

The
Management
University
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UNDERGRADUATE UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF EDUCATION ARTS

RES 215: SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

DATE: 9TH APRIL 2026

DURATION: 2 HOURS

MAXIMUM MARKS: 70

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Write your registration number on the answer booklet.
2. **DO NOT** write on this question paper.
3. This paper contains **SIX (6)** questions.
4. Question **ONE** is compulsory.
5. Answer any other **THREE** questions.
6. Question **ONE** carries **25 MARKS** and the rest carry **15 MARKS** each.
7. **Write all your answers in the Examination answer booklet provided**

QUESTION ONE

Read the case study below and answer the questions that follow:

ROLE OF SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

The sociology of religion examines religion as a social phenomenon, focusing on how religious beliefs, practices, and institutions are created, maintained, and transformed within society. Rather than treating religion as a purely spiritual or theological matter, this field analyzes how religion operates within social contexts, influencing patterns of behavior, systems of authority, and collective identities. Religion is understood as both a product of social conditions and a force that can shape social life in powerful and lasting ways.

One important area of study in the sociology of religion is religious organization. Sociologists analyze different forms of religious institutions, such as churches, sects, denominations, and new religious movements, to understand how authority, leadership, and membership are structured. These organizational forms reflect broader social dynamics, including class divisions, political arrangements, and cultural values. Changes in religious organization—such as the rise of informal or individualized spirituality—often mirror shifts in modern societies toward greater personal autonomy and diversity.

The sociology of religion also investigates the relationship between religion and social inequality. Religious institutions can reinforce existing hierarchies related to class, gender, ethnicity, and race, for example by legitimizing traditional authority structures or limiting access to leadership roles. Conversely, religion has also served as a source of resistance and social change. Religious movements have played significant roles in struggles for civil rights, social justice, and political transformation, demonstrating that religion can function as both a conservative and a progressive force.

Contemporary sociologists pay close attention to the changing place of religion in modern and postmodern societies. Processes such as urbanization, scientific advancement, and cultural globalization have altered how religion is practiced and understood. While some individuals disengage from organized religion, others

reinterpret religious beliefs in more personal or hybrid forms. Migration and global communication have increased religious diversity, bringing different traditions into closer contact and reshaping religious identities.

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Some sociologists of religion explore the theoretical analysis of the sociological dimensions of religiosity. For example, Charles Y. Glock is best known for his five-dimensional scheme of the nature of religious commitment. His list consist of the following variables: belief, knowledge, experience, practice (sometimes subdivided into private and public ritual) and consequences. Glock's first four dimensions have proved widely useful in research, because generally, they are simple to measure survey research.

Overall, the sociology of religion provides critical insight into how religion continues to matter in social life, even as its forms and expressions evolve. By examining religion through a sociological lens, scholars gain a deeper understanding of how belief systems interact with power, culture, and social change, revealing religion as a dynamic and influential element of human societies rather than a static or purely private phenomenon.

Required:

- a) Distinguish between sociology and sociology of religions. **(5 marks)**
- b) "Religion can unite and divide society". Discuss **(5 marks)**
- c) Analyze the view that "shakhahola" is here to stay. **(5 marks)**
- d) Assess the place of women in major world religions. **(5 marks)**
- e) Evaluate **five** factors that led to the emergence of sociology as a discipline. **(5 marks)**

QUESTION TWO

- a) Distinguish between tribal, traditional, and world religions. **(5 marks)**
- b) Analyze religion as a source of peace and reconciliation for conflicting communities. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION THREE

- a) With reference to a religion of your choice, examine five essential elements of religion. **(5 marks)**
- b) Discuss religion as a driving force for social stability and social transformation especially in the developing world. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION FOUR

- a) Propose **five** solutions to negative impacts of secularization. **(5 marks)**
- b) Examine **five** roles of religion in addressing social problems such as crime and abject poverty. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION FIVE

- a) Elaborate the nature and characteristics of religious beliefs. **(5 marks)**
- b) Assess **five** challenges facing religion and religious institutions in the 21st century. **(10 marks)**

QUESTION SIX

- a) Examine five roles of religion in contemporary African societies. **(5 marks)**
- b) Analyze Emile Durkheim's theory of religion and its relevance for modern human societies. **(10 marks)**