brought big trade centers where the natives could sell their palm-oil at high prices:

There were many men and women in Umuofia who did not feel as strongly as Okonkwo about the new dispensation. The white man

had indeed brought a lunatic religion, but he had also built a trading store and for the first time, palm-oil and kernel became things of great price, and much money flowed into Umuofia.
(Achebe:157)

Those who were not convinced of the new religion looked at their personal interest in the new commercial stores and ignored the issue of the new faith. The trade stores that were introduced by the white man served as a type of religious support that attracted the natives to the new religion as it became a source of wealth. This played a crucial role in making the borders between the two religions vague. Thus, many of the natives were not taking the differences between the two religions seriously, especially with the polite policy of Mr. Brown, who made up his mind to change them slowly, avoiding falling into any religious clashes with them.

4.1.3.3 The Policy of Mr. Brown

This growing feeling was due to Mr. Brown, the white missionary, who was very firm in restraining his flock from provoking the wrath of the clan' ...' And so, Mr. Brown came to be respected even by the clan, because he trod softly on its faith. He made friends with some of the great men of the clan and on one of his frequent visits to the neighboring villages he had been presented with a carved elephant tusk, which was a sign of dignity and rank.
(Achebe:157)

The cultural understanding helped Mr. Brown to avoid falling into cultural clashes, so he succeeded in building good relations with the natives that enabled him to attract them to his schools, where he taught them the new faith without their knowledge. Mr. Brown's understanding of the indigenous culture resulted from his long talks with many leaders

of the clan. One of these great men was called *Akunna*, from a village near to Umuofia.

Whenever Mr. Brown went to that village, he spent long hours with Akunna in his obi talking through an interpreter about religion. Neither of them succeeded in converting the other but they learned more about their different beliefs.(Achebe: 158)

After a long talk, Mr. Brown came up with the conclusion that:

In this way Mr. Brown learned a good deal about the religion of the clan and he came to the conclusion that a frontal attack on it would not succeed. And so, he built a school and a little hospital in Umuofia. He went from family to family begging people to send their children to his school. But at first, they only sent their slaves or sometimes their lazy children. Mr. Brown begged and argued and prophesied. He said that the leaders of the land in the future would be men and women who had learned to read and write. If Umuofia failed to send her children to the school, strangers would come from other places to rule them.(Achebe:159-160)

Intercultural communication needs good cultural understanding. The most influential component of culture is religion, so when Mr. Brown gave himself a chance to understand the nature of the local religion, he was able to find the best way to the natives' hearts. Thus, changing people's identity mainly depends on understanding it.

Religious conversion has three types *sudden*(two samples of it were shown earlier in 4.1.2.5- 4.1.2.6), *gradual* (Nwoye's conversion was an example in 4.1.2.4)and *socialized*. Some of the converts turned to the new religion gradually. According to Mr. Brown's understanding of the nature of the local faith, he concluded that the best policy to follow in his attempt to change their religious identity was through socialized

conversion. Socialized conversion is assumed to happen through breeding the new faith since early time of the converts life, or since childhood (see: 2.1.2.1.5). Therefore, Mr. Brown made up his mind to attract the natives to his schools, where they could absorb the new faith without their knowledge. He convinced them to come by telling them that if they refused to learn, strangers will come to rule them, because the rulers would be those who have learned. Hence, Mr. Brown won a number of them in his schools and brought them up according to his new faith.

In the end, Mr. Brown's arguments began to have an effect. More people came to learn in his school, and he encouraged them with gifts of singlets and towels'...' Mr. Brown's school produced quick results. A few months in it were enough to make one a court messenger or even a court clerk. Those who stayed longer became teachers'...' From the very beginning religion and education went hand in hand.(Achebe:160)

Education played a great role in changing identity, for it gradually bred on the learners the new faith and wiped out of all the remains of the previous thoughts.

Although Mr. Brown was considerably knowledgeable about the native culture and had gained a great respect in the clan, he fell into a clash with Okonkwo, thinking that Okonkwo would be pleased with the news of his elder son, who had joined the Christian college of teachers. Mr. Brown visited him to share the news. As a result of his religious commitment, Okonkwo did not welcome the missionary and was about to give him a beating:

As soon as he had learned of Okonkwo's return five months earlier, the missionary had immediately paid him a visit. He had just sent Okonkwo's son, Nwoye, who was now called Isaac, to the

new training college for teachers in Umuru. And he had hoped that Okonkwo would be happy to hear of it. But Okonkwo had driven him away with the threat that if he came into his compound again, he would be carried out of it.(Achebe:160-161)

By joining the new Christians, Nwoye had changed all aspects of his identity, even his name, for he was given the Christian name Isaac. Thus, Nwoye was an example of the gradual type of conversion as he had gone through most of the stages of gradual conversion until he reached the phase of complete change.

4.1.3.4 The Governmental Role in Change

Okonkwo said, almost to himself. "But I cannot understand these things you tell me. What is it that has happened to our people? Why have they lost the power to fight? "Have you not heard how the white man wiped out Abame?" asked Obierika."I have heard," said Okonkwo. "But I have also heard that Abame people were weak and foolish. Why did they not fight back? Had they no guns and machetes? We would be cowards to compare ourselves with the men of Abame. Their fathers had never dared to stand before our ancestors. We must fight these men and drive them from the land". (Achebe:154-155)

The natives were warned by the government of molesting the Christians or holding back their mission. It was stated later that the story of Abame made the local people afraid of taking any violent action against the missionaries. Therefore, the government protected the strangers from the danger of the natives until they gained a handful of converts. Hence, the clan could no longer be able to fight the Christians because it would be forced to fight its children. Thereby, the matter got out of the clan's hand and many of its men embraced the new faith:

"It is already too late," said Obierika sadly. "Our own men and our sons have joined the ranks of the stranger. They have joined his religion and they help to uphold his government. If we should try to drive out the white men in Umuofia, we should find it easy. There are only two of them. But what of our own people who are following their way and have been given power? They would go to Umuru and bring the soldiers, and we would be like Abame." He paused for a long time and then said: "I told you on my last visit to Mbanta how they hanged Aneto". (Achebe:155)

4.1.3.5 Summary of *Falling Apart*

How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart. (Achebe:155-156)

The unity of the clan was broken by the coming of the new religion. The clan's men were no longer acting together because the sources of their opinions differed. They would not fight together as they used to do when they were following the orders of the same Gods and elders. The white man started with cutting the thickest rope that tied the clan's members together, which was religion, and succeeded to seduce some of them. Then he made a part of the clan fight the other for him. This confirmed that the religious bond was stronger than the ethnic and cultural, and it also confirmed that the religious change affected the people's relation as it set new criteria of hate and love.

Thus, the title of this novel, *Things Fall Apart*, refers to the fracture of the native identity due to the coming of the white man with his new faith.

The clan had fallen in identity *conflict*. They were faced with a choice of two things, i.e. to fight their own people or to let the Christians go ahead in converting the rest of the clan. If they were to fight their own people, they would break down the clan's rule of punishing anyone who commits a crime of killing a clansman, and if they were to stop fighting the clan would also be fallen apart.

4.1.3.6 The Policy of Mr. Smith

Mr. Brown was obliged to leave Umoufia due to his illness and Mr. Smith was the white man who had taken his place. Unlike Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith was cruel and unkind with those who disagreed with him:

Mr. Brown's successor was the Reverend James Smith, and he was a different kind of man. He condemned openly Mr. Brown's policy of compromise and accommodation. He saw things as black and white. And black was evil. He saw the world as a battlefield in which the children of light were locked in mortal conflict with the sons of darkness'... ' Our Lord Himself stressed the importance of fewness. Narrow is the way and few the number. To fill the Lord's holy temple with an idolatrous crowd clamouring for signs was a folly of everlasting consequence. Our Lord used the whip only once in His life-to drive the crowd away from His church.
(Achebe:162)

Mr. Smith's personal religious identity resulted from his own understanding to the religious texts, which differed from that of his brother Mr. Brown. Mr. Smith's personal identity put him and his flock in clashes with the natives.

Within a few weeks of his arrival in Umuofia, Mr. Smith suspended a young woman from the church for pouring new wine

into old bottles. This woman had allowed her heathen husband to mutilate her dead child. The child had been declared an ogbanje, plaguing its mother by dying and entering her womb to be born again.(Achebe:162-163)

As far as Mr. Brown succeeded in attracting some of the natives to the new faith as a result of his good understanding of their nature, Mr. Smith's policy would spoil some of what his brother had achieved. Thus, intercultural communication needs good cultural understanding, so as to give positive results. The difference in the personal identities between the two white missionaries affected the results of their mission. The first one, Mr. Brown, was kind and had a good understanding of the native religion and culture so he was able to convert a large number, compared to his successor who was opposite to him, so he failed to do the same. This indicated that religious preaching was influenced by the personal attitudes of the advocates.

To punish a woman for such a silly mistake in the very early days after his arrival, Mr. Smith showed that he was a narrow-minded man who wanted his flock to accurately act as he wishes. He was not tolerant with the same woman either, because she let her husband mutilate their *Ogbanje* child:

Mr. Smith was filled with wrath when he heard of this. He disbelieved the story, which even some of the most faithful confirmed, the story of really evil children who were not deterred by mutilation but comeback with all the scars. He replied that such stories were spread in the world by the Devil to lead men astray. Those who believed such stories were unworthy of the Lord's table.(Achebe:163)

Mr. Smith dealt with the incident according to his own view, which was based on this stereotypical concept that everything not found in his own religion must be an evil deed spread by the devil. Mr. Smith treated the natives according to his pre-set stereotypical concepts about them and he did not give himself the chance to know more about their individual differences. Unlike Mr. Brown, Mr. Smith's personal religious identity seemed more exclusivist or extreme. He did not have any tolerance with those who differed with him in his opinions.

4.1.3.7 The Zealous Convert

Mr. Smith's strict treatment of his flock and the villagers encouraged the over-zealous converts, who were held back by Mr. Brown's wisdom, to attack the local faith savagely:

The over-zealous converts who had smarted under Mr. Brown's restraining hand now flourished in full flavor. One of them was Enoch, the son of the snake-priest who was believed to have killed and eaten the sacred python. Enoch's devotion to the new faith had seemed so much greater than Mr. Brown's that the villagers called him the outsider who wept louder than the bereaved.(Achebe:163)

The personal identity differences between the two white men had a great effect on the result of their missions. While Mr. Brown built strong bonds with the natives to the degree that some of them trusted him and sent him their children to be taught at his schools, Mr. Smith persuaded the over-zealous converts to molest the natives and put the church in confusion.

Mr. Smith's *relational* identity layer was clarified through his friendship with the people. Unlike his former brother, Mr. Smith made strong relations with those who used to be known as overzealous among the converts, such as Enoch. Thus, Mr. Smith personal identity could also be conceptualized through his relations. The relational identity layer is

thought to reflect the person's orientation via his friendship, so the emergence of Mr. Smith sprang the extreme converts to take actions that put the infant church in troubles.

Although, *Enoch's* father was a highly religious man in the village, his son joined the new religion and became remarkable of his great devotion to his new faith. Enoch had become more Christian than the Christians themselves. He was accused of eating the royal snake, which was a serious crime according to the village's law, and that was rarely committed throughout the history of the clan. Enoch's new identity made him tear up everything that tied him with his clan. Although, his own father was the priest in charge of the so-called holy python, he dared to kill it as the villagers said. Enoch's religious identity was superior to his family, ethnic and national ones.

One of the greatest crimes a man could commit was to unmask an egwugwu in public, or to say or do anything, which might reduce its immortal prestige in the eyes of the uninitiated. And this was what Enoch did'...' Enoch boasted aloud that they would not dare to touch a Christian. Whereupon they all came back and one of them gave Enoch a good stroke of the cane, which was always carried. Enoch fell on him and tore off his mask'...'Enoch had killed an ancestral spirit, and Umuofia was thrown into confusion'.(Achebe:164)

Mr. Smith's policy encouraged Enoch to overstep the boundaries and tear the mask of an ancestral spirit. He did so to show his devotion to the new faith, but he put himself and his master Smith in a religious-based clash due to his personal fanatic attitude. Immediately the ancestral spirits came to talk to the white man, who addressed them through his interpreter Okeke:

"The body of the white man, I salute you," he said, using the language in which immortals spoke to men. "The body of the white man, do you know me?" he asked. Mr. Smith looked at his interpreter, but Okeke, who was a native of distant Umuru, was also at a loss. Ajofia laughed in his guttural voice. It was like the laugh of rusty metal. "They are strangers," he said, "and they are ignorant". (Achebe:167)

The language and culture stood as barriers between the Christians and the natives, for the interpreter could not encode the words of the spirits as he had no knowledge of the indigenous culture and the white man ignored the meaning of the uttered words let alone the cultural meanings that lied behind them.

Based on the native stereotypical concept that everyone, who did not share with them their culture, was ignorant, they ridiculed the Christians. These communication barriers held back the intercultural understanding between the two groups. Moreover, the incident became more complicated due to the personal attitude of the white man, who saw everything as black or white.

"Tell the white man that we will not do him any harm," he said to the interpreter. "Tell him to go back to his house and leave us alone. We liked his brother who was with us before. He was foolish, but we liked him, and for his sake we shall not harm his brother. But this shrine, which he built, must be destroyed. We shall no longer allow it in our midst. It has bred untold abominations and we have come to put an end to it." (Achebe:167)

The words of the village's leader showed the individual difference between the two white men concerning their treatment of the natives. Unlike the second, the first learned a lot about the local religion so he

made up his mind that confronting it would not bring positive results. Thus, he gained great respect from the villagers, who later did not want to harm his successor for his sake.

What made the clan decide to destroy the church was not only because it converted some of them, although this was a reason. The main reason was Enoch's provoking action, which made a harsh stir in the clan. This confirmed the assumption that the Mr. Smith's misunderstanding of the native culture and his ill-treatment of them negatively affected their mission of converting the natives to Christianity.

“You can stay with us if you like our ways. You can worship your own god. It is good that a man should worship the gods and the spirits of his fathers. Go back to your house so that you may not be hurt. Our anger is great, but we have held it down so that we can talk to you.” Mr. Smith said to his interpreter: “Tell them to go away from here. This is the house of God and I will not live to see it desecrated.” Okeke interpreted wisely to the spirits and leaders of Umuofia: “The white man says he is happy you have come to him with your grievances, like friends. He will be happy if you leave the matter in his hands”. (Achebe:167-168)

This short communication between the natives and the white man showed the features of their different identities. Both sides were ready to fight, or even lose their lives, for the sake of their faith. A clansman would longer be a real member of it unless he defended his religion. The Christian missionary, on the other side, shared with them the sense of belonging to his own belief. So, communication showed identity. That is, the individual may not be able to understand himself until he/she encountered others who differed from him in his/her thought. Like the natives, the

Christian was religiously ordained to act in a way that expressed allegiance to his faith.

To avoid the religious-based clash between the two sides, the interpreter conveyed the message wrongly to the natives. The interpreter's wise act was due to his cultural understanding of the others. He knew that the villagers were harshly provoked by unmasking one of their leaders in public, a thing that would lead to religious war:

"We cannot leave the matter in his hands because he does not understand our customs, just as we do not understand his. We say he is foolish because he does not know our ways, and perhaps he says we are foolish because we do not know his. Let him go away." Mr. Smith stood his ground. But he could not save his church. (Achebe:168)

Both two conflicting groups depended on the pre-set stereotypical views each group had about the other, regardless of the accuracy of the stereotype and the individual differences.

The clan was put in an identity conflict by what Enoch had done. That is, they were led to act in one of two ways, each of them reflecting a different identity aspect. Had they kept silent and taken no action, that meant the superiority of the new Christian identity over them and the breaking down of their own way of life; and if they were to fight back the Christians they might have faced a similar end to that of Abame. This identity conflict clarified the native's allegiance to their own ways and also reflected the degree of the effect made by the new faith on the natives. That is, the clan would not have fallen apart if they were ready to fight the strangers together as they used to do in the past.

4.1.3.8 The fracture of the Clan

In the last clan's meeting, Okonkwo came to examine whether or not the clan would fight the white man, or had it become cowardly. He began to show his hatred to those, who held the clan down from chasing away the strangers, particularly after the imprisonment of the six clan leaders:

“The greatest obstacle in Umuofia,” Okonkwo thought bitterly, “is that coward, Egonwanne. His sweet tongue can change fire into cold ash. When he speaks, he moves our men to impotence. If they had ignored his womanish wisdom five years ago, we would not have come to this.” He ground his teeth. “Tomorrow he will tell them that our fathers never fought a ‘war of blame.’ If they listen to him, I shall leave them and plan my own revenge”
(Achebe:176)

Okonkwo's stereotypical masculine identity caused him to consider everyone coward unless they defended the ways of their fathers. He hated the clan's spokesperson *Egonwanne*, as the latter was against the idea of chasing the Christians out of their land. Okonkwo made up his mind to fight the Christians alone if his clan chose not to fight. While they were waiting for the meeting to start, Okonkwo sat sadly beside his friend Obierika and asked him about Egonwanne:

“Yes, there he is, under the silk-cotton tree. Are you afraid he would convince us not to fight? “Afraid? I do not care what he does to you. I despise him and those who listen to him. I shall fight alone if I choose.”(Achebe:177)

Okonkwo began to distance himself from his clan. This is a sign that he felt that his clan was not acting untidily, and he would choose to stick to the ways of his fathers. Okonkwo remained loyal to his religion and his

ancestors, but some of his kinsmen had joined the strangers. The intercultural context made Okonkwo understand the aspects of his religious identity, i.e. he has still firm and loyal to his fathers' ways while others of his people had changed.

Okika said "I ask you: Are all the sons of Umuofia with us here?" A deep murmur swept through the crowd. "They are not," he said. "They have broken the clan and gone their several ways. We who are here this morning have remained true to our fathers, but our brothers have deserted us and joined a stranger to soil their fatherland. If we fight the stranger, we shall hit our brothers and perhaps shed the blood of a clansman. But we must do it '...' We must root out this evil. And if our brothers take the side of evil, we must root them out too. And we must do it now. We must bale this water now that it is only ankle-deep..." (Achebe:178-179)

The clan had fallen apart because it was no longer acting like one as it used to be. Some of its sons had joined the new religion and turned their back to the native religion and way of life. By changing their faith, the white man changed their ethnic identity, so there was an Ibo Christian and an Ibo following the traditional faith. If the natives called for war, they would fight their kinsmen, who had joined the strangers and fight for the sake of their new religion.

Okika insisted on fighting the Christians even if it required fighting the clan's men. This showed that the religious bonds are stronger than the ethnic ones. However, it was too late to say that, since the clan had broken into two religious groups. While *Okika* was encouraging *Umuofia* to wipe the Christians out of their land, five court messengers came to inform the gathering that the white Governor had ordered the meeting to

stop. As Okonkwo had been the man of action, he started fighting as they came across him to convey their message:

In a flash Okonkwo drew his machete. The messenger crouched to avoid the blow. It was useless. Okonkwo's machete descended twice, and the man's head lay beside his uniformed body'...' Okonkwo stood looking at the dead man. He knew that Umuofia would not go to war. He knew because they had let the other messengers escape. They had broken into tumult instead of action. He discerned fright in that tumult. He heard voices asking: "Why did he do it? "He wiped his machete on the sand and went away.(Achebe: 180)

Okonkwo realized that he was alone without his clan. The white man owned some of them and the others had lost their true sense of belonging as they had deserted the way of their ancestors. Moreover, some of the crowd even wondered why Okonkwo had killed the messenger.

By killing the court messenger, Okonkwo has shown his sincerity to his faith and that he was still firm in the way of his fathers, who would have never let this happen.

Then they came to the tree from which Okonkwo's body was dangling, and they stopped dead. (Achebe:182)

Okonkwo chose to take his life than to be hanged by the hands of his enemies, although it was a crime against their Earth Goddess. His clan's men, who had left him alone to fight for the clan's religion and customs, were to be blamed for his death. The Christian colonizers, who came to his land and obliged him to desert the ways of his fathers, were also to be blamed. His death illustrated the collapse of the traditional culture and religion that he devoted the whole of his life to defend. It also symbolized

the victory of the colonizers who drove him to take his life through attracting his people to the Christian camp.

4.2 Analysis of Religious Identity in the Novel *The Bamboo Stalk*

The novel is divided into five main parts. Each one of them narrates a phase of the protagonist *José's* life. José's journey to and from his father's land influenced some sort of development in his life. The main five parts have no sub-titles, so I need to put my own headlines according to the chosen citations that are relevant to the study purpose.

4.2.1 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part One

The first part narrates the incidents that took place before the birth of José. These events led to the existence of José. His Filipino mother *Josephine* was driven by the circumstances in their homeland to travel to Kuwait in search for work. She traveled to work as a housemaid in the house of an old Kuwaiti lady, *Ghanima*, who later became Jose's grandmother. *Rashid*, the son of the old lady, secretly married Josephine and bore their only son José. A secret marriage is called *urfi* in Kuwaiti Muslim society. It is done without the acceptance of the two families and without being declared to the public (Alsanousi 2015).

José faced socio-familial refusal from the early days of his life. This society-based refusal has its effect on Jose's religious identity as we will see later.

4.2.1.1 *The Name of Jose*

My name is José. In the Philippines it's pronounced the English way, with an h sound at the start. In Arabic, rather like in Spanish, it begins with a kh sound. In Portuguese, though it's written the same way, it opens with a j, as in Joseph. All these versions are

completely different from my name here in Kuwait, where I'm known as Isa. How did that come about? How did that come about? I didn't choose my name so I wouldn't know. All I know is that the whole world has agreed to disagree about it'. (Alsanousi 2015:3)

José started talking about the different opinions regarding the pronunciation of his name and that the way it is pronounced in Kuwait is completely different from the other countries. The person's name reflects part of his identity, as it might symbolize the religious and/or social background of his parents. Parents always want their children to grow up in their footsteps (foreclosure identity). José was given the name *Isa* by his father who was a Muslim. This indicates that his father planned to bring him up as a Muslim. This could easily happen as many Muslims worldwide do so. However, Jose was waving between Islam and Christianity since his father was a Muslim and his mother a Christian.

To choose a name then is to choose identity. This is because sometimes parents give their child the name of the person that they wish him to grow up like. Nevertheless, the child may grow up and choose his own way of life and sometimes might be opposite to his/her name.

The differences in José's name in the different countries indicate the various facets of his identity. If the people do not agree on someone's name, this means that they perceive him in various ways according to the different names:

'José or Isa, whatever. There's no great need to talk about my problem with names or how I acquired them, because my problem isn't really with names but with what lies behind them' (Alsanousi:3).

The name shows how people prefer to see you (ascribed identity) and it tells about people's degree of acceptance of the identity that you want to show (avowal identity- see 2.1.2.2.3 in Chapter Two). In the case of José, the variety of names reveal the discrepancy between the identity he chose for himself and the one people ascribed to him:

'In Kuwait, on the other hand, the first thing I lost was my nickname 'the Arab', along with my other names and titles, though I later acquired a new nickname: 'the Filipino.' If only I could have been 'the Filipino' in the Philippines, or 'the Arab' in Kuwait! If only the word 'if' could change things, or if . . . but there's no need to go into that now'(Alsanousi:4).

José was seen as an Arab in the Philippines and as a Filipino in Kuwait which is different from what he wished. The Kuwaiti people regarded him as a stranger and so did the Filipinos. The meaning behind the name was the ascribed identity. That is, people named him according to the way they categorized him.

José suffered from the discrepancy between the way he showed himself and the way others saw him. This is an identity gap, as his personal identity frame contradicted with the relational frame; he was seen as a Filipino where he wanted to be seen as an Arab. This identity gap created misunderstanding and miscommunication as well.

The name Isa, which his father gave him paves his way to be an Arab Muslim belonging to his father's prosperous family (*Altaroof*), while his mother called him after the famous Filipino warrior Rizal:

'My mother called me José after the Philippine national hero José Rizal, who was a doctor and writer in the nineteenth century. Without Rizal the people wouldn't have risen up to throw out the

Spanish occupiers, but the uprising had to wait till after he was executed (Alsanousi:3).

José rose up to find himself waving between various names, each of them indicating a different identity. For his misfortune, the society preferred to call him by the name or nickname in the place where he wanted the other name.

4.2.1.2 Hybridism and Religious Identity

According to Belkhasher and Badurais (2016), there are three main hybrid characters in the novel: José, *Gassan* (Rashid's intimate friend) and *Merla* (José's cousin):

'I wasn't the only person in the Philippines born to a Kuwaiti father. Plenty of Filipina women have had children by Kuwaiti men, or other Gulf men, and even other Arabs. The women worked as maids in houses in the Arab world or messed around with tourists from Arab countries who came seeking pleasure at a price that only someone in dire need would accept. Some people engage in vice to satisfy their natural urges; others, due to poverty, engage in vice to fill their stomachs. In many cases the outcome is fatherless children' (Alsanousi:4).

Poverty is the reason for many Filipino women to migrate in search for work; others were forced by circumstances to earn money by engaging in vice actions and the product of that is to have fatherless mixed-race children. The financial condition of some families drove parents to exploit their young girls for bringing money regardless of consequences of this greedy action on the girls and their children:

'Sometimes she would come home with a swollen lip, a bloodied nose or a dark blue bruise on her jaw. Her parents didn't even

notice. The only thing that interested them about the brute who had hurt their daughter was the money he tossed at her after sating his lust' (Alsanousi:7).

The girls, who were made to do so, would have a negative stance on their families and men in general. The hybrid children will face much more difficulties in life, for they will grow up to find themselves waving between two races and cultures.

The hybrid characters in the novel faced various sorts of societal refusal that affected the formation of their social and religious identities. Being hybrid directly affected Jose's religious identity:

'If I had been born Muslim to a Kuwaiti father and a Kuwaiti mother, I would be living in a big house with a spacious room on the upper floor, with a forty-six-inch television, a walk-in closet and an en suite bathroom. I would wake up every morning to go to a job I had chosen myself, wearing a loose white thobe and a traditional headdress'...' I could go to the mosque on Fridays and listen to the man standing in the pulpit and understand what he was saying, instead of just raising my hands, imitating the men around me and repeating 'Amen, amen' like a parrot' (Alsanousi:47).

Regrettably, José expressed his hope that he would have been so happy if he had been born to a Kuwaiti father and mother and grow up as a Muslim. This reveals the negative effect of being hybrid on his religious identity.

'If I had been born to a Filipino father and a Filipina mother, two of a kind, then I would be a Christian, comfortably off, living with my family in Manila, venturing every day into a mass of humanity,

exposing my lungs and the pores of my skin to vehicle exhaust fumes. Or I might be a poor Muslim living at peace among my people in Mindanao in the south despite hunger and harassment by the government, or a rich kid living in a fancy house in wealthy Forbes Park in Makati City and going to a school that only the rich can afford, or a Buddhist of Chinese origin, working with my father in a shop in the Chinese quarter of Manila, burning incense in front of a statue of Buddha every morning because it's good for business' (Alsanousi:48).

The reason that stands behind his puzzled religious situation is not having a defined racial origin. He expressed that his parents had put him in a real mess, for he became unable to choose a single religion. The loss of a single defined origin caused him a similar loss in the religious identity. Here José has experienced identity crisis as he was ranging between his mother's religion (Christianity) and his father's (Islam). It was not possible to believe in both of them, and it was neither easy - for him - to choose one, so his religious identity crisis emerged.

4.2.1.3 The Religious Beliefs of Ghanima

'Although she seemed to be sensible and to have a strong personality, she was also superstitious and firmly believed what she saw in her dreams. She thought that every dream was a message that she couldn't ignore, however trivial or incomprehensible it might seem. She spent much of her time looking for an explanation for the things she had dreamed and if she was unable to do so herself, she would seek out people who interpret dreams. Although the various interpretations she obtained from these people were different, sometimes even

contradictory, she believed everything they said and expected the things she dreamed to take place in real life' (Alsanousi:15).

The old lady Ghanima was a Muslim and she had some superstitious beliefs that are prohibited in Islam. Believing in omens is one of the characteristics of the disbelievers according to the Noble Quran and the authentic Sunnah of the Prophet of Islam, Muhammad, peace be upon him. It is narrated in the book *Sunan Abi Dawud: 3910*) that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: 'taking omens is polytheism (*shirk*)'.

The old lady deviated from the correct Islamic belief by believing in omens and superstitions. Her belief in these superstitious signs of good and bad luck made her mistreat others as a result of her interpretations to certain circumstances:

'My grandmother thought her arrival was a very bad omen, and it showed on her face whenever she saw my mother. My father had an explanation for that. 'You came to our house, Josephine, around the same time a bomb went off near the Emir's motorcade,' he said. 'Without divine intervention it would have killed him. So my mother saw your arrival as a sign of bad luck'(Alsanousi:16)

Josephine's relation with Ghanima was not good as the latter linked between the arrival of the former and the bombing of the Emir's motorcade. Thus, according to Ghanima, Josephine is religiously rejected as it was thought to be a sign of bad luck. Ghanima's superstitious prejudices served as a cultural barrier that held back the intercultural communication between her and her Filipina housemaid, Josephine. Thereafter, Ghanima kept regarding all of Josephine's actions as evil, particularly the birth of her son José.

'Apparently some names bring shame on others, and that's what happened with Rashid. As soon as his mother heard the girl's family name, she rejected the idea of Rashid marrying the girl. Sometime later the girl married another man' (Alsanousi:22).

Ghanima's religious superstitious prejudice affected her son's affair. Taking omens regarding some names made the old lady reject her son's marriage with the girl that he loved. It also made her son think that, before one loves someone, he has to think carefully of such religious-based thoughts.

'After Walid's death, the old lady agreed for the first time to have contact with your father by telephone. "I didn't really want to speak to you, but I just wanted to let you know that you're in for a run of bad luck. Look what happened to your friend after that horrible thing was born. It's a curse, like its mother," ... "Then come home and you'll find I have a mother's heart and I've forgiven you the horrible thing you've done.(Alsanousi: 34)

The old lady regarded her son's tragedy as a result of the curse that was caused by the birth of his son (*the thing*) and the coming of his mother too. The old lady then exploited religion to achieve her social-based wishes. Ghanima's ethnocentric view hindered her contact with her own son. She preferred to cast out her son for fear of the community. Although she seemed to be a religious woman, she judged her son's behavior from a social prejudicial viewpoint, not from a religious one.

'Ghassan told me he was supposed to take me straight from the airport to Grandmother's house, but the country was in mourning, people were upset and, most importantly, it wasn't clear how Grandmother felt about me coming back. What would she think

about me arriving just as the Emir had died? Hadn't my mother and I caused enough trouble in the past? My mother had arrived at the time of the attack on the Emir's motorcade in the mid-1980s, I was born at the time of the plane hijacking, and we left Kuwait when the passengers were released. The fact that I had arrived at just that moment confirmed my grandmother's belief in the curse of Josephine, Ghassan said. So, my meeting with Grandmother had been postponed for a month' (Alsanousi: 162).

Ghanima's personal religious thought affected her relations with her family and her grandson. One of the obstacles that held back José from achieving his religious identity and approaching Islam is the old lady's superstitious belief.

4.2.2 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Two

Part two narrates the events after José's birth. His parents fled to stay away from the house of the old lady, who rejected their existence near her for fear of the society. They stayed away for a while, then his father, Rashid was pressed by his mother to send his family back to the Philippines so as to gain his mother's acceptance. This part recounts José's journey back to his mother's land and his childhood in the land of Mendoza (his grandfather), from whom he took the name José Mendoza. This part shows the trigger of his identity crisis, because he grew up to find himself waving between his mother's Christian Filipino identity and his father's Islamic Arab one.

4.2.2.1 Josephine and the Religious Identity Formation

'My mother somewhat neglected my religious education in the belief that my future was to be a Muslim in my father's country. My father had whispered the Muslim call to prayer in my right ear

as soon as he held me in his arms in hospital after I was born, but that didn't stop my mother from taking me to the small local church as soon as we arrived in Manila to baptize me in holy water as a Catholic. Apparently, she wasn't yet fully convinced at that stage that I would go back'(Alsanousi: 47)

Although his mother was a Christian, she bred in him a sense that he had to grow up as a Muslim like his father. Therefore, she took part in his identity diffusion status. She wanted to fulfill his father's will to bring him up as a Muslim, because his father started to hand him his Islamic identity by whispering the Islamic call for prayer in the very moment after his birth. Both of his parents thus agreed to this foreclosure identity status (see: 2.1.2.2.5), so his mother was not serious to take him to the church, though it was the place of her own worship. For Josephine, Islam did not mean the way of salvation, rather it was the cultural element of the identity that she drew for her son. That is, she looked at the matter from a prosperous point of view rather than religious:

'But because life was hard and my mother painted a picture of the paradise that awaited me, I ended up looking forward to the day when I would be rich and I could get whatever I wanted without having to work for it. If I was impressed by an advertisement for an expensive car, my mother would say, 'You can have one of those if you go back to Kuwait.' If I pointed to something in the shops that my mother couldn't afford, she would say, 'In Kuwait Rashid will buy you one like that' (Alsanousi:55).

The poor life they lived in the Philippines made Josephine prepare her son to be a Muslim for the sake of easy richness, so she held him back from embracing Christianity for fear of preventing him from the prosperous Kuwaiti life. José's preference for Islam was thus extrinsic,

not intrinsic (see: 2.1.2.1.5), as he had been encouraged to accept Islam for achieving a non-religious purpose, i.e. a happy life. This would have its effect on his religious commitment as it would be linked with being accepted as a member of the Kuwaiti society.

'My first visit to the Manila Cathedral was with Mama Aida, who insisted I be confirmed in the cathedral rather than just in the little parish church where I was baptized years earlier. Mama Aida asked Uncle Pedro and his wife to come and witness the rite and to join her as my sponsors. The two agreed, but my mother stuck to her position – 'He'll embrace Islam sooner or later' – and she didn't attend' (Alsanousi:85-86).

José was attracted to Christianity by his aunt Aida while his mother was insisting that his future was to be Muslim. He was still in the status of diffusion or confusion and he had not experienced either of them. His hybridity caused him to be caught between two different religions and nationalities. This shows the great influence of the environment on the religious identity formation. His mother saw that it would be of no value to baptize him as he would soon leave to his father's land where he would eventually be a Muslim. The place and the contact with the adherents of a certain religion thus plays a substantial role in shaping religious identity. José was willingly waiting to go to Kuwait, as his mother kept promising him, predicting for him to be a Muslim, so he refused to go regularly with his aunt to the church. This shows the family effect on forming religious identity. It seemed that he sometimes wanted to go to church, only for the sake of his aunt, until his mother's dream could become true.

'If only my parents could have given me a single, clear identity, instead of making me grope my way alone through life in search of one. Then I would have just one name that would make me turn

when someone called me. I would have just one native country. I would learn its national anthem. Its trees and streets would shape my memories, and, in the end, I could lie at rest in its soil. I would have one religion I could believe in instead of having to set myself up as the prophet of a religion that was mine alone' (Alsanousi: 47).

Due to his hybrid character, José was ranging between two religions, countries and names. A family's agreement on one religious identity paves the way for the child to grow up with a cleared defined identity. José started his life with a confused religious view due to the multi-religious context he lived in:

'It's my destiny to spend my life looking for a name, a religion and a country. I won't however deny my parents credit for helping me, unintentionally, to discover my creator, in my own way' (Alsanousi:50).

José's diffusion status drove him to find his Creator and religion in a subjective way. His religiosity seemed unique as if he was the Prophet of himself. His religion seemed to be a combination of multiple faiths as well as his character. The three main identity component she kept looking for, i.e. *name, religion* and *country*, each had a role in identifying the other. The country is the context where religion is learnt, and the name is the indicator of the religious identity the person has.

Since his parents did not agree on one religion, did not refer to one nationality and even did not give him a single name, they were responsible of leaving him wandering his whole life searching for what his parents did not agree upon. This identity diffusion status would lead him to an identity crisis, when he later was faced with the Kuwaiti societal refusal.

4.2.2.2 The Reason Behind José's Rejection

Josephine read to her son a letter sent by his father some years ago. The letter informed her about the completion of the divorce procedure and the reason behind that.

'My mother cried when I read out the words 'I completed the divorce procedures', despite the fact that she had read the letter years before and had married another man after Rashid. I cried too, but that was when I read about my grandmother saying, 'Mind you never bring that thing back here again.' 'Why does Grandmother hate me, Mama?' I asked. My mother was busy mopping up my tears with a handkerchief that was already soaked with her own. 'As Jesus said, even prophets are strangers in their own country,' she said' (Alsanousi:58-59).

Rashid was ordained by his mother to divorce his wife and to send her with her son to the Philippines. When José questioned about the reason of his grandmother's hatred, Josephine gave him a religious reasoning that even God's Prophets were faced by the same refusal. She did not want to discourage him from going back to his father's land.

The old lady was affected by the societal viewpoint to the degree that she refused to accept her son and grandson. Moreover, she disowned her grandson and even did not regard him as normal human being as she called him *a thing*. Ghanima's attitude was due to the societal point of view. The Kuwaiti society seemed to have more superior effect on people's behavior than religion:

'My mother said she was stunned when she read the letter for the first time, not because of the divorce, which was how she expected

the relationship to end ('The decision wasn't your father's. A whole society stood behind him,' she said)' (Alsanousi:60).

Although Rashid chose for himself to marry a Filipino woman and to have a half-Kuwaiti son (personal identity), the community did not accept this kind of marriage (communal identity), so his own preference contradicted the social one, hence the personal identity was so weak that it could not confront the communal identity in this high-context society (see: 3.5).

4.2.3 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Three

This part narrates José's life when he became fifteen and left school to look for a job. He became unable to stay with his annoying grandfather especially after his cousin Merla had left home. He kept wandering from one job to another. Like Merla, he insisted on leaving home although his mother had done her best to dissuade him.

4.2.3.1 The Chinese friend

During search for work, José stayed with a Chinese boy three years older than him, whose name was *Cheng*.

'I was born. I told him I was born on 3 April 1988. He closed his eyes, thought a while and counted on his fingers. 'Year 4685, the year of the dragon,' he said. 'That's excellent. We both have wood as our element.' If I had been born in the year of the snake, the horse or the sheep, Cheng wouldn't have let me share his room, because they have fire as their element, and wood and fire don't go together, he said. Chinese astrology is complicated, and Cheng didn't trouble himself with the details. He just looked at the basic elements, such as earth, fire, water, wood and metal, and took his

decision on that basis. It was the kind of madness that my Kuwaiti grandmother went in for when she decided whether things were good or bad omens, or so my mother had told me' (Alsanousi:114).

According to Chinese Cheng's Buddhism, one must not mix with anyone whose origin contradicts with his. This showed that people's relation is based on their religious thoughts. Cheng judged José according to his Buddhist prejudice (see: 2.1.2.5). If José's origin had not suited Cheng's, he would not have allowed him to share the same room with him.

José did not believe in his friend's beliefs, rather he regarded them as mad beliefs, similar to what he was told about his grandmother. This religious difference between them could have affected José's relationship with his Chinese friend as it had done with his mother when she arrived in time when the Kuwaiti Emir's motorcade was about to be bombed. Grandmother considered Josephine as a curse. Thus, religious prejudicial beliefs greatly affect people's relations.

This incident let José himself experience contact with people, who differed from him in religion and culture. Encountering different cultures and thoughts is the context whereby one would be able to understand his own identity, shape and modify it (see: 2.1.2.2.2). From the contact with the Buddhist boy, José discovered part of his religious identity that he did not believe in, like taking omens, which is a Buddhist thought, and also practiced by his Muslim grandmother.

4.2.3.2 The Wander Between Christianity and Buddhism

The multiple religious alternatives around José made him confused between them. When he was close to his aunt Aida, he seemed more Christian, when he came across Cheng, he thought about Buddhism and when he remembered his mother's promise of the prosperous Kuwaiti life,

he became more Muslim. His religious identity crisis was motivation and legitimation. That is, his crisis was due to internal changes and external situational factors (see: 2.1.2.2.5). José was inwardly wandering and outwardly attracted by his multi-religious environment.

Before leaving to the Muslim land, Kuwait, he paid two visits, one to the Christian cathedral and the other to the Buddhist Seng Guan Temple:

'Our Father, I am going back to where I was born, to the land of the father I have never known, to a destiny known only to You. My mother says a beautiful life awaits me there but no one but You knows what really awaits me. Our Father who art in Heaven, in my hand. I have a blue passport, and in my heart, I have a faith I fear I may not be able to preserve. Help me to believe in You. Abide with me on my journey. Guide me to what is good and dispel my doubts. Our Father who art in Heaven, are You really in Heaven? Answer me, in the name of Your angels and in the name of Your son the Messiah and of the Virgin '(Alsanousi:153).

José's search for faith seemed to be aimed at achieving non-religious purposes. This could be clear from the way he prayed. He asked for a good life and a defined identity. He did not question himself or the others about the reality of these religions. He did not show any interest in learning any of these religions' teachings. He looked to all these deities from an angle of his personal interest. It did not matter which one of these Gods was the true God, but the matter is which one of them could help him settle his dispute.

'Buddha, I don't know how to pray to you. But if you really are the one who will save mankind from its ordeals and afflictions, then you will hear me and accept my prayer as it is. I don't know how to pray with prayer beads like the man sitting over there'...' Help

me to believe in you, in your message, your disciples and your virgin mother, Maya, who bore you inside her on the day when her womb radiated light and you were visible inside it before you were born. If you are a god, a prophet or a saint, guide me, be my helper so that, through you, I can see the light'(Alsanousi: 156).

Like what he did in the cathedral, Jose went to Buddha's temple and prayed. Though he wore the cross around his neck, which is a sign representing Christianity, he also went to pray to Buddha. This showed his confusion status of religious identity. He had not settled himself in a single religious faith yet. He was confused in choosing religious identity due to his confusion in nationality and race. The measure he set up to examine if Buddha or Jesus were real Gods was to achieve his purpose, i.e. a defined identity and a stable life. However, having a good life as one assumes and a clear identity, on the one hand, does not mean that the religious system is true, and, on the other hand, the person may experience a life of tribulation in the eyes of others while he worships the true God.

By his prayers to Buddha and Jesus, he aimed to achieve two goals. The first is non-religious and the second is religious and this could be achieved by the non-religious. The non-religious goal is to have his life dream, which his mother had promised him, i.e. a prosperous Kuwaiti life as a Kuwaiti citizen. If this had been obtained, his religious goal would have been accordingly gained.

José asked the two deities for guidance as he was confused by all the situational factors (family, parents, and friends) to have a consistent faith. As it was stated earlier (see: 2.1.2.1.5), one of the influential factors for choosing religion is God's guidance, especially when one is confused by

multiple alternatives around him. José assumed that he was guided by God as we will see later.

Although José was thought to be Christian till that time, as he sometimes visited the church and was wearing the cross, he sought guidance in non-Christian Gods like Buddha. This showed that he had somewhat of the pluralistic concept (see: 2.1.2.1.6). He believed that all religions might be means of salvation or at least some truth might be found in the other religions.

Thus, his multi-religious and mixed-racial context is the direct reason behind his religious identity diffusion. This is because the family ought to provide the children with clear and identified guidance, by which the young boy or girl would easily find his/her way to achieve religious identity. Hence, the family plays an essential role in religious identity formation.

4.2.4 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Four

This part is the largest one in size and content as it narrates José's journey back to his father's land where he was born. This part describes the intercultural encounter between the Kuwaiti-Filipino protagonist and his father's society. Three main intercultural barriers hindered José's contact with his father's kinsmen: religion, language and, above all, race. This part narrates José's search for a suitable place among his father's community, his search for identity. He learned more about the variety of the Kuwaiti society and came up to the conclusion that he would not fit to be one of them.

4.2.4.1. Jose and Islam

'Allahuakbar, Allahuakbar' called the muezzin from a small mosque about fifty meters from Grandmother's house, followed by

other calls to prayer from far and near: 'Allahuakbar, Allahuakbar.' It was the first time I had heard the call so clearly and so close up. I had a strange feeling. Something about it reassured me. The words sounded familiar even though I didn't know the language. Something still inside me started to stir. It was the same call that my father had whispered in my right ear just after I was born. That was the first human voice I ever heard. Did the call to prayer perhaps stir a subliminal memory of the words my father whispered? It was a sound that made me curious to go into the mosque near my grandmother's house – a curiosity I had never felt when I went past the Golden Mosque or the Green Mosque in Quiapo in Manila' (Alsanousi:181).

For the first time José tried to visit his grandmother with his father's friend Ghassan. To be accepted by the family is not an easy task as Ghassan told Jose. The Islamic call for prayer touched José's heart in a way that differed from the way when he was in Manila. This time the call for prayer approached his heart as he approached his Kuwaiti family. This indicates that José's acceptance of Islam is linked with his acceptance of his father's family. Although José could not speak Arabic and the difference in language hindered communication, it still did not have any considerable effect as the racial and ethnic factors mattered most. Nothing would have prevented Jose from Islam if he had been accepted by the family:

'I had a strange, vague impression of Islam. For me it was associated with certain symbols, like any religion or civilization or idea. If the symbol worked well, it left a good impression of the thing it symbolized. If the symbol was a failure, it sent the wrong message' (Alsanousi:181).

José still remained in the identity diffusion status and he had not committed to any faith yet. During his religious identity search, he did not study religions and their teachings to examine which of them is true, rather he had been observing the deeds of each religion's adherents. For José, the followers of every religion served as symbols and signs that indicated to him the validity of a certain faith. Thus, he came close to Islam and fled from it due to some experiences he had with some Muslims. One can conclude here that José was demonstrating to the end that his acceptance of Islam and having a Muslim identity depended on the Muslims accepting him as one of them. That is, the commitment of religious identity is affected by the social-class identity.

4.2.4.2. Jose and Islamic Sects

'The heroism and life story of Sultan Lapu-Lapu, and the way ordinary people in the Philippines, regardless of religion, admired him and recognized his role in resisting invasion, were positive images that made me feel close to Islam. But the Abu Sayyaf group, by killing missionaries and other innocent people, very much alienated me from Islam' (Asanousi:183).

These two experiences José had with these Islamic groups gave him two different images of Islam. The first bred into him a good impression that kept him closer to Islam while the second negatively affected him:

I left the laptop on the table and, puzzled, I went to lie down on my bed. Which one of the two was Islam? Was it what I had seen in The Message? Or was it what had put an end to the life of the director? Was it the Islam of Lapu-Lapu, the sultan of Mactan? Or the Islam of the Abu Sayyaf group in Mindanao? I was filled with confusion, fear and doubt. I wondered whether Satan had taken

root in my mind while I was preparing a house for God in my heart' (Alsanousi: 244).

José made friends with a religious Kuwaiti man whose name was *Ibrahim Salam* who welcomed Jose in his apartment and stood by him. Salam reflected to José a good image about Islam. He let José watch a film portraying part of the Prophet of Islam's life (*The Message*):

'I liked the film very much. I watched it several times. I liked the Prophet Muhammad, even though he didn't appear in the film. I liked Hamza, the Prophet's uncle. I liked the companions of the Prophet and their conversation with the Negus of Abyssinia. The conversation provided answers to many of the questions I had been thinking about' (Alsanousi:244).

Ibrahim Salam made José search directly about Islam from sources that Salam thought reflected an authentic image about the reality of Islam, so José gained a bright picture that provided him with some answers to the questions that he had been thinking of. Unfortunately, the bright image had not stayed longer as it was soon corrupted when he heard about the murder of the film-maker in a terrorist attack:

'I started researching on the Internet. The first thing I read about was The Message, its crew, how it was filmed and how audiences responded. I was particularly interested in the director. I saw a picture of him on one website, smartly dressed in a suit and a black tie. I was stunned to read the news under the picture. It said that two months before I came back to Kuwait the director, Moustapha Akkad, and his daughter were killed in an Amman hotel in a bombing carried out by an Islamist group(Alsanousi:244).

Although he was pleased by the film and it brought him closer to Islam, he was stunned by learning that the film director had been killed by Muslims' hands. He was very confused because he could not understand which of these groups represented real Islam. The great conflict between the Islamic groups led José astray and put him in massive diffusion. His friend Ibrahim Salam once warned him against some group of Kuwaiti boys, whom he met once in *Boracay* (a tourist place in the Philippines), meanwhile his aunt Hind warned him against Salam and his group:

'Brother,' Ibrahim broke in, 'choose your friends very carefully. You don't need people of that kind.' I didn't respond. 'I know you're looking for Kuwaiti friends, brother Isa,' Ibrahim continued. 'Join our group and not only will you have lots of friends, but you'll have Kuwaiti brothers, as you wanted, to guide you to the right path and to give you assistance.' I thanked him and the conversation ended. If Ibrahim had known what my Aunt Hind had to say about his group, he wouldn't have blamed me for being reluctant to accept his repeated offers. Why do things have to be so complicated? Ibrahim was warning me about the Boracay gang, while Hind was warning me about Ibrahim and his group. Didn't I have the right to choose what I wanted? I wanted them all. Hind, Ibrahim and the gang of crazies. I ignored what I heard from him and from Hind' (Alsanousi:320-321).

This context in which José was put in, did not positively contribute in forming the Islamic-Kuwaiti identity that he dreamed of. As much as José wanted, all of the distinctive groups who were Kuwaiti, did not agree among themselves on one orientation to let him join them. For his misfortune he was the only one rejected by all for he was a half-Kuwaiti boy. The conflicting Islamic sects thus played a passive role in inviting

José to Islam, while the ethnic prejudice played the worst role as we will see later.

4.2.4.3 Jose and the Family of his Father

Under the pressure of his half-sister *Khawla* (his grandmother's favorite), José was accepted to visit Tarouf's household. In the beginning of his visit he sat with all the family members, Grandmother Ghanima, the three aunts Awatif, Nouryia and Hind, his sister Khawla and his father's friend Ghassan who brought him to Kuwait to fulfill his father's wish.

During this short visit, José learned more about his family and the nature of Kuwaiti society.

'Awatif, my eldest aunt, was very happy. She didn't see a problem, and she was enthusiastic about me staying in Grandmother's house because, as she put it, 'He's our son.' Although the others ignored her opinion, she had insisted on recognizing me. 'He's my brother's son. God wouldn't like it if we disowned him,' she had said. Ghassan made me happy when he told me what she said. I was delighted to hear that God was present at the meeting to hear what was going on. Even if I hadn't seen Him, I was reassured that He was present in Awatif's heart, because that meant He was nearby. I asked God to enter my heart as well' (Alsanousi:195).

This was the first meeting that joined him with his family to know something about their opinions regarding the affair of recognizing him. The first member to speak was his aunt Awatif, who was pleased to see him and to welcome him as the son of her brother. She seemed to be religious as she looked to the matter from a religious point of view, regardless of what people said. Although her other sisters did not agree

with her, she insisted that José should not be disowned because God Almighty would not like that.

According to Awatif, religion should be superior to the social norms and as their family was Muslim, they had to judge this issue according to the Islamic view. José having a half-Filipino origin should not prevent him from being recognized as a member of the family since his father is Rashid Altarouf. Awatif's religious identity is stronger than her social one, so she defeated the social norm with the religious stance.

When Ghassan translated this to José he felt happy and came close to Islam. José approached Islam whenever he learned that Islam contributed to settle his identity crisis, so he was delighted with Awatif's words when she mentioned that God would not accept his disowning. At that time, he asked God to insert faith in his heart as well as He had inserted it into Awatif's. José's religious identity was, thus, dependent on his social one.

'Nouriya was totally opposed to me being around and had got angry with Awatif and warned her of what might happen if her husband, Ahmad, found out about me. Awatif wavered a while when her husband was discussed but she later relented. 'My husband is a God-fearing man and would not take a negative position if he found out,' she said'(Alsanousi:195-196).

Unlike his aunt Awatif, his aunt Nouriya saw things differently. She ignored her sister's religious point of view, and, instead, relied on and feared the social norm. Although Awatif was religious, Nouriya was social. Nouriya tried to dissuade Awatif from her opinion by reminding her of its negative communal consequences. Awatif again relied on the religious teaching and told her that her husband would not have a negative position as he was a God-fearing man. Awatif and her husband's personal identity then was contradicted by the communal one, though the

Kuwaiti society is Muslim, the native social norm contradicted the religious view that Awatif confirmed:

'Although Awatif had shown some sympathy for me at first, she later deferred to her sister Nouriya, who said, 'Ahmad and Faisal are friends and if Ahmad found out about the Filipino, word might reach my husband. You'd only blame yourself if that were to happen.' Awatif was weak. One day she gave me, through Khawla, a copy of the Qur'an in English and a prayer mat. After that she disappeared under orders from Nouriya, but I gathered from Khawla that she was always asking whether I prayed. I kept away from all of them' (Alsanousi: 215).

Although Awatif seemed to be God-fearing and hence stood with her nephew, her religious personal identity was not strong enough to confront the communal one, so she caved to the pressure of her sister who warned her against the aftermath of her view.

Despite Awatif's positive stance and her gifts that intended to help José strengthen his religious identity, all this did not matter in solving his crisis since a whole society was standing against him. The personal identity was weak in case of the high-context society where the communal identity is dominant.

Nouriya had grown angrier and raised her voice. She said that, if there was no other way out, my full name should be just Isa Rashid Isa and the Tarouf name should be removed from my official papers. They should look for somewhere that could put me up, away from the Tarouf house, or settle the matter by offering me some money and sending me back to the Philippines, she added. She lost her temper. 'Kuwait's a small place and word spreads fast,' she said' (Alsanousi:195-196).

Tarouf's household, among other honorable Kuwaiti families, was socially ordained to act in a certain way. Some things were expected to be done by a member of any normal Kuwaiti family, but the same thing would be a blame if it was done by a family like the Tarouf's.

José's identity crisis was thus due to the social norm that prevented his family from recognizing him. José was also suffering from the identity gap which occurred as a result of the discrepancy between the personal and communal identities as well as the inconsistency between religion and the social behaviors of its adherents.

'Hind was unsure where she stood. She was a rights activist, well-known as Hind al-Tarouf. 'My credibility is on the line and so is my name,' she had said. She would have to sacrifice one of them – either her credibility or her name. If she upheld my rights as a human being when people found out that her war hero brother, Rashid al-Tarouf, had married a Filipina maid, she would have to sacrifice the way people saw her illustrious name. Sacrificing her principles and taking a stand against my human rights would preserve the prestige of her name and society's respect for her'(Alsanousi:197).

His aunt Hind was put in an internal conflict. She was attracted by two opposite stances, in which one had to be chosen. Her personal identity as a human rights activist inspired her to defend José, while the communal identity pulled her back to preserve her illustrious name. Personally, Hind would like to stand along her brother's son (personal identity) while she could not make that clear (enacted identity) for fear of the social criticism (communal identity) so she fell in contradiction between three layers of identity (identity gap).

The conflict between these identity frames weakened the religious identity as it was challenged by the communal frame, which prevented religion from performing its role in uniting the members of the same family on religious grounds.

4.2.4.4 Religion and Society

His sister Khawla exerted great efforts to gain Ghanima's acceptance to let José live in the Tarouf's house. It was a partial acceptance as he was allowed to stay in the annex, where the cook and the driver lived. It was somewhat separate from where the rest of the family members lived. He was accepted on the condition that he should be seen to the public as one of the cooks, not the son of the family, so he was not allowed to talk to the servants about his reality for fear of gossip. He was happy at first, hoping that it would improve to eventually become a complete acceptance.

'Aren't you going to come in and wish Grandmother a happy Eid?' she asked me. 'After everyone's gone? Once she's sure no one will see the face that brings shame on the family?' I said. The words just slipped out of my mouth, involuntarily. I was pointing at my own face as I spoke. 'Khawla!' I said angrily. 'Why do they treat me this way?' She was still smiling, though there was no longer anything to smile about. 'It's not easy, Isa,' she said, looking at the ground. 'Grandmother and Awatif are religious people,' I said excitedly. 'They pray a lot. Is God against me too?' Khawla didn't answer. I walked towards the door where she was standing' (Alsanousi:246).

As José was partially accepted, he was kept secretly and was not allowed to disclose his identity. José and his family were enacting for him a

servant identity, which would not fit him for long. He enacted so only for a certain time, but he seemed to lose his patience. The family was pressed by the society to mistreat him.

He tried to remind them that their religion has prohibited them from mistreating him. He told his sister that his aunt Awatif and grandmother were acting in a way that contradicted their religion. The two ladies really contradicted their religion (enacted identity) for fear of the society (communal identity). He tried to use religion as a source of guidance to conduct their actions. He was surprised about how the social norms could have a superior position to religion. His sister Khawla somewhat agreed with him in his critique of the way the Kuwaiti society judged things and she gave no convincing excuse except telling him that the matter is more complicated.

'The Buddha says in his teachings that people are equal and that no one is better than anyone else, other than in their knowledge and their ability to control their desires,' I said. 'We're not Buddhists,' she said, shaking her head. I took the chain with the cross from the drawer near my bed. 'And in the Bible, St Paul the Apostle says there's no longer any difference between Jews and non-Jews, between slaves and those who are free, between men and women. They are all one in Jesus Christ,' I told her. She cast a suspicious look at me. She was about to answer but I didn't give her time. 'I know, I know, you're not Christians.' I went to my laptop and turned the screen for her to see a website page that I had left open since the night before. 'The Prophet Muhammad, in his farewell sermon, said, "All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab is not superior to a non-Arab nor is a non-Arab superior to an Arab; also a white person is not superior to a black person nor

a black person to a white person, other than in piety and good deeds. "I folded the screen down on to the keyboard. 'I'm not that evil,' I added. 'Enough!' said Khawla, and her raised voice shut me up. 'I'm sorry,' she added, and she did look remorseful. 'But this has nothing to do with religion' (Alsanousi:246-247).

Although José was ranging between Islam, Christianity and Buddhism, he showed her that all of the three religions agreed that what they have done to him was wrong. These incidents showed the discrepancy in the Kuwaiti society's identity, for it takes Islam as the source on which the social life should be based. Khawla shook her head when he cited to her some of Buddha's words. Since they were neither Buddhists nor Christians, but Muslims, why did they not submit to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammad, who ordered them that there should not be any difference between Muslims according to their race?

Religion and social norms are two of the elements, by which identity is shaped. Religion is thought to be the base of societal behavior (see:2.1.2.1.1), so if religion was applied as it was originally taught, it would certainly have provided a solution to such identity conflict. José's identity crisis rose from the communal deviation from the religious teachings of their own religion, since his sister Khawla tried to convince him that the matter had nothing to do with religion. Her justification seemed to him illogic as the distinction between people and the social classification is found everywhere, even in his mother's land, but it did not reach the degree of disowning and despising each other.

José's religious identity was thus influenced by the confrontation of the communal behavior. In the time he would have achieved his religious commitment and learned more about his father's religion, which was handed to him since childhood (*foreclosed identity*), he had still wavered in

the *moratorium status*(see: 2.1.2.2.5), where he could not commit to one defined identity as he lost the *religious support* (see: 2.1.2.1.5), which should be gained from family, friends and religious leaders. The loss of the family support negatively affected José as he thought that God himself might hate him because he observed that the God-fearing people like grandmother and Awatif did not want to welcome him. This confirmed his thought that people's behaviors are the symbols that prove the validity of religion.

'Did Ghassan tell you about the bidoon?' she asked. 'Anyway, that's not what this is about,' she added before I had time to answer. Khawla explained to me what Ghassan had failed to explain. In Kuwait, I gathered, people didn't set much store by the word Kuwaiti, even if they were Kuwaiti, because it didn't mean much. There were different kinds of Kuwaitis, different levels, different classes that distinguished themselves from other classes' (Alsanousi:247-248).

Khawla tried to simplify the Kuwaiti issue for her brother, by telling him that the matter has nothing to do with religion. She thought that the issue was related to the inherited communal norms. The Kuwaiti society has been classified into levels and varieties. The national identity (Kuwaiti) does not mean that everyone, who is a Kuwaiti, has the same social status as the others. The internal social *classes* within the Kuwaiti society have their own communal positions and prestigious rank.

4.2.4.5 The Effect of Class Identity

Class identity tends to give some families high titles and prestigious position over the common and inferior ones. The communal norms thus contradicted the religious texts such as the *Hadeeth* (narration of the

Prophet's sayings), which was cited by José that supported his idea that Muslims should be equal regardless of their social ranks.

The society did not care much about the national or religious identity when they fell in discrepancy with the class dimension. The class identity seemed more deeply rooted in Kuwaiti society than religious identity.

Khawla said, 'In his unfinished novel, my father said we're Kuwaitis only in times of need. We become Kuwaitis when there's a crisis, but we soon go back to that horrible putting people in categories as soon as things calm down' (Alsanousi:248).

Rashid was criticizing his own community for having what he termed *horrible categorization*. In his unfinished novel, Rashid pointed out that the Kuwaiti was Kuwaiti only against non-Kuwaiti people, but when it comes to dealing with a Kuwaiti citizen, they go back to their sub-categories. Like the national identity, the religious identity seemed to have the same sense. That is, Kuwaitis are Muslims when dealing with non-Muslims from other nationalities, but when it comes to the treatment within the Kuwaiti community, the national and religious identities would no longer make sense, since class identity would arise.

For this social complexity, one of the Kuwaiti boys who met Jose in the Philippines warned him from the Kuwaiti society if he came there with his half-Kuwaiti expressions:

'He ignored what I said and looked into my face. 'I'm not sure that what you said was true, about being Kuwaiti, but . . . ' He paused. I wanted to swear to him that my father was Kuwaiti and I was born there and I had papers to prove it, but I let him go on with what he wanted to say: 'But whatever you are, don't even think of going there unless you're a real Kuwaiti' (Alsanousi:139).

To illustrate the concept of multiple identities that form the individual identity, one could exemplify that identity layers occur like a number of circles inside one another. The biggest one is the national or religious (according to the strength of each one of the individuals) and the smaller is the class. The bigger ones act in time of crisis that encompass all the Kuwaitis, and they give a broader sense. However, the class identity is narrower, and it acts against the religious and national identities, as it separates or categorizes those who have the same religion and the same nationality into sub-divisions, i.e. high and low ranks.

The Kuwaiti society thus appeared to be more social than religious, as its social classes had a superior position to the religious one:

'There was something complicated in Kuwait that I didn't understand. All the social classes looked for a lower class on whose back they could ride, even if they had to create one. Then they would climb on to the shoulders of those in the class below, humiliate them and use them to ease the pressure from the class above' (Alsanousi:250).

José was one of those who suffered a lot from the social classification he found in Kuwait and that he had not expected before his arrival. His sister Khawla told him some more things when he later called her:

'Khawla sounded upset, and unusually sad. She immediately took the conversation in a different direction, nothing to do with why I had called. She wanted to talk about the family name, and she came out with things I didn't understand. 'All the advantages the family name brings to family members are in fact no more than restrictions and a long list of taboos' (Alsanousi:321).

The indigenous social norms ordained the prestigious families to act in a way that may not be preferred by some of the family members. The family name would be spoiled if any of its members had committed any deed which was on the social taboo list. To preserve the family name, the members were forced to act in a way that contradicted their real identities. This discrepancy between what the family pretends to be, and its real personality, created identity crisis to the whole family and to José in particular.

The strength of the social norms and the superiority of the family position made Ghanima and her daughters act exclusively with the son of their brother and the only boy left holding the family name, because they could not be able to face the society with a half-Filipino son. This identity gap greatly affected José's identity for he could not be able to make up his mind to one single defined religion, family or country.

'If we belonged to one of those families we like to describe as . . . '
She hesitated. Perhaps she was about to describe them as lower-
class, but she checked herself. 'Ordinary families,' she said, 'then
Hind would have been Ghassan's wife long ago and no one would
dare speak badly about us or make fun of our family name. The
Tarouf's marry their daughter to a bidoon man! Even if that
bidoon man is descended from the same tribe as the Tarouf family'
(Alsanousi:322).

The class identity was also behind Ghassan's misery. For Ghassan's marriage was rejected sometime ago for the same reasons, though he was Kuwaiti and Muslim and one of the intimate friends of their former brother Rashid. When he asked for Hind's hand, Ghanima said to him:

'Grandmother said to him, 'You're almost family and we hold you
in the highest regard but when it comes to marriage, I pray to God

to provide you with a woman who is better than Hind.' Khawla said she understood why Grandmother turned Ghassan down: she didn't want her grandchildren to be bidoons like their father – social and legal outcasts'(Alsanousi:261).

From the Islamic point of view, which is expressed through the way Khawla was telling the story, Ghassan's marriage should not be rejected. Khawla informed her brother with these social restrictions (*adat*- in Arabic) in a regrettable way that showed her sadness for what was happening to them. The superiority of the social class then caused identity gaps, created problems and prevented religious sincerity and social equality.

'Ghassan stayed away from Grandmother's house and went off in his own world, while Hind went through a period of emptiness, which she filled with her interest in human rights. She wrote on behalf of people who had been mistreated, asserting their rights, and took part in public meetings as an activist in the field. Through seminars, television discussions and interviews with newspapers, she became known for defending people regardless of their gender, religion or affiliation. She was famous in Kuwait. People knew her name – Hind al-Tarouf. But what no one knew was that the only thing she was defending was a love that wasn't destined to last long, love for one of those whose cause she had dedicated her life to defend – a cause that became her cause' (Alsanousi:262).

José was not the only victim of the social class identity, rather there were so many others who were greatly impacted, and among them were Ghassan and aunt Hind. As a result of the effect of the class categorization, Hind enacted the identity of a human rights' activist, while

she was actually dedicated to defending her own affair. The identity gaps thus occur most in the high-context society as the personal identity is hindered by the communal mainstream.

Had the religious identity gained its superior position in society, it could have united all the various adherents of the same religion and made all of them equal.

Khawla continued:

'If only we belonged to some other family, an ordinary family. Then you would be living with us now, instead of Grandmother trembling all over whenever someone visits the house, in case they find out about you. Isa, I know how badly you've been treated but there are things you have to understand. Grandmother and the aunts don't bear full responsibility. The people around us are full of envy. They're trying to catch us out, waiting impatiently for any opportunity to do us down' (Alsanousi: 322).

Khawla explained to her brother the reason behind his family's mistreatment of him. The whole family fell a victim to the social norm. She emphasized that even grandmother, who was the dominating power of the family, was acting against her will.

'We're constantly being monitored. Some people may think a man can marry a Filipina woman, but if the man comes from a family of high social status, then it would be a crime condemned even by those who come from . . .' She hesitated again, but this time she spelt it out: *'humble origins.'* She continued to air her frustrations. *'Dozens of young Kuwaitis die from drugs and no one cares, but it's a big deal and a great shame if it happens to*

someone of good family. He may rest in peace, but his family inherits the shame when he's gone' (Alsanousi:322).

The honorable family was not free to do what it wished. They were prohibited to do things that the low-status families could normally do. This showed that José's appearance in Kuwait caused the family a problem greater than that of which the family caused to him by the rejection. The family fell into identity crisis as far as he did. José dreamed to have a full Kuwaiti identity equal to all the other Kuwaitis, but his half-Filipino origin prevented him. Similarly, his family had been doing its best to preserve the prestige of its name and his existence among them would bring them down:

To be the victim of a tyrant is normal, but to be the victim of another victim! My sister tried to explain. And did I understand? Even if I did understand, was I convinced? And even if I was convinced, what did it matter? (Alsanousi:323).

She continued: 'You know you're from the Tarouf family, but do you know what the word tarouf means? I don't expect you to answer this question because it's a purely Kuwaiti word and many people here hardly know what it means. A tarouf is a net that Kuwaitis use for fishing. It's set up in the sea like a volleyball net and big fish get caught in it as they pass by. And we, the members of the family, get caught in this tarouf, caught in our family name, and we can't escape it. We can move only as much as the net allows. But you're a small fish, Isa, the only one, and you can slip through the mesh of the tarouf without getting caught. Isa! You're lucky! You're free. Do what you want (Alsanousi:323).

Because of the social class, the family suffered from José's presence more than his suffering by their refusal to him. Khawla reasoned by explaining

that the family members were not free to get out of the social net while José was. José could have his way to escape the community seize; he could flee away and shape his identity in the way that he wished. However, the rest of the family members could not do so.

Regarding religious identity, José and his family fell into identity crisis due to the effect of the social class categorization. If they had welcomed José and defended his rights, they would have sacrificed their family name, and if they had rejected him, they would have sacrificed their religious identity and caused him identity diffusion.

4.2.5 Analysis of Religious Identity in Part Five

This is the last part of the novel which narrates the end of José's journey to the land of his father. José's search for his Kuwaiti Islamic identity did not succeed, so he made up his mind to go back to his mother's land under the pressure of his Kuwaiti family. Despite the variety of Kuwaiti social and political life, it was too narrow to encompass the half-Kuwaiti boy. José experienced an identity crisis by himself and did his best to find himself a place, but he failed. His identity conflict reached its peak when it came to the point that his family would no longer bear his presence in Kuwait. At that time all of the Kuwaiti doors had been closed in front of him, except only one door that led him to his mother's land.

4.2.5.1 The Power of Kuwaiti Society

José's stay in the Tarouf household did not take much time. His existence was contradicted with his sister's, so he preferred to leave. During his stay outside the family house, he did not succeed in gaining permanent work nor a home. During his movement from one job to another and from one house to another, he came across one of the boys that he met in Boracay who then led him to the others.

As you know,' he replied, 'no one else in the gang drinks alcohol. Besides, places like this arouse suspicion.' I thought that remark was odd. 'But I live here!' I said. 'Do I arouse suspicion?' He patted me on the shoulder and laughed. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'It only arouses suspicion in the case of Kuwaitis.' I let it pass. Perhaps he didn't mean it, or he'd forgotten I was Kuwaiti. 'Does that mean they're frightened of the police?' I asked. 'The police don't frighten anyone,' he said. 'They're frightened of what people will say.' He held out his hand as if holding an apple. 'Kuwait's a small place. Everyone knows almost everyone else,' he said (Alsanousi:320).

Mishaal told José than none of their friends drank alcohol and lived in such suspicious places for fear of what people would say, not for fear of the police. What people say about others was thought to have a stronger power than the police. Therefore, Kuwaitis showed much concern to social criticism. The social power then forced people to identity enactment where they pretend to be something that differs from their realities.

As a result of the small number of the Kuwaitis, the social power gained stronger domination as everyone was almost known to all the others and no one could escape observation. Kuwait was a type of high-context society where every member should be permanently in touch with the others and no one had the complete freedom to choose for himself the way of life he wished.

I'm Jabir, the son of your neighbor, Umm Jabir.' Mishaal was sitting cross-legged in the far corner. He clapped. We all gathered around him. He looked straight at me and held out his hand as if

holding an apple. 'Didn't I tell you? Kuwait's a small place,' he said (Alsanousi:339).

José took part with his friends in their parliament election campaigns. The gang were supporting four candidates, one of them was a woman whose name was Hind Al-Tarouf, José's aunt. José was firstly stunned to know that and later he introduced himself to the gang. Then he learned that one of them was the son of their neighbor Um Jabir:

What Jabir had heard reached his mother, and from his mother it spread to the houses nearby and then to other people, and because Kuwait is a small place where almost everyone knows everyone else, and because words have wings, the news flew through the realms of gossip, especially places where women gathered. The news landed comfortably on the tongue of one woman only to fly off once again (Alsanousi:340).

Almost all of the society discovered what José and his family tried to keep secret. This emphasized what Mishaal had told him that Kuwait was small and also confirmed the strong social power over the Kuwaitis.

The crazies knew all about me. 'You're not to blame, Isa, for everything that happened,' Turki said. His words were a consolation, but he quickly added, 'And your grandmother and aunts aren't to blame either.' 'But they're rich,' I retorted. 'They have everything. What harm does it do them if I'm around?' With a smile like Ghassan's, he replied, 'There's a popular saying in Kuwait: a good reputation is worth more than wealth (Alsanousi:342).

To preserve its good reputation, the family members were forced to sacrifice their half-Filipino son. Had they been able to keep his presence

secret, they would not have done him any harm, and they would have let him live among them. However, the Kuwaiti society was so small that no one could hide his life from the others' observation.

4.2.5.2 Jose and his Aunts' face-to-face Conversation

They sat next to each other opposite me. Nouriya sought Awatif's help after her own approach had failed to persuade me to leave. Awatif spoke in something resembling English, helped by her sister. 'Do you pray?' she asked. 'Yes,' I replied tentatively. She smiled approvingly and said, 'That's good. I was confident you were a sincere believer.' I looked from one to the other, trying to work out where this was leading (Alsanousi:344-245).

His two aunts Awatif and Nouriya came to convince him to leave Kuwait as they were pressed by the society after the spread of the news. Awatif seemed to be more religious so she first made sure that he prays (the prayer is one of the five pillars of Islam), as performing the five regular prayers somewhat indicates that the Muslim is God-fearing. She wanted him to be sincere to God Almighty because she wanted to exploit his fear of God to simplify her mission which was to get rid of him. Even though his aunt Awatif had been the most religious one in the family, as she accepted him in the beginning, reasoning that if he had been rejected, God Almighty would have been angry with them, she submitted to the family and social pressure and changed her mind. The social identity thus was stronger than the personal.

Be a strong believer. Accept your fate. Be content with what God has decreed for you,' she continued. 'God?' I asked. She nodded with a calm smile. From the confidence on Nouriya's face I knew how confused I must look. 'Almighty God didn't create you to be

here,' she said, as calm as ever. I must have looked like a wax sculpture, expressionless and immobile except for my eyes, which looked from one to the other in scorn. My god, they were trying to corner me into doing what suited them. 'The right place for you is there, in the Philippines' (Alsanousi:345).

To achieve her will that José would agree to leave Kuwait, Awatif claimed that it was God's will who decreed that he should go. Here she interpreted religious beliefs according to her own interest. Awatif was trying to apply the modern form of *Sociological Pluralism*(see:2.1.2.1.6), where the religious beliefs become subjective, that is, every religious adherent has the right to come up with his or her own interpretations to the religious beliefs. To prove that, remember what Awatif had said the first time she met José. She declared that José was their brother's son and she saw no problem in welcoming him in the Tarouf house. She also added that: *'He's my brother's son. God wouldn't like if we disowned him'* (Alsanousi:195). Why did she come to change her mind and claim that God's will is that José should go to live in the Philippines?

Thus, Awatif contradicted herself and she was caught between two layers of her personal identity, the religious dimension and the social class one. From the religious viewpoint, Jose should have stayed in Kuwait, while from the social class view, he had to leave Kuwait. This contradiction made Awatif modify her religious thought to coincide with the social one, so that she could satisfy her family's will. This identity gap affected Awatif's relationship with the son of her brother and he began to see her as weak because she could not remain firm to her first stance *'Awatif's weakness'* (Alsanousi:195).

I'm Isa Rashid al-Tarouf,' I said. 'Rashid isn't your father,' Awatif said with the same smile. 'You've no right to claim him as

your father or use his name. 'Her self-confidence seemed to be slipping. 'You're a believer,' she added, reminding me. 'Illegitimate children take their mother's name.' Nouriya cut in. 'Yes, on that basis, you're Isa Josephine.' What a lot of names I have! It's time to settle on just one of them (Alsanousi:346).

To convince him to leave, they contradicted themselves again by claiming that he was not Rashid's son at all, they said that he was the son of Josephine, his mother, as the illegitimate son should not take his father's name in Islam. They exploited religion to achieve their non-religious goal.

Nouriya added to him a new name, José Josephine, which indicated how she saw him. This is an *ascribed identity*. There was a difference between the way he saw himself and the way they perceived him; he saw himself as the son of their brother and they so him as the son of the Filipino maid. The discrepancy between the avowal and the ascribed identities caused misunderstanding and affected their relations.

Nouriya took the initiative. 'I expect you're going to show me the marriage certificate of Rashid and Josephine. Don't bother. Even if you are Rashid's son under Kuwaiti law, you're not his son by Islamic law,' she said. Awatif joined in. 'You are a believer,' she said (Alsanousi:346).

If José was not the son of Rashid, as Nouriya insisted, why did they not disown him from the first time they met him? Or as early as he was born during the life of his father? Their excuse then did not ring true. They came to exploit religion after they failed to keep his issue a secret from the people, and when they could not do so, they tried to use religion so as to get rid of him. Awatif kept reminding him that he was a believer so as to exploit his belief in God to change his mind.

I ignored her remark and looked defiantly into Nouriya's eyes. I let her finish off what she wanted to say. 'I think you know that your mother,' she stopped and rephrased it, 'that our maid Josephine was pregnant with you before this piece of paper was written, that is before the marriage.' I let her continue as I looked through the papers. 'Listen, Josephine's son, you don't have the right to use our name. You don't have any inheritance rights. Under Islamic law that wouldn't be allowed. And yet you insist on staying. Don't you have any dignity?' Nouriya said. 'Or faith?' added Awatif" (Alsanousi: 346).

Nouriya called him José Josephine and described his mother as their maid. She told him that he has no right in taking their name or inheritance in Islam, as she claimed. However, Nouriya herself had said that he has the right to take the name of her brother Rashid:

'Nouriya had grown angrier and raised her voice. She said that, if there was no other way out, my full name should be just Isa Rashid Isa and the Tarouf name should be removed from my official papers (Alsanousi:196).

In the beginning, Nouriya accepted that he could take the name of his father Rashid, then she changed her mind to claim that he had no right to take his name and he was not his son at all. Those inconsistencies in Nouriya's opinions about José proved that she had two identity sides. One of them was the personal side which accepted Jose as her nephew and the other was the social class dimension that was directed by the communal will which drove her to disown him. The identity gap again stood behind the family relations.

My mother did get pregnant several months before this document was written,' I said, waving the marriage certificate signed by Walid and Ghassan. 'But a few hours after this document was written,' I added, waving another piece of paper in my left hand. They looked at each other skeptically. With a confidence that she was trying her hardest to sustain, Nouriya said, 'What is that document?' 'This is a certificate of what they call common-law marriage,' I said, with the same composed smile as Awatif(Alsanousi:346-347).

José has the documents by which he could defend his legal rights, but he had still lacked the gain of social rights. The two aunts pretended at first that they were religiously pushed to disown him, when they were really pushed by the social view.

Nouriya exploded. She threatened, she menaced, she cursed, she snarled, she issued warnings in Arabic, in English and with hand gestures. Awatif took refuge in silence with a face that fluctuated between shock and sadness. Nouriya left my flat a defeated shark. Awatif covered her head with her black abaya. At the front door, before I closed it, she turned to me in tears. 'Oh God,' she said. 'Oh God, I'm sorry.' She wiped her face with part of her abaya and said, 'You are Kuwaiti. You're my nephew, Rashid's son.' From the open lift Nouriya called her impatiently: 'Awatif!' 'Forgive me. God forgive me,' Awatif added, before joining her sister. I faked a smile and said, 'You are a believer' and closed the door (Alsanousi:347).

Although Nouriya was religiously convinced that José had the right to take their name, she insisted on her opinion. She was really influenced by the social class view and she appeared to be more social than religious.

Thus, she issued strong warnings that she would force him to leave though she could not defend his reasoning that he was her nephew.

Awatif had fallen into identity diffusion. When she began the conversation, she was certain that he was not the legal son of her brother, but when he showed her the documents, she found no way to ignore that. Her religious identity was activated again and confronted the social class one, so she became confused. Awatif's personal identity was then caught between the religious and the social dimensions.

The communal class identity was stronger than the religious one, so that the individuals did not seem to have the courage to perform their own preferences and form their personal identities for fear of the high-context community.

4.2.5.3 Identity Commitment

Only one week after I moved into Ibrahim's room, the shift leader in the restaurant called me aside. 'You'd better make some plans for the future. This is your last week working here.' And the reason? No reason. I made up a reason of my own – Kuwait was spitting me out. Khawla called me a few days later. 'Have you really been fired from your job?' she asked. 'Damn! Nouriya did that,' she said (Alsanousi: 354).

Aunt Nouriya insisted on driving José to leave Kuwait. She was supported by the communal trend that the existence of the half-Kuwaiti boy would belittle the family's status. Caving to the social orientation (communal identity), Nouriya decided to sacrifice the son of her brother (relational identity). Nouriya's personal identity agreed with the social one and put José in the peak of identity crisis as he realized that Kuwait had eventually closed its doors in front of him.

The dominance of the social norms over the personal attributes created troubles and affected the relationships of the members of the same family. Khawla was angry with her aunt Nouriya for she was behind getting José fired from his job.

Disputes broke out in the Tarouf household. Hind and Awatif had a serious disagreement with Nouriya, who was behind me losing my job. 'Leave the kid alone,' they told her. Nouriya was furious with Hind because of what she had said in the election campaign and because she had lost. 'If Isa al-Tarouf were still alive, you would have been the death of him,' she said. Grandmother was in a bad way because of what was happening in the house. The sisters were at odds. Khawla left to live in her other grandmother's house, saying the situation in Grandmother's house was unbearable. 'Grandmother slaps her thighs all day long in grief and asks God to have mercy on her husband and on Rashid. She lifts her arms to heaven and says, "May God avenge you, Ghassan.' 'Khawla, I want to understand. Please. These are complicated things,' I said(Alsanousi:354).

Some internal troubles rose in the Tarouf's household. Each one of the family members had his own analysis of the causes of their family problems. Every one of them read the situation from his own point of view and according to his personal attitude. Grandmother thought that Ghassan bore hand in what happened to them because she regarded that he wanted to take revenge of the family due to rejecting his marriage.

When José knew about the dispute that broke out in his father's family, he was afraid that his existence in Kuwait was the cause. When he asked his half-sister Khawla, she told him that the reason was neither him nor

Ghassan, but the family name: *'There's no one else,' she continued. I didn't say anything. 'It's the Taroufs,' she concluded'* (Alsanousi: 355).

The communal position and duties the society put for the honorable families restrained the personal freedom of the individuals, so the personal identities of the family members were directed by the communal ones to the degree that they could not get out of the track the community has drawn for them. Thus, José's religious identity diffused due to the diffusion of his familial identity. His family refused to accept him for fear of the communal norm. The Kuwaiti society drove José to change his mind and turn back as he failed to achieve his dream; to become a Kuwaiti Muslim boy.

I left Kuwait in August 2008, about three years ago, abandoning everything except the bottle with soil from my father's grave, the small Kuwaiti flag that had been attached to the back of my bicycle, a copy of the Qur'an in English, a prayer rug (I don't know whether I'll use it regularly), and the empty, cracked shell of my dead tortoise, Inang Choleng (Alsanousi:369).

Although José failed to fulfill his dream and to form the foreclosed identity that his parents prepared him for, he committed to his own identity. He was caught between multiple religions, countries and names. He finally settled himself to have his own identity that was a composite of portions taken from all these multiplicities. He did not commit to one of them and did not cover himself with any of the religious, social or national umbrellas. He made up his mind to choose from religions what he considered appealing.

José committed to theological and sociological pluralism. His religious theological perspective appeared through his concept that he did not trust all that religion provided, and all the religions seemed the same to him.

His conversation with his friend Ibrahim Salam indicated his theological pluralism:

One night I asked him to tell me about the Prophet Muhammad in return for me telling him about Jesus Christ, rather like those bedtime conversations that Cheng and I used to have about Jesus and the Buddha. 'I'll tell you about the Prophet Muhammad, but you don't need to tell me about Jesus,' he replied. When I asked why not, he answered confidently, 'I'm sure I know more about Christ than you do' (Alsinousi: 268)

Unlike his friend Salam, who seemed to be confident and strict to the knowledge sources of his own religion, José was open-minded to acquire knowledge from every source. This showed his theological pluralism as he thought that the truth was not enclosed in a single religion and no religion was perfect. Therefore, he did not mind hearing from Salam who was a Muslim, Cheng who was a Buddhist and Aida who was a Christian. Finally, he came up with his own religion which was something different from all the above.

Religions are bigger than their adherents. That's what I've concluded. Devotion to tangible things no longer matters as far as I'm concerned. I don't want to be like my mother, who can only pray to a cross, as if God lived in it. I don't want to be like one of the Ifugao and never take a step unless it's sanctioned by the anito statues, which help my work prosper, protect my crops and save me from the evil spirits at night. I don't want to be like Inang Choleng, tying my relationship with God to a favorite statue of the Buddha. I don't want to seek baraka from a statue of a white horse with wings and the head of a woman, as some Muslims do in the south of the Philippines... The statue of Buraq, the cross, the

Buddha, the anito, imaginary miracles and other such things help to reinforce people's faith. People aren't satisfied with the miracles that took place in distant times and that were the monopoly of prophets when religions were in their infancy. So, everyone who wants to find faith goes looking for miracles that don't exist. They make them up and believe in them, but their belief only shows how much doubt they still have(Alsanousi:271-272).

Here he criticized the miracle stories religious adherents used to tell to back up their faiths. He indicated that he wanted to form his belief in his own way unlike all the different religious adherents that he came across. To prove that his religious identity was something different he did not show hate or love for any one for pure religious cause(s). He also did not objectively study any religion in depth to know which one of them was true and deserved to be followed. He used to examine religions subjectively, that is, according to actions of the religion's adherents. He did not ignore all religions nor did he think that he had no need for religion, but he achieved a religious concept identity that was not fixed to one single defined religion, rather he let himself free to choose from religions what he saw appealing.

It's my destiny to spend my life looking for a name, a religion and a country. I won't however deny my parents credit for helping me, unintentionally, to discover my creator, in my own way (Alsanousi:50).

He clarified that he profited from his parents to discover his creator but in his own way (achieved identity), though his parents wished and prepared him to be a Muslim (foreclosed identity).

During his life journey he heard about religions and met adherents of different but opposing religions. He was affected by some of them in some parts of his life, but he left all of them aside and achieved his religious identity in his own way:

I was sitting in front of Ibrahim. He was silent, as was I. In my right ear I heard the call to prayer, in my left ear the ringing of church bells. The smell of incense from the Buddhist temples hit my nostrils. I ignored the sounds and the smell. I focused on my steady heartbeat and I knew that God was there (Alsanousi:272).

He had come up to commit a pluralistic perspective that did not stick to one religion as a means of salvation. He settled himself to choose his faith by a way that concerned him alone.

Since his calamity was due to the social norms that were not put according to the religious teachings of the religion adopted by the certain society, he was thus led to think that it is better for him to choose from religions what he wished as the others did. That is, he was caused by the adherents of Islam who chose not to follow the Islamic teachings concerning the acceptance of their son regardless to his racial origin, he was caused to select from religions what he admired.

It was mentioned above that when he was debating with his half-sister Khawla about the reason of rejecting him, he cited to her texts from Buddhism, Christianity and her religion Islam ordering people to be equal regardless of race. His sister told him that the matter had nothing to do with religion. This indicated that those who followed Islam gave themselves the right to select from the Islamic rules what achieved their interests and rejected what did not. It seemed to him that Muslims were not obliged to follow every Islamic instruction, so the Kuwaitis preferred not to establish their societal relations on the Islamic rules which

condemn racial discrimination and order all Muslims not to believe that there is one Muslim better than the other for matters of race, richness or nationality, except piety (*taqwa*).

Some types of the sociological pluralism José experienced with his father's relatives seemed to affect his religious concept. For example, grandmother Ghanima felt angry when she saw Khawla sitting with her half-brother alone in the office room. She ordered them not to sit together alone assuming that was prohibited in Islam.

She was scowling and, without looking at me, she scolded Khawla with words I didn't understand. Khawla blushed, then took Grandmother's arm to support her in place of the maid. She turned to me in embarrassment and said, 'You'd better go back to your room, Isa.' Khawla told me later that Grandmother didn't trust me and had blamed me for the fact that Khawla and I had been alone in the study together with the door closed. 'You shouldn't be together. If a boy and a girl are alone together, the devil soon joins them,' Grandmother told her. Khawla went off with Grandmother. I went back to my room, leaving the devil alone in the study (Alsanousi:208).

The old lady exploited religion to fulfill her social-based purpose. She was really afraid that the matter of the half-Filipino son spread to the neighbors due to his stay with Khawla. That is, if Jose was seen sitting with Khawla alone, the society would know that unless he was her brother (*mahram*) he would not sit with her alone as it was the socio-Islamic habit. Therefore, Ghanima wanted José to be seen as their cook, not the son of their late son Rashid, but she pretended that it was banned by Islam.

Although, José failed to fulfill his parents' will and his own dream to commit to a Kuwaiti Muslim identity, he succeeded in achieving his personal identity in a way that no one similarly shared with him. He settled himself to have an identity that was a composite of multiple cultures, religions and nationalities.

I went downstairs quietly and as soon as I stepped foot on the ground floor Khawla realized I was there. She screamed. She picked up a cushion that was next to her on the sofa and covered her head with it. 'Isa! Wait, wait!' she shouted. I turned away as if I had invaded her bedroom when she was changing. 'OK, you can come now,' she said after putting on her hijab. It was the first time I had seen her long black hair uncovered. My sister was beautiful and looked very much like Hind. I sat down next to her on the sofa. 'Does Islam say I can't see you with your head uncovered?' I asked her. She locked her fingers together and started to wave her legs in the air like a child. 'In fact, Islam doesn't say that in the case of a mahram,' she said. 'A mahram?' 'Yes, a mahram. The husband or people that the woman wouldn't be able to marry – her father, her grandfather, her brother, her son and some special cases,' she said (Alsanousi:227).

His sister told him that Islam did not forbid for a brother and his sister to sit together alone and the sister also was not forbidden to uncover her hair in front of any *mahram*. Although, it was not banned for her to do so in Islam, she chose to deal with him as a non-mahram for fear of the social norm.

Chapter Five

Conclusion, Findings, Implications and Recommendations for Further Research

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5.1. Summary of the Findings

For *Things Fall Apart*, the analysis reveals that the religious identity is illustrated in the form of stereotypical concepts and in religion-based actions and beliefs, actions that have pure religious motivations. The religious identity is reinforced by the gender dimension but the racial has no positive effect, the ethnic is weak so that it cannot confront the religious orientation, the class has weak effect that takes its bases from religion, while the personal identity of the protagonist is opposite to the native communal mainstream. The study results support the ICT analysis and confirms its validity in investigating fictive data.

The analysis also reveals that religion is the base of almost all the characters' actions: the identity gaps among several social, political and financial factors impact the characters' relations, affect identity construction and create misunderstandings; hybridity has no effect and there is no religious pluralism as the two opposing sides are exclusivists. The results show many examples of the concepts of identity crisis and religious conversion.

For *The Bamboo Stalk*, the analysis shows that the religious identity is not illustrated in stereotypical concepts, but in prejudice-based actions and classifications. The racial and ethnic dimensions affect religious identity and the socio-class is the most influential one. Gender has no effect on the religious identity formation while the personal layer of identity is mostly opposing the communal mainstream as the individuals' own preferences often do not agree with the main trend, but the strength of the

communal orientation constrains the personal identity. The effect of religion on the societal life and relations is weak as the social norms take a superior position. The results support the validity of the ICT and DA method of analysis and reveal that religion is greatly affected by the indigenous culture. No conversion to a new religion is found but the results show relevant issues of conversion. The identity gaps and hybridization impact the religious identity. The analysis shows many details of identity crisis and social factors affection the religious identity construction, including superstitious beliefs, exploiting religion for achieving non-religious purposes, the negative effect of the opposing Islamic sects and ethnocentrism.

5.1.1 The Findings of the Analysis of the Novel: *Things Fall Apart*

5.1.1.1 First Research Question and Hypothesis

Here, I will show the answer of this first question in light of the results investigated in the previous chapter.

The first question: How is religious identity illustrated in the novel *Things Fall Apart*?

The first hypothesis: Religious identity is illustrated in the novels in two forms. One is the evident influence of one cultural group's pre-set stereotypical images about the others. The other is the strong belief of a group of people that everyone else must be wrong and/or mad unless he/she shares their own beliefs or belongs to their own ethnic group.

The study argues that 'identity formation and maintenance are impacted by the cultural stereotypes concerning religious beliefs, especially when it comes to investigate its impact on cross-cultural communication' (2.1.2.4).

The study supports the first hypothesis that the religious identity is expressed in a form of stereotype-based treatment. That is, the characters in the novel who differ in faiths treat each other in a way that is influenced by their pre-set stereotypical concepts. For example, the pre-set stereotypical concept the white man has about the natives, that they are primitive as their way of life and their limited knowledge about the world showed, makes him treat them in a simplified way that put him in confusion (4.1.2.3). On the other hand, the natives have developed the stereotypical concept that the white man is violent and strong. This played a role in protecting the white missionaries from the danger of the natives as he was preaching his religion (4.1.2.3).

The results also show that the second white missionary was influenced by his pre-set stereotypical concepts about the natives, so he mistreated them and did not give himself the chance to know more about their individual differences (4.1.3.6).

Based on the natives' stereotypical concept that everyone, who does not share their culture, is ignorant, they ridicule the Christians. (4.1.3.7).

Okonkwo's stereotypical masculine identity cause a him to consider everyone coward unless they defend the ways of their fathers (4.1.3.8).

Both two conflicting groups depend on the pre-set stereotypical views each group had about the other, regardless of the accuracy of the stereotype and the individual differences(4.1.3.7). The local religious faith is deeply rooted in the natives' lives for successive previous generations, so they believed that the one who opposes it must surely be mad (4.1.2.3). This concept is confirmed by the failure of the missionary in answering Okonkwo's question regarding the Christian son of God (4.1.2.3).

Although the study has supported the first hypothesis, it shows that the religious identity is not only illustrated in the novel by stereotypical

concepts, rather it is also expressed by various religion-based actions and beliefs. The results show that the religious identity is clearly expressed in what is termed *religion-based actions* than the stereotypical-based actions that the study hypothesized.

The study argues that the measure it adopts for 'considering the individual or the individual's behavior as being *religious* depends on the motivation underpinning the behavior or the nature of the action itself. That is, every individual behavior is labeled as *religious* if it depends on a religious guidance. The individual himself is considered religious when he acts according to the beliefs of the group he belongs to. The degree of religiosity could be measured by comparing the individual with his associates or/and whether he actually follows the authentic group guidance' (2.1.2.3).

In accordance to the measurement of the study the results show that the religious identity is clearly illustrated in many religion-based actions. That is, many of the novel actions have pure religious reasons or influenced by religious motivations. For example, the individuals were to follow the religious-based customs blindly, without questioning even if the individual thought the particular custom was wrong, but he had no choice to refuse (4.1.1.5). They take actions that they would not like to do if they were not coerced by religious reasons, such as destroying the house of their friend whom they still love (4.1.1.7), only to achieve their God's will. They also kill innocent fellows and throw baby twins to die to achieve God's wishes, without any other reason for doing so. They agree to exile the one who commits a killing crime by accident for seven years (4.1.1.7). They even do not allow their members to question Gods' will (4.1.1.7).

All the village activities are underpinned by their God's approval, and when they are faced by any new circumstance, they immediately run to consult the Oracle, and when it warns, they base their actions on its words (4.1.2.1).

Their criteria of love and hate is based on their religious beliefs, so the woman, who brings twin babies more than one time, is considered a source of curse to her in-laws, so they regarded her conversion 'a good riddance' (4.1.2.6). In addition, they hated their own kinsmen who converted and clashed with them. On the other hand, being Ibo in race and having relatives in the village did not hold the converts back from refuting the clan's Gods. This shows that the effect of religion is the one that matters most, compared with the ethnicity, race and nationality (4.1.2.7).

The results show that the natives are ready to fight for the sake of their religion and they use disgusting words to show anger and make others ashamed for not punishing the Christians (4.1.2.7). Based on that, they decide to exclude the Christians from the village activities (4.1.2.7).

The religious attitude also is expressed through the relational clashes, such as chasing the white man from Okonkwo's house and warning him from repeating it (4.1.3.2); falling in religious clashes with the natives (4.1.3.7) and supporting the overzealous converts to molest the natives by cursing their Gods and ridiculing their rituals (4.1.3.7).

Okonkwo realized that he was alone without his clan. The white man owned some of them and the others had lost their true sense of belonging as they had deserted the way of their ancestors (4.1.3.8). By killing the court messenger, Okonkwo shows his sincerity to his faith and that he is still firm in the way of his fathers, who would have never let this happen (4.1.3.8).

Generally, the results show that a clansman would no longer be a real member of it unless he defends its religion (4.1.3.7).

All in all, the results reveal that the measures adopted by the study provided valid results that show how the religious identity is illustrated. The illustration of the religious identity in religion-based actions and beliefs is more accurate and gives a bigger picture than the stereotypical concepts, which were hypothesized by the study.

5.1.1.2 The Second Research Question and Hypothesis

The second question: What types of identity and social factors affect the formation and maintenance of religious identity in the novel?

The second hypothesis: The racial, ethnic, gender, class and personal identities have great influence on the formation and maintenance of religious identity, as expressed in the novels.

With regard to the second research question and hypothesis the results show the following:

5.1.1.2.1.Racial Identity

The study results do not show any effect to the racial identity on the religious identity formation or maintenance, so the results do not support the study hypothesis here.

5.1.1.2.2 Ethnic Identity

The results reveal that the ethnic identity affected the formation and maintenance of the religious identity, but its effect was too weak that it could not overcome the impact of religion over it. That is, the religious identity is stronger(4.1.2.7). Therefore, the study hypothesis is not supported here either.

The ethnic identity is illustrated as follows: it was still rooted in the native life, so they refused mixing with the Osu people even after conversion according to the local custom. It was about to make trouble between the new converts and their teacher (4.1.2.7), but the religious identity overcame it later on and they welcomed the Osu.

The results also show that the family and tribal bonds (ethnic identity) would not be influential in case of having a new religion, because when a family member converted to a new faith, he/she abandoned his kinsmen and the family would no longer act like one (4.1.2.8).

By changing their faith, the white man changed their ethnic identity, so there was an Ibo Christian and an Ibo following the traditional faith (4.1.3.8).

The results show that the natives take stance against their kinsmen who converted (4.1.2.7) and they are ready to fight them for the sake of religion (4.1.3.8), so the ethnic identity was not strong enough to unite the natives after the coming of the new religion (4.1.2.7).

5.1.1.2.3 Gender Identity

The results show gender differentiation in the characters' treatment. The native society is more masculine, and it considers the strangers to be more feminine. This masculine viewpoint of the natives serves as a factor that strengthens the local religious customs (4.1.3.1). The results reveal association between religion and gender differentiation (4.1.1.7). For example, Nwoye's effeminate nature negatively affected his religious commitment (4.1.1.4) to his traditional religion, because he fits with the new religion, which calls for love. Toughness is linked to the traditional religion (4.1.1.6), so effeminate characters fit the new religion (4.1.2.4).

The native society is very serious and sensitive in the gender issue. They appreciate a man when he was a man in thought and behavior (4.1.2.4). According to the native gender-based point of view the effeminate men are not respected (4.1.2.4). This view has a positive effect in strengthening their religious identity (4.1.2.4). That is, the white man and all his followers are seen by the natives as effeminate, so it is an abomination to follow them (4.1.2.4).

The native view of disrespecting soft men led them to hate the new religion (4.1.2.4), so native religion took some support from the gender-based conception.

Okonkwo's thoughts are captivated by the native masculine view, so he considers that everyone who forsakes the local way of life is no longer a man (4.1.3.1), so he considers Okeke's opinion to be womanish and a sign of cowardice (4.1.2.7). He also regards everyone coward and effeminate, unless they defend the ways of their fathers (4.1.3.8).

Thus, the results support the study hypothesis and show clear influence by the gender identity on the religious one.

5.1.1.2.4 Class Identity

The results reveal that there is little effect of the class identity on the religious one. For example, the calamity of the Osu people is due to the native ethno-religious custom (4.1.2.7). That is, the society differentiates between the ordinary people and the Osu. The Osu are considered outcast and are deprived of all the rights of the normal people, so they suffered from this and it caused them to flee to the new religion where they can choose a better way of life. The results also show that the native society is categorized into low and high classes. The low class is called *efulefu*, or worthless people (4.1.2.2). The *efulefu* are not

respected, so they choose to embrace the new religion and when they did so no one takes account of them because they are worthless.

However, the results also show that the categorization of high and low classes takes its roots from the native religious thoughts (4.1.2.2), so the right is to say the class identity has no effect on the religious one as the socio-class identity takes its roots from the religious bases. Therefore, the categorization of low and high and Osu and ordinary is more religious than socio-class (4.1.2.2).

5.1.1.2.5 Personal Identity

The results reveal that the village society is a high-context type of society and the communal identity takes a superior position over the personal (4.1.2.6). In the high-context society, the personal identity is enacted when the communal becomes weak due to the emergence of the new alternative, because the dominance of the communal identity restrains the individuals from applying and enacting their personal preferences (4.1.2.4).

In the beginning of the novel before the coming of the strangers the communal identity was dominant, so the personal identities are not activated. But in the multi-cultural society after the emergence of the new alternative which provides a new choice the personal attitudes appeared accordingly (4.1.2.4 - 4.1.1.7).

The results show contradictions between the personal and the communal identities (4.1.1.7). The communal generally supports the native religion, while the personal often disagrees with it (4.1.1.6). For example, Okonkwo's personal identity causes him to contradict his religion, clansmen and even himself as well (4.1.1.3). It also affects his relations with his children (4.1.1.6). The source of his personal contradicted identity was his fear of failure (4.1.1.6).

Another example is Obierika's personal identity, which contradicts the communal identity with regard to the illogical religion-based actions (4.1.1.7). But he does not speak out his personal opinion due to the dominance of the native culture at that time (4.1.1.7) and also due to his personal character (a man of thought not of action like Okonkwo).

The results also reveal that the differences in the personal identities between the two white missionaries affect the results of their mission. The first one, Mr. Brown, is kind and had a good understanding of the native religion and culture so he was able to convert a large number, compared to his successor who was opposite to him, so he failed to do the same. This indicates that religious preaching was influenced by the personal attitudes of the advocators. (4.1.3.6 - 4.1.3.7).

The personal identity of the second white man, which was extreme and strict, makes troubles with the natives who appreciated the way of his previous brother (4.1.3.7), so it is the cause of complications as it makes the church fall in successive troubles with the natives. He also encourages the extreme converts to take actions and cause problems that restrains the religious preaching.

The results then reveal that the personal identity has more negative effect on the communal religion than its positive effect as it often contradicts the communal one.

5.1.1.3 The Third Research Question and Hypothesis

The Third Question: What is the effect of religious identity on the relationships between the characters in the novel?

The Third Hypothesis: The characters' relations are negatively impacted by the differences in their religious identities to the degree that these differences became the cause of misunderstanding and various types of conflicts.

The results support this third hypothesis and show great effect of the religious differences on the relation between the characters of the novel, both between those who have distinct religions and those who belong to the same religion.

For example, it affected Okonkwo's relation with his father as the former is thought to have bad relations with his personal God, so his son is ashamed of him (4.1.1.2). Okonkwo hates his father for he is not respected in the clan due to his bad relationship with the Gods. Okonkwo's relations with the clansmen are affected accordingly as he is caused to behave in a way that is not accepted by the clan so as not to be like his father (4.1.1.3).

Ezeani, the priest, is angry with Okonkwo as the former breaks the clan's religious customs, so he refused to eat in the house of Okonkwo (4.1.1.3). Thus, the respect of the clansmen is gained through the obedience of the local religious rules (4.1.1.3).

The religious change thus affects the natives' relations to the degree that makes the priest to use disgusting words about those who have the same race when they changed religion (4.1.2.2). Changing religion also causes Nwoye to forsake his relatives and tear himself away from all of the previous religion's customs (4.1.2.4). He disowns his father and family and put his Christian teacher and guide in the place of the father. Enoch's religious identity is superior to his family, ethnic and national ones. (4.1.3.7). Therefore, his new identity makes him tear up everything that tied him with his clan, although his father was a religious clansman.

The effect of the religious identity on the family relations is greater than the gender identity. This is because, although Okonkwo is angry with his elder son due to his effeminate character, he does not disown him until the son changes religion (4.1.2.4). In addition, he warned the rest

of his children from following the way of their elder brother lets he consider all of them to no longer be his children (4.1.3.1). On the contrary the influence of changing to the new religion makes Nwoye to desert his family and leave his fathers' way of life for the sake of his new faith. (4.1.2.8).

The religious native customs caused the in-laws of the woman Nneka to hate her, ill-treat her and consider her conversion a good riddance (4.1.2.3).

The Osu are deprived of all their rights and are thought to be abominable their whole life (4.1.2.7). This makes them change religion. The new faith causes the natives to change the criteria of making social relations because they are made to befriend the Osu people who were treated as outcast people (4.1.2.7).

The religious change affects people's relations as it sets new criteria of hate and love(4.1.3.4). That is, the oneness in religion unites the people of different races, nationalities and cultural backgrounds, whereas the oneness in race, nationality and cultural background do not unite the people of different faiths (4.1.2.3).

5.1.1.4 Intercultural Communication and Identity

The study argues that 'the IC theory highlights the interplay between identity and communication. That is, people communicate their identities with each other, and their identities could be perceived through communication' (3.4). It also argues that identity is shaped maintained and modified through communication, and people communicate their identities.

The results of the study support this argument and confirm the bidirectional influence between identity and communication. For

example, the confrontations with the strangers make the natives understand aspects of their identity and provide them with chances to understand themselves through comparing their ways with those of the strangers (4.1.2.1). This emphasizes the CTI argument that identity is communication and that identity is conceptualized, shaped, and modified in communication (4.1.2.5- 4.1.2.3). The results show that intercultural communication is essential to conceptualizing identity as the individual may not be able to understand himself until he/she encounters others who differ from him in their thoughts (4.1.3.7).

The IC barriers like the differences in language and cultural backgrounds restrain IC understanding and, thus, communication influences identity formation (4.1.2.3). These cultural barriers hold back the communication process and the religious message (4.1.2.3).

Intercultural communication needs good cultural understanding, so changing people's identity mainly depends on understanding its reality (4.1.3.2). Thus, intercultural communication needs good cultural understanding to give positive results (4.1.3.6). For example, the interpreter's wise act was due to his cultural understanding of the others(4.1.3.7).

The analysis also confirms that language and culture stand as barriers between the Christians and the natives, for the interpreter cannot encode the words of the spirits as he has no knowledge of the indigenous culture and the white man ignores the meaning of the uttered words let alone the cultural meanings that lie behind them (4.1.3.7).

The intercultural context makes Okonkwo understand the aspects of his religious identity, i.e. he is still firm and loyal to his fathers' ways while others of his people have changed. (4.1.3.8)

5.1.1.5 Function of Religion

The study argues that 'religions have their significant role in shaping our perception of the world and forming the most foundational aspects of our identity, including attitudes, beliefs and preferences' (2.1.2.1.1).

The results of the study support this argument. They show that religion shapes the native identity as it is the source of morals and it conducts their behavior (4.1.1.1), is the base of their actions (4.1.1.1), customs (4.1.1.3- 4.1.1.5); it is the strongest element that tie people together (4.1.2.2- 4.1.3.4) ; it is the most influential factor in identity formation (4.1.2.3; 4.1.2.7); it is the most influential component of culture (4.1.3.2) ; it is the source of happiness in life (4.1.1.2); it controls one's relation with family and clan (4.1.2.4); it is the ground upon which the criteria of love and hate is based (4.1.2.4) ; it affects the way a man perceives himself and also influences the others' treatment of him; it is the most essential element in the white man's mission (4.1.2.3).

Religion is the most influential component in shaping a sense of belonging (identity) (4.1.2.7) and the religious link is the strongest in people's relations (4.1.2.4-4.1.3.4); changing religious identity is the main factor and a base in changing many of the aspects of one's life (4.1.2.7- 4.1.3.7).

Changing religion is the turning point that changes Nwoye into a new character that has nothing to connect him with his natives, neither his race nor his family relations(4.1.2.4).

The clan had fallen apart because it is no longer acting like one as it used to be. Some of its sons have joined the new religion and turned their back to the native religion and way of life (4.1.3.8), so religion is the main reason of falling apart.

5.1.1.6 Religion and Culture

This study argues that 'religion shapes, constitutes and transcends culture. It interacts and it is influenced by it' (2.1.2.1.4.).

The analysis confirms this argument and shows that religion shapes culture and is influenced by it. It reveals that religion is a main source of the native culture (4.1.1.1), customs are based on religion (4.1.1.3), and it is the basis of the cultural behavior of peace and war. The native religion is influenced by the cultural customs of each clan (4.1.1.5).

The results also show that there is close link between religion and culture. Religious preaching is negatively affected by the difference in the cultural backgrounds and language (4.1.2.3). The white man faces difficulties in approaching the natives due to the difference in language and culture (4.1.2.3). The cultural mistake that the interpreter makes when he introduces the natives by using an unsuitable word causes negative impact on the religious conversation (4.1.2.3).

The results also show that good cultural understanding helps Mr. Brown to avoid falling into cultural clashes, so he succeeds in building good relations with the natives and attracting many of them to the new faith (4.1.3.2).

Thus, the most influential component of culture is religion, so when Mr. Brown gives himself a chance to understand the nature of the local religion, he becomes able to find the best way to the natives' hearts (4.1.3.2) compared to Mr. Smith, who falls into several cultural clashes that restrain his mission due to his lack of cultural understanding (4.1.3.5).

5.1.1.7 Religious Conversion

The religious conversion referred to in this study is the change from one religion to another. This change can have one of three types: *sudden*, *gradual*, and *socialized*(2.1.2.1.5).

The results support this argument and show samples of each one of the three types. Some converts change faith suddenly due to an extraordinary event without going through the conversion stages (4.1.2.5-4.1.2.6, 4.1.3.3). Nwoye's conversion was a sample of the *gradual* type (4.1.2.4- 4.1.3.3). The white man generally uses the policy of *gradual* conversion (4.1.2.1), since some of the native converts do not get rid of all the local customs at once, some customs take time to be ignored (4.1.2.7).

Mr. Brown's policy to change the natives through learning the new faith in his schools without their knowledge is an example of the *socialized* conversion (4.1.3.2- 4.1.3.3).

The study assumes that the gradual conversion follows a seven-stage process (2.1.2.1.5). The results show that Nwoye is an example of the convert who follows the *gradual* type of conversion (4.1.1.4), as he goes through most of the stages of gradual conversion until he reaches the phase of complete change (4.1.3.3). The results reveal the following stages: *context*, the contact with the new religion (4.1.2.1-4.1.2.4); *encountering*, the convert trusts the advocator and starts getting knowledge from him (4.1.2.4); *interaction*, the convert consults the advocate to move to Umoufia to learn the new religion away from the influence of his father (4.1.2.4); *commitment*, to change faith and adopt the new one (4.1.2.4); *consequence stage*, the converts face difficulties that are about to weaken their allegiance to the new faith (4.1.2.7).

The results support the argument that the most influential factor for religious change is the intercultural and inter-religious context in the village due to the coming of the white man (4.1.2.1-4.1.2.5, 4.1.2.7-4.1.2.8).

The results also support the study's assumption that religious conversion may occur due to the curiosity of the convert without being a religious seeker (4.1.2.3).

The analysis reveals some reasons for religious conversion. For examples, the personal interpretations of the native religion and some of the religious customs provide some excuses to those who criticize it and those who desert it (4.1.2.4). When the new religion wins the challenge, it gains the first three converts. This challenging example allows the people in the clan, who have rebellious thoughts, to think that many of their local religious customs are wrong (4.1.2.5), so some natives, who are delaying their declaration to the new faith to see what will happen to the missionaries, announce their allegiance to the new religion (4.1.2.5). The conversion of Nneka is due to the wicked thoughts of the local faith. She suffers a lot from the custom of throwing children alive to die in the Evil Forest (4.1.2.6).

The strictness of the local customs cause some of them to convert to find some sort of freedom in the new religion to perform their own preferences. If the native way would be somewhat flexible and allow the natives to choose what suit them, the number of converts may be smaller than this (4.1.2.6).

The results support the study's argument that religious conversion needs religious support (2.1.2.1.5). The trade stores that are introduced by the white man serve as a type of *religious support* that attract the natives to the new religion (4.1.3.2).

The results show that the novel title *Things Fall Apart* refers to the fracture or change of the native identity due to the coming of the white man with his new faith (4.1.3.4).

5.1.1.8 Religious Pluralism

The study argues that religious pluralism (RP) 'occurs in a society that encompasses distinctive religious groups. RP is a concept that makes these groups coexist in harmony and in a degree of acceptance that allows them to exchange peaceful treatment if not they exchange religious knowledge. One of the most remarkable features of RP is that it prevents religion from acting its role as source of power that unifies society. That is, RP weakens the religious ties between the people , so they do not base their treatments to each other on religious grounds (2.1.2.1.6).

The results show that neither the natives nor the white man have a religious pluralistic perspective because they keep clashing with each other for religious reasons. The core of the white's man mission is to convert the natives(5.1.1.6) and he does not accept the coexistence of the two religions in the society, and so do the natives (4.1.2.3).

Like the natives, the white man is religiously exclusive, as both think that the only way of salvation is one's own religion and all the other ways of worship are wrong (4.1.2.3).

Thus, no religious pluralism is expected to take place in the village society. The two opposite religions do not have the potentiality of coexisting with another different religion (4.1.2.3).

The results also show that if there is some degree of religious diversity or acceptance to the other, the religion-based clash will be more peaceful than it actually is. That is, if the native way is more flexible and tolerant and allows the natives to choose what suit them, the number of

converts might be smaller than this and the society could avoid many of the clashes (4.1.2.4).

On the other hand, the exclusivist view of the second white man, who is not tolerant, but extreme, and sees things as white or black, does not open the way for religious pluralism and raises much stir in the society (4.1.3.6). The white man's exclusivist view negatively affects his mission of converting the natives (4.1.3.7).

5.1.1.9 Hybridism and Religious Identity

This study argues that a hybrid person, whose father and mother differ in their races, religions and cultures, will be affected by this difference in his identity formation as he will find himself torn between two opposing religions and cultures.

The study results of *Things Fall Apart* do not show any examples of the concept of hybridity and its effect on the religious identity. This is because the concept of hybridization referred to in this study stands only for the sort of diversity that results from the mixture of two different races that each has its distinctive religion and culture. The results of the novel show some effect for those who embrace a multicultural identity, but there are no examples of multiracial hybridity.

5.1.1.10 Identity Gaps

The results show some contradictions between the identity layers. They also support the assumption that the discrepancies between the identity layers affect the religious identity formation, affect the characters' relations, create negative health outcomes for the individual and result in a low communication process (4.1.1.6). Examples: Okonkwo pretends not to be affected by the breaking of the Peace Week. He, thus, contradicts the communal layer, and this influences his social relations

(4.1.1.3). He kills the innocent boy with his own hands, though he inwardly does not like to do so (4.1.1.5-4.1.1.6). This affects his relations with his own people and influences the balance of his own identity. Okonkwo's contradicted layers of personal identity create misunderstanding between him and his close friends Obierika (4.1.1.6). This also puts him in conflict with his religion, people and even with himself (4.1.1.6). He is caused by the same identity gap to be depressed and sad as he has failed to accomplish his big wish (4.1.1.7).

The inconsistency in Obierika's personal identity causes him internal conflicts as he keeps thinking and feels unconvinced (4.1.1.7).

Nwoye enacts to be strong in the eyes of his father. The identity gap makes Nwoye feel upset and worried about his future, so the coming of the new religion seems to fill the space in his heart and led him to fill his identity gap (4.1.2.4).

Nneka's in-laws see her in a different way (ascribed identity) from what she prefers to see herself (avowal identity). The discrepancy between these two layers of identity causes them to exchange ill-treatment and she feels depressed. Thus, the identity gap is a cause of depression and bad relations with the others (4.1.2.6).

The results show that identity gaps occur more in the high-context society (4.1.2.4) as the dominance of the communal culture makes the individual hide their reality and pretend to agree with the mainstream.

The results also reveal that the degree of effect of the contradiction between the communal and the personal layers of identity depends on the personal nature of every individual (4.1.2.6).

5.1.1.11 Identity Crisis

The study results show some aspects of identity crisis. It reveals the following outcomes: The coming of the new religion constituted the

first step in Nwoye's identity crisis (4.1.2.4). The most influential factor thus for identity crisis is the intercultural and inter-religious context in the village (4.1.2.8). Nwoye's identity seems to move from firm to diffused due to the emergence of Christianity (4.1.2.4). The coming of the new religion provided an alternative that opened the way for Nwoye to free himself from the pressure of his father. As a result of his father's bad treatment, among other reasons, Nwoye has reached the peak of the identity crisis and, hence, he made up his mind to change religion (4.1.2.4).

The fear about the future of the family due to the emergence of the new religion is an aspect of the identity crisis (4.1.2.8).

The clan has fallen in identity *conflict*. They are faced with a choice of two things, i.e. to fight their own people or to let the Christians go ahead in converting the rest of the clan. If they were to fight their own people, they would break down the clan's rule of punishing anyone who commits a crime of killing a clansman, and if they were to stop fighting the clan would also fall apart (4.1.3.4).

The clan is also put in an identity conflict by what Enoch does. That is, they are led to act in one of two ways, each of them reflecting a different identity aspect. If they kept silent and take no action, that means the superiority of the new Christian identity over them and the breaking down of their own way of life; and if they were to fight back the Christians they might have faced a similar end to that of Abame (4.1.3.7).

5.1.1.12 Factors Affecting Religious Identity

The study argues that religious identity formation, maintenance and modification depends on the influence of the other identity dimensions such as parenting, social pressure, cultural norms, race, ethnicity, personality and other factors (2.1.2.3.1.).

The results show the following outcomes:

The weaknesses of the native religion cause a considerable number of its people to flee to the new faith (4.1.2.4). First, the superstitious belief that the one who looks after twin babies will soon die (4.1.1.4). Second, their belief that whoever lives in the Evil Forest will die in couple of days(4.1.2.3). When the Christians challenge them and do so, some natives lose trust in the local religion. These two weak points in the local religion, among others, help the Christians to refute the local faith and fracture the native religious identity (4.1.2.3-4.1.1.5, 4.1.2.5. Third, the custom of exiling the clansman, who commits the crime of killing another clansman by accident. This makes some of them to rethink their own way of life and condemn the local Gods of injustice (4.1.1.7). This custom also makes them unable to fight their own people for the sake of their religion for fear of being exiled (4.1.1.7). Fourth, the custom of categorizing people into respected and worthless supports the fracture (4.1.2.2). Thus, the native dogmatic rules drive some of those who suffer from it to join the new faith (4.1.2.7).

The result show that the Christians benefit from the fact that the native people of some quarters do not know anything about the world around them (4.1.1.8). This seems to simplify the white man's mission to defeat their local customs.

The terrible story of the destruction of the village Abame is one of the means used by the white colonizers to let their religion spread without any forceful resistance (4.1.2.1). This is exploited to convince the native people that they would not be able to fight back as the white man has strong guns and magic (4.1.2.1; 4.1.2.3).

The results show some factors that positively affect the maintenance of the native religious identity, such as the role of the family to keep its members firm in the religion of their fathers (4.1.2.8-4.1.3.1); the

prejudice concept that everyone who is different from the local way of life must be wrong (4.1.2.3); and the ethnocentric view that the local culture is thought to be the only proper one and their religion is the only one true religion(4.1.2.3).

The results show that some other financial and political factors have negative effect on the maintenance of the native identity. The financial factor is the introduction of the trade stores by the white man which open the chance for the natives to be wealthy (4.1.3.2). This serves as a type of religious support that attracts the natives to the new religion (4.1.3.2). The political factor is the establishment of the governmental court, which protects the strangers from the danger of the natives until they gain a handful of converts (4.1.3.4).

5.1.2 The Findings of the Analysis of the Novel *The Bamboo Stalk*

5.1.2.1 First Research Question and Hypothesis

The First Question: How is religious identity illustrated in the novel *The Bamboo Stalk*?

The First Hypothesis: Religious identity is illustrated in the novels in two forms. One is the evident influence of one cultural group's pre-set stereotypical images about the others. The other is the strong belief of a group of people that everyone else must be wrong and/or mad unless he/she shares their own beliefs or belongs to their own ethnic class.

The results of the analysis of the second novel do not support the first hypothesis. They reveal that the religious identity is illustrated in several forms other than the stereotypical concept. Examples: some characters judge others according to their own prejudicial concepts or build relations based on religious beliefs (4.2.3.1). Some other characters try to base the criteria for love and hate or acceptance and rejection upon

religious grounds (4.2.4.3-4.2.4.4), but the communal identity gives the social norms a superior position over religion so it hinders religion from playing its role in making all the adherents equal (4.2.4.3).

The results show that the religious identity is illustrated by choosing names for the protagonist. The name that the character prefers for himself reflects the inner religious faith he wants for himself, while the name ascribed to him by the others show how they perceive him (4.2.1.1).

The results show that the religious identity is mostly enacted to achieve non-religious goals (4.2.1.3). The local society activates his religious identity only when dealing with non-Kuwaiti people, but when it comes to dealing within the borders of Kuwait, they refer to their non-religious categorizations (4.2.4.5).

The results also reveal that some characters religiosity appears in their belief in some superstitious beliefs like taking omens and basing their activities on their own interpretations of some religious texts (4.2.1.3).

Both the protagonist and the pure Kuwaitis exploit religion to achieve social-based wishes (4.2.1.3), so the religious identity is dependent on the non-religious goals.

The protagonist does not base any of his actions on pure religious reasons. Moreover, he does not objectively study any religion in depth to know which one of them is true and deserves to be followed (4.2.5.3).

5.1.2.2 The Second Research Question and Hypothesis

The Second Question: What types of identity and social factors affect the formation and maintenance of religious identity in the novel?

The Second Hypothesis: The racial, ethnic, gender, class and personal identities have great influence on the formation and maintenance of religious identity, as expressed in the novel.

The results support some of the elements mentioned in the second hypothesis as we will see in detail:

5.1.2.2.1. Racial Identity

The results show that the diffusion in the protagonist's religious identity is due to his confusion in nationality and race (4.2.3.2). That is, his multi-religious and mixed-racial context is the direct reason behind his religious identity diffusion (4.2.3.2). The results show some more details as we will see in *Hybridism and Religious Identity* below.

5.1.2.2.2. Ethnic Identity

The results support the study hypothesis and show that the ethnic identity affects the construction of José's religious identity as he faces socio-familial refusal from the early days of his life (4.2.1.1). This shows the family effect on forming religious identity (4.2.2.1 - 4.2.5.3).

Although José cannot speak Arabic and the difference in language hinders communication, it still does not have any considerable effect as the racial and ethnic factors matter most. (4.2.4.1).

The results reveal that the ethnic prejudice plays a passive role in the protagonist's religious identity formation (4.2.4.2)

5.1.2.2.3. Gender Identity

The results do not show any effect of the gender identity on the religious identity.

5.1.2.2.4. Socio-class Identity

The results support the study hypothesis and reveal that the socio-class identity is the most influential identity dimension on the religious identity (4.2.4.5). The effect of the socio-class identity on the Kuwaitis

is so strong to the degree that it makes some of them disown a member of their family(4.2.2.2) and mistreat him (4.2.4.4), prefer to disobey religion for fear of society (4.2.2.2-4.2.4.4).

The religious identity depends on the socio-class identity (4.2.4.1) as José's acceptance of Islam is linked with his acceptance by his father's family (4.2.4.1). That is, José's religious identity is influenced by the confrontation of the communal behavior (4.2.4.4).

The results show that a Kuwaiti is Kuwaiti only against non-Kuwaiti people, but when it comes to dealing with a Kuwaiti citizen, they go back to their sub-categories. Like the national identity, the religious identity seems to have the same sense. That is, Kuwaitis are Muslims when dealing with non-Muslims from other nationalities, but when it comes to the treatment within the Kuwaiti community, the national and religious identities would no longer make sense, since class identity would arise. (4.2.4.5). The class identity seems more deeply rooted in Kuwaiti society than religious identity (4.2.4.5), as it separates or categorizes those who have the same religion and the same nationality into sub-divisions, i.e. high and low ranks (4.2.4.4-4.2.4.5).

The results also reveal that the superiority of the social class (4.2.5.2) then causes identity gaps, creates problems, and prevents religious sincerity and social equality(4.2.4.5). It is behind the miserable lives of some characters (4.2.4.5). Because of the social class, the family suffers from José's presence more than his suffering by their refusal to him (4.2.4.5).

The results show that what people say about others is thought to have a stronger power than the police (4.2.5.1). Kuwait is small and so the social power over the Kuwaitis is strong (4.2.5.1). José's family members are pressed to disobey their religion (4.2.5.3.), to disown their

son, to confront their own personal attitudes and to cause relational troubles (4.2.5.2- 4.2.5.3).

The Kuwaiti society drives José to change his mind and turn back as he fails to achieve his dream; to become a Kuwaiti Muslim boy(4.2.5.3).

5.1.2.2.5 Personal Identity

The results show that the personal identity is so weak that it could not confront the communal identity in this high-context society (4.2.2.2-4.2.4.3). The characters, whose personal identities differ from the communal one in some points, are not able to confront the strong social mainstream so they are forced to cave to the social pressure and visibly agree with the dominant communal norms (4.2.4.3-4.2.5.2). The social identity thus is stronger than the personal in this high-context society (4.2.5.2).

The strength of the communal identity hinders the personal and thus affects the familial and communal relations between the characters (4.2.1.3- 4.2.4.3).

The protagonist's identity is more personal than communal. He looks to all these deities from an angle of his personal interest. It does not matter which one of these Gods is the true God, but the matter is which one of them could help him settle his dispute (4.2.3.2). José's diffused status drives him to find his Creator and religion in a subjective way. His religiosity seems unique as if he is the Prophet of himself (4.2.2.1).

He finally settles himself to have his own identity that is a composite of portions taken from all these multiplicities (4.2.5.3). He succeeded in achieving his personal identity in a way that no one similarly shares with him (4.2.5.3). But he cannot do so against the strength of the high-context Kuwaiti society, so he goes back to his mother's land.

5.1.2.3 The Third Research Question and Hypothesis

The Third Question: What is the effect of religious identity on the relationships between the characters in the novel?

The Third Hypothesis: The characters' relations are negatively impacted by the differences in their religious identities to the degree that these differences became the cause of misunderstanding and various types of conflicts.

The results do not support this hypothesis as the religious identity is not the strongest in the society, so it does not constitute the basis upon which the characters build their relations and attitudes. The results show some events in which the characters base their activities on religious thoughts. But this cannot be considered as religion-based actions as their motivations are not purely religious. The characters only exploit some religious concepts or create their own religious prejudice concepts (4.2.1.3-4.2.3.1) to achieve their non-religious goals. Therefore, the effect of the actions that appear to be religious (4.2.3.1) cannot be regarded as effects of the religious identity according to the measurement adopted in this study.

5.2.2.4 Intercultural Communication and Identity

The results support the argument that encountering different cultures and thoughts is the context whereby one can be able to understand his own identity, shape and modify it (4.2.3.1).

The results also reveal that three main intercultural barriers hinder José's contact with his father's kinsmen: religion, language and, above all, race. (4.2.4- 4.2.4.1).

5.1.2.5 Function of Religion

The results show that religion matters most when they deal with non-Kuwaiti people, but when they deal with each other the base of their classification is the societal norms (4.2.4.5). If religion gains its high position on the societal actions, the characters' problems would be solved (4.2.4.5).

5.1.2.6 Religion and Culture

The results show close conflation between religion and culture. Some cultural concepts seem to be dealt with as religious like the superstitious prejudices of taking omens (4.2.1.3). The cultural norms of having strict rules on how to conduct the social life of families, individuals and social ranks have great effect on religion as they prevent religion from performing its role in conducting the social life, as we have seen in (5.1.2.5).

5.1.2.7 Religious Conversion

The results do not show religious conversion in the sense of changing religion and turning to a new one as it is the sense referred to in this study, but they show some of the conversion concepts discussed in 2.1.2.1.5.

One of the concepts is that José's preference for Islam is extrinsic, not intrinsic (4.2.2.1), as he is encouraged to accept Islam for achieving a non-religious purpose, i.e. a happy life (4.2.3.2-4.2.4.4). This has its effect on his religious commitment as it would be linked with being accepted as a member of the Kuwaiti society. He acquires this sense from his mother, who looks at the matter from a prosperous point of view rather than religious (4.2.2.1).

The place and the contact with the adherents of a certain religion thus plays a substantial role in shaping religious identity (4.2.2.1).

Some reasons lie behind his reversion to Islam. One of these reasons is the loss of the religious support which is, according to him the familial and social acceptance (4.2.4.4). The other main reason is that he is not a religious seeker (4.2.4.1), as he does not show any interest in looking for the true faith, rather he has some misleading criteria, by which he assumes to be able to check religions, i.e. the behavior of the religion's adherents. So, when he is encountered by the behavior of some Muslim groups, who disobey Islam in some of its teachings, he turns back and condemn Islam accordingly.

5.1.2.8 Religious Pluralism

The results show that José and the local Kuwaitis have a somewhat pluralistic concept. He believes that all religions may be means of salvation or at least some truth may be found in the other religions (4.2.3.2-4.2.5.3), so he made up his mind to choose from religions what he considered appealing (4.2.5.2-4.2.5.3). José committed to *theological* and *sociological* pluralism (4.2.5.3). Some types of the sociological pluralism José experienced with his father's relatives seemed to affect his religious concept (4.2.5.3).

The Kuwaitis have sort of the modern form of *Sociological Pluralism* as they have come up with their own interpretations of the religious beliefs. (4.2.5.2). They exploit religion to achieve their non-religious goal(4.2.5.2-4.2.5.3). They tried to use religion to get rid of José (4.2.5.2).

5.1.2.9 Hybridism and Religious Identity

This study argues that the hybrid character, whose father and mother differ in their races, religions and cultures, will be affected by this difference in his identity formation as he will find himself torn between two opposing religions and cultures (2.1.2.1.7).

The results support this argument and show that the hybrid characters in the novel face much more difficulties in life, for they grow up to find themselves waving between two races and cultures (4.2.1.2). José is waving between Islam and Christianity since his father was a Muslim and his mother a Christian (4.2.1.1). His religious identity is affected by being hybrid (4.2.1.2). Thus, his multi-religious and mixed-racial context is the direct reason behind his religious identity diffusion (4.2.3.2). Due to his hybrid character, José was ranging between two religions, countries, and names (4.2.2.1). He dreams to have a full Kuwaiti identity equal to all the other Kuwaitis, but his half-Filipino origin prevents him from that (4.2.4.5).

5.1.2.10 Identity Gaps

The study argues that the contradictions between any of the identity layers affect the religious identity formation, affect the characters' relations and create negative health outcomes for the individual and create low communication process.

The results support this argument and reveal that the variety of names reveal the discrepancy between the identity he chooses for himself and the one people ascribe to him (4.2.1.1). This identity gap creates misunderstanding and miscommunication as well (4.2.1.1).

The personal identity contradicts the communal one, but it cannot confront it in this high-context society (4.2.2.2), so it causes misunderstanding and affects social relations (4.2.5.2).

José is also suffering from the identity gap which occurs because of the discrepancy between the personal and communal identities as well as the inconsistency between religion and the social behaviors of its adherents(4.2.3.2- 4.2.4.3).

The conflict between these identity frames weakens the religious identity as it is challenged by the communal frame, which prevents religion from performing its role in uniting the members of the same family on religious grounds(4.2.4.3).

This discrepancy between what the family pretends to be, and its real personality, creates an identity crisis to the whole family and to José in particular(4.2.4.4-4.2.4.5).

As a result of the effect of the class categorization, Hind enacts the identity of a human rights' activist, while she is actually dedicated to defending her own affair. The identity gaps thus occur most in the high-context society as the personal identity is hindered by the communal mainstream(4.2.4.5). The social pressure then forces people to an identity enactment, where they pretend to be something, that differs from their true selves (4.2.5.1). The identity gap emerges as no one has the complete freedom to choose for himself the way of life he wishes (4.2.5.1).

The identity gap again stands behind the family relations and causes misunderstanding between the members of the same family (4.2.5.2-4.2.4.5).

5.1.2.11 Identity Crisis

The results show that José experiences an identity crisis as he is ranging between his mother's religion (Christianity) and his father's (Islam)

(4.2.1.1). It is neither possible to believe in both, and nor is it easy - for him - to choose one, so his religious identity crisis emerges (4.2.1.2-4.2.2). This identity confusion leads him to an identity crisis, when he later is faced with the Kuwaiti societal refusal (4.2.2.1).

In the early days of his life before he comes to Kuwait, José is attracted to Christianity by his aunt Aida, while his mother is insisting that his future is to be Muslim. He is still in the status of diffusion or confusion and he had not experienced either of them (4.2.2.1).

Both of his parents thus agree to this *foreclosure* identity status (4.2.2.1). That is, they prepare him to be Muslim. In the meantime, when he was to achieve his religious commitment and learn more about his father's religion, which was handed to him since childhood (*foreclosed identity*), he still wavered in the *moratorium status* (4.2.4.4).

His religious identity crisis depends on *motivation* and *legitimation*. That is, his crisis is due to internal changes and external situational factors (4.2.3.2).

José's religious identity crisis is due to some reasons. First, the lack of motivation, that is, he is not serious in searching for the true religion (4.2.3.2). Second, the great conflict between the Islamic groups leads him astray and puts him in massive diffusion (4.2.4.2). Third, the social norms that prevent his family from recognizing him (4.2.4.3). Fourth, the communal deviation from the religious teachings of their own religion (4.2.4.4).

Regarding religious identity, José and his family fall into an identity crisis due to the effect of the social class categorization (4.2.5.2). If they welcome José and defend his rights, they will sacrifice their family name, and if they reject him, they will sacrifice their religious identity and cause him identity diffusion (4.2.4.5).

His identity conflict reaches its peak when it comes to the point that his family would no longer bear his presence in Kuwait. At that time, all of the Kuwaiti doors are closed in front of him, except only one door that leads him to his mother's land (4.2.5- 4.2.5.3).

5.1.2.12 Factors Affecting Religious Identity

The results show that there are several reasons affecting the construction of the religious identity.

Poverty is the reason for many Filipino women to migrate in search for work (4.2.1.2-4.2.2.1). Others are forced by circumstances to earn money by engaging in vice actions and the product of that is to have fatherless mixed-race children (4.2.1.2), who grow up to have a negative stance on their families and men in general.

The belief in superstitious signs of good and bad luck causes some characters to mistreat others as a result of the interpretations in certain circumstances (4.2.1.3).

The results show great influence of the environment (4.2.2.1) and situational factors (family, parents, and friends) on the religious identity formation (4.2.2.1-4.2.2.3).

The conflicting Islamic sects thus play a passive role in inviting José to Islam (4.2.4.2), as well as exploiting religion to achieve non-religious purposes (4.2.5.2- 4.2.5.3). Some types of the sociological pluralism José experiences with his father's relatives seem to affect his religious concept (4.2.5.3) and the superior power of the social norms over religion (4.2.4.4).

The religious and social prejudices serve as a cultural barrier that hold back the intercultural communication between the members of the same family (4.2.1.3). The social prejudicial viewpoint is the basis of the behaviors(4.2.1.3- 4.2.3.1).

The ethnocentric view of the Kuwaiti society prevents multiracial characters from constructing their identities as equal to the other members of the society (4.2.1.3).

5.2 Implications and Recommendations for Further Research

5.2.1 Evaluating the Study Methodology and Significance

The study results reveal that the data of the current study could be analyzed in the light of the adopted method. This study concluded that fictive writings could serve as corpus for IC investigations. This is because the ICT of identity is applied to fictive data (two novels) and gives reliable outcomes. The fictive data provides the study with a fruitful corpus that enables the researcher to come up with results that can be useful in linguistic and social studies.

In the statement of the problem of this study, it is argued that the study aims to deeply investigate the religious identity expressed in the above-mentioned novels; a topic that previous research did not give much attention. The results of the study support this assumption. The results show that previous research (accounted for in Chapter Two) has not investigated many fictive works through the IC concept, particularly not through the concept of religious identity, to which previous literature did not pay much attention.

The analysis confirms the reasons provided by the study (3.6), expressing the method of choosing data. The results reveal that both novels narrate the life journeys of the protagonists, who are enduring a search for identity and experiencing continuous cultural and religious clashes. They also show the religious conflicts in two high-context societies.

The results confirm the reliability and validity of the method of data analysis. Although, the reliability of the results is based on the correct

application of the ICT theory that guides the analysis, the matter sometimes seems somewhat subjective as it depends to some extent on the background of the researcher and his personal observation. This opens the chance for more studies in the same area and other researchers may come up with different results. Particularly, if we take into consideration the nature of identity, which is dynamic and especially in intercultural contexts where no two persons may seem the same.

The study results confirm that the analysis of these novels could serve as teaching materials in the IC field in Sudan since Chinua Achebe's novel has been taught as an additional teaching material in the national school curriculum.

The study also explores the role played by cultural differences in the characters' relations and intercultural understandings.

5.2.3 Suggestions for Future Studies

The current study focuses on three areas: the way the religious identity is illustrated in the data, the factors that affect its construction and its effect on the other identity dimensions and the characters' relations. The application of the discourse analysis on the data shows some new areas of study can be suggested to the future studies. Therefore, the current study suggests the following:

First, future studies may employ the same method on the same data to modify some of the given results, challenge them or go deeper and come up with new findings. Second, to apply the same method on new intercultural fictive works to enrich the field with more research. Third, to focus on any of the identity dimensions (personal, gender, ethnic, etc.) and analyze it as in depth as possible. Fourth, to focus on analyzing concepts like religious conversion in the novel TFA, discrimination in the BS, and the effect of identity gaps on characters' relations. Fifth, a future

study could trace the writers' symbolizations in the novels. The current study has revealed some of them, such as Okonkwo's toughness representing the traditional way of life (4.1.1.6); Nwoye representing the new religion, whose successful spread is facilitated by the weaknesses of the native religion (4.1.2.4). His death illustrates the collapse of the traditional culture and religion, which he devotes his whole life to defend. It also symbolizes the victory of the colonizers, who drive him to take his life through attracting his people to the Christian camp (4.1.3.8). The conversion of the woman Nneka is a sign by the writer that the local religion had lost the most important member of all, as the name Nneka means 'mother is supreme' (4.1.2.6). Sixth, a future study may compare the results of the two novels to see differences and similarities in the identity formation between the two distinctive high-context communities. The comparative analysis could also be significant in evaluating the application of the research methodology. Seventh, the existing study focuses only on the descriptive discourse analysis, which is concerned with the written texts in the novels, so it does not intervene in the contextual and relevant issues outside the two novels. A future study can employ the critical DA which may give a bigger picture by tracing the backgrounds of the authors and the relevant causes and reasons behind writing the novels and analyzing the social environment in the intended communities.

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