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Rethinking Nigeria's Development: The Transformative Power of Ethics, Education and Religion

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Abstract. The concept of development has been intertwined with human existence since ancient times. The study delved into the contemporary development landscape of Nigeria, analysing it from a comprehensive perspective that encompasses ethics, education, and religion. The study was initiated by a profound scientific inquiry in order to explore the intricate interplay between ethics, education, and religion in the growth and development of Nigeria. In addition, data collected from secondary sources such as text, journals, and the internet were analysed using exposition and content analysis methods. The concepts of education, development, and development ethics were further elucidated. The study highlighted Nigeria's on-going struggle to achieve developed status, citing the prevalence of immoral acts like corruption. It also emphasised the undeniable influence of religion on various aspects of Nigeria's development, such as education, social amenities, science and technology, language, peace as well as reconciliation. The study also revealed that the Nigerian government's

insufficient investment in the education sector has resulted in a scarcity of experts in various fields, hindering the nation's progress. As a result, the study recommended that the government increase funding for education and that educational institutions incorporate ethics into their curricula.

Keywords: development ethics, morality, education, religion and Nigeria.

Introduction

Nigeria, a nation with a significant population in Africa, has faced various obstacles in its journey towards progress. Despite its abundance of natural resources and potential, the country has faced challenges in utilising these advantages to achieve sustainable economic growth and prosperity for its citizens. The development challenges faced by Nigeria are deeply intertwined with a range of factors, including political, economic, and socio-cultural dimensions. Corruption has unfortunately spread throughout various sectors of society, causing obstacles in the effective distribution of resources and undermining potential investment opportunities (Mathew et al., 2013; Gbadamosi & Ajogbeje, 2018). Consequently, the prevailing culture of corruption has greatly hindered the economic growth and suppressed development initiatives, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and inequality (Ahmad, 2010).

It is important to recognise the significance of insufficient infrastructure on Nigeria's path of development. Limited access to electricity, road networks, and sanitation facilities presents substantial obstacles to economic activities, hindering productivity and discouraging potential investors (Kabiru, 2016).

In addition, the limitations of educational systems, along with widespread illiteracy and insufficient healthcare, greatly hinder the development of human potential, thereby obstructing the overall advancement of the nation (Aina & Aremu, 2022).

Apart from facing internal challenges, Nigeria also contends with external obstacles that impede its capacity for growth. The nation's heavy reliance on oil exports leaves it vulnerable to the unpredictable nature of global oil prices. This, in turn, leads to economic fluctuations and a reliance on foreign aid and loans (Yakubu et al., 2019; Ohiomu, 2020).

The special focus on one commodity tends to distract from the need to diversify the economy and invest in other sectors that can promote sustainable development and generate job opportunities (Johnny et al., 2018).

As Nigeria embarks on its journey towards genuine development, it is essential to carefully examine the various challenges it faces and identify effective strategies to overcome them. In order to foster the sustainable development in Nigeria, it is crucial for policymakers and stakeholders to acknowledge the significant impact of ethics, education, and religion on shaping societal progress. Tackling corruption, promoting ethical practices, prioritising quality and inclusive education, and fostering interreligious harmony are crucial for Nigeria's sustainable development. Through this approach, Nigeria can tap into the vast potential of its diverse population, fostering social unity and paving the path for reasonable and inclusive development. This in-depth analysis provided valuable insights for policymakers and

stakeholders, helping them to implement focused interventions that tackle corruption, boost infrastructure development, improve education and healthcare systems, and foster economic diversification. Through this approach, Nigeria has the opportunity to pursue a path of sustainable development that not only improves the lives of its people but also harnesses its vast potential on the global stage.

Research Problem

Nigeria, a nation in western Africa, is regarded as Africa's giant due to its abundance of natural and human resources. It is both the most populous black nation in the world and the most populous country in Africa. Following gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has witnessed various military and civilian administrations and leaders, yet all have struggled to fulfil their obligations to the people, leading to on-going unrest and instability in the nation. The fact that the Nigerian state mostly exhibits indicators of a developing country makes it appear to be one as well. According to Asike (2017), several philosophical principles are regularly applied in Nigeria to improve development. Since philosophical questions are crucial to the progress, they serve as a broad framework for all sets of functional relationships and human endeavours in Nigeria. Every society aims for development at the emergence of the formation of a society, but there are a few fundamental conditions that must be realised. According to Gran (1983), the development is a social and practical process that tries to liberate the human potential so that individuals can obtain the greatest degree of control over all socially viable and potential resources required for the achievement of basic human needs and security. Development involves unlocking human potential to achieve complete autonomy in accessing resources to fulfil essential human requirements. According to Asike (2017), development is a transformational process. It is not completely materialistic; rather, it arises within the framework of a people in connection to the rate of development and advancement of specific society members.

The synergy of ethics, education, and religion plays a pivotal role in shaping various facets of development in Nigeria. When these three elements intersect in areas such as governance and corruption, social inequality and poverty, gender equality, environmental sustainability, and peace building and conflict resolution, they have a profound impact on the country's progress and growth. Nevertheless, there are obstacles that need to be addressed, including the limited availability of high-quality education, misinterpretation of religious doctrines, and ethical lapses in governing bodies. To tackle these obstacles, Nigeria may make significant strides as a developing nation by giving top priority to inclusive education, advocating for ethical leadership, and nurturing interfaith dialogue.

Research Focus

The establishment of a community inherently entails ethical responsibilities that must be upheld by its members. Ethics is as old as the history of man's creation, and thus a society cannot function properly without ethics, which also applies to Nigeria. Nigeria as a nation has moral standards that are binding on all citizens, but if these standards are not upheld or used to guide our behaviours, the society will collapse morally and struggle to advance. Education, as a fundamental human right, is required for development to take place. Nigeria has grown

over decades since the introduction of formal education, however, the government's efforts in this sector fall short in comparison to other affluent nations. One intriguing aspect of the interplay between ethics, education, and religion in Nigeria is the incorporation of religious values and teachings into the curriculum of ethical education. Nigeria is a nation that boasts rich embroidery of religious beliefs, encompassing Christianity, Islam, and indigenous religions. Religion holds great importance in the lives of numerous Nigerians, shaping their ethical beliefs and values. Thus, by incorporating religious teachings into the ethical education curriculum, a basis for moral development and character formation can be established.

Research Aim and Research Questions

This paper investigated the significance of ethics, education, and religion in national development in Nigeria. Despite the abundance of research on the importance of ethics, education, and religion in development, certain areas remain unexplored. With this in mind, the article delves into the following questions:

1. What role does the ethic play in Nigeria's development?
2. What is the role of education in the development of Nigeria?
3. What is the role of religion in the development of Nigeria?

Literature Review

Education is considered fundamental for the growth and advancement of any nation. The philosophy of the nation's education system, which encompasses its needs, aims, ambitions, and aspirations, is the foundation upon which this is founded. It should be stated that it is the foundation upon which significant and sustainable growth, development, and accomplishments in the fields of art, science, and technology are built. In the article titled "Rethinking the Function of Quality Education towards Societal Transformation and Sustainable Development in African States," written by Chioke, Ukeje, Mbamalu, & Oranekwu (2023), the authors stated that education in African positions such as Nigeria is intended to serve as a tool for societal transformation and sustainable development. Unfortunately, Nigeria continues to struggle with the task of presenting acceptable means of making learning attractive for the purpose of enhancing societal change and sustainable development. The researchers considered both the role of quality education in societal transformation and the sustainable development in Nigeria in the twenty-first century and the obstacles preventing quality education from fostering such changes. They also investigated potential solutions to the contradictory challenges that the education sector faces in Nigeria's pursuit of sustainable development and societal transformation through quality education. According to the findings of their research, quality education not only sets a standard for the knowledge and skills needed to drive sustainable development initiatives but also shapes the beliefs, values, and attitudes of individuals within societies. It serves as a foundation for creating a culture of sustainability and responsible decision-making, guiding communities towards positive change. By emphasising the importance of education in sustainable development, we can foster a mind-set of continuous learning, innovation, and adaptation that is essential for addressing complex environmental, social, and economic challenges. Ultimately, quality education acts as a catalyst for

transformation, influencing individuals to become agents of change in creating a more sustainable future for all. It argued that the following fundamental principles should be addressed in order to achieve social change and sustainable development in Nigeria through excellent education. These principles are physiological, self-esteem, freedom, and cum safety in Nigeria. In conclusion, it can be argued that the implementation of quality education in Nigeria's education policies can serve as a catalyst for societal transformation and sustainable development (Chioke, Ukeje, Mbamalu, & Oranekwu, 2023). To address challenges in education, it is essential to integrate values like life sustenance, self-esteem, freedom, and safety, in collaboration with government agencies.

According to Umo (2005), education has been acknowledged all over the world as a driving force behind success in the areas of socioeconomic growth, scientific advancement, and technical advancement. For example, the Federal Government of Nigeria assumed in its National Policy on Education (2004) that education is the most effective tool for promoting national development. This statement was made in the context of providing education. Before any country can experience growth and development that is significant, it must first have a solid educational planning system in place. Education, according to Abiogu (2014), is not only a discipline; rather, it is a philosophical force in its own right that has positive implications for human growth. The author asserts that education lacking in philosophical foundation may not effectively achieve its envisioned national development goals. Educational philosophy not only establishes a connection between the ideology of society and the aims and purposes that may be adopted in education, but it also goes so far as to occasionally criticise ideologies in order to guarantee that such ideologies are valuable and appropriate for the growth of their respective societies. As an anchor, philosophy of education is responsible for coordinating the numerous inputs from other fields of education, such as psychology, sociology, history, and economics, into the policy as a whole that is complimentary to it. In the absence of such efforts, the entire process of education and policymaking would continue to be described as "a jig-saw puzzle whose bits and pieces hang together in a crazy quilt" (Akinpelu, 2005, p. 167).

The philosophical reinforcements of education are at the very heart of the entire realm of educational discourse (Abiogu, 2014). According to Mango (2011), the philosophy of education played a significant part since it was interested in the perspectives of the other foundations, as well as the varied ways that they used by applying the tools and processes that are associated with philosophy.

In addition, Reid (1972) emphasised that the application of philosophical approaches to educational concerns and the utilisation of philosophical tools were the two main components of the philosophy of education. It investigates the ways in which the outcomes of such philosophical thought are connected to the field of education. The philosophy of education characterises an intelligent way of thinking about education, as this demonstrates. Similar to philosophy itself, philosophy of education is responsible for a variety of responsibilities. According to Shaaba (2010), the tasks that were advocated by various philosophers of education were dependent on their vision of the goals that were supposed to be achieved by education.

According to Akinpelu (2005), the primary objective of education for Plato (427 BC-347 BC) is to promote the political and social cohesiveness of the nation that it serves. Education that is of high quality encourages good behaviour, which in turn fosters peace and harmony, both of which are essential for the development of a nation. According to Plato's philosophical view, the purpose of education is to set a man in the correct order, to show him the right route, and to instil in him the spirit of devotion towards societal stability and cohesiveness. This is the objective of education (Soni, 1987).

The only way to achieve this is for individuals to be educated in a way that recognizes and nurtures their unique skills and talents within their community. A technique of education like this will result in the acquisition of information in a variety of scientific fields, which will contribute to the growth of society. Philosophy is responsible for coordinating the results of these many branches of the sciences, and philosophy of education is responsible for interpreting these discoveries through the lens of how they relate to education. Given that education is at the centre of a nation's growth, having an appropriate educational philosophy is important. This research is motivated by the fact that, according to the aforementioned quotation, it appears that there is potential for development in the educational philosophy that is utilised in Nigeria.

It was appealed by Ani et al. (2021) that the process of education is the means by which every civilization passes on its knowledge, culture, values, and skills from one generation to the next. Before the arrival of Western culture, education in Africa included only of traditional practices, which culminated in the establishment of formal schooling. The African idea of education was both fundamentally both an ethical process and a potent kind of indigenous identity that helped establish the African knowledge system and personality, as adopted by Professor Obiora Ike's African Cultural Economics (ACE). This was the case because education was both of these things. In the background of a society that was well-ordered, this made it possible for individuals to cultivate flexibility, morality, and healthy social interactions. The African has become estranged from his culture, ethics, and indigenous environment as a result of the advent of western education, which has led to a loss of identity. An African in the modern day finds himself straddling the line between their indigenous roots and the influence of Western education, leading to a fragmented sense of identity. This conflict of values shapes their worldview and ideals, ultimately creating a complex and multifaceted identity. A moral dilemma has arisen in higher education as a result of the paradigm change in the educational system, which might be resolved by the use of African cultural economics. In order to achieve the renewal of true African identity, curriculum balance, and the reduction of moral problems in tertiary institutions and African societies in general, there should be an integration of Africa's value-based education with the Western model in higher education institutions. This is because knowledge and ethics are ingrained in the indigenous educational system of Africa.

The publication of *Afrotopia* by Sarr (2020), a Senegalese economist, served as a catalyst for the postcolonial conversation surrounding Africa within the European context. Sarr established the conceptual framework for a prospective outlook on the African continent. Regarding "development," he emphasises the need of avoiding the imposition of Western notions of "development" on Africa (Sarr, 2020).

Instead, the author advocates for an African development that aligns with the specific circumstances of each country. A meaningful development strategy is dependent on a thorough grasp of the interplay and interaction of all of the elements that impact a given group of people's responses to development initiatives. There are external and internal variables. Some are concrete and reasonable, while others are irrational, ethereal, and mythical (e.g., worldview, meaning structures, thinking patterns). In most cases, both religious and secular forces are involved. A religious impulse frequently lives on in secular form (van Niekerk, 1986). The perception and application of religious beliefs and organisations can substantially affect Nigerian development efforts. Religious organisations often provide healthcare, education, and poverty relief. They support government efforts and reach isolated communities to promote development. Religious teachings encourage morality and ethics, which promote sustainable development. Religious teachings foster community, empathy, and social responsibility, which encourage cooperation and inclusion. Religion may unite communities and promote social peace. The peace building relies on interfaith dialogue initiatives to foster religious understanding and cooperation.

At certain times religious teachings can be interpreted in a way that promotes inflexible adherence to specific beliefs or practices. These conflicting ideas can impede the social progress, particularly when they clash with scientific advancements, human rights, or gender equality. Religion has been linked to conflicts, both between different religions and within the same religious groups, in Nigeria. Firmly held interpretations can fuel extremist ideologies, leading to violence, instability, and impeding progress in afflicted areas.

Service (2022) asserts that Christianity has had a significant role in shaping the current Western framework of humanitarian assistance and development. Nevertheless, with the growing influence of a secular agenda in shaping this domain, the inquiry into the impact of a religious cosmology on Christian faith-based development organisations (FBDOs) becomes importance (Service, 2018). Ngwoke & Ituma (2020) assert that the detrimental impact on human lives and property caused by irresponsible ethnic and religious extremists is a significant obstacle to the achievement of sustainable development in Nigeria. The authors analysed the ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria via an epistemological lens, aiming to identify the primary factors contributing to these conflicts and propose potential solutions to effectively challenge their underlying causes. According to their proposition, the presence of religious intolerance among Nigerians belonging to diverse religious groups can be attributed to the misconception of religious teachings by terrorist group leaders to their adherents. Furthermore, they argue that ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria have adverse effects on sustainable development, as they result in casualties and property damage, among other consequences. Furthermore, it has been suggested that ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria result in a rise in the unemployment rate, a decline in foreign investments, and an imbalance in schooling.

Research Methodology

General Background

The importance of the implementation of development strategies has been widely acknowledged by stakeholders across various sectors. Over the past few years, there has been an increasing recognition of the profound impact that ethics education and religion can have in driving positive change and promoting the development of Nigeria. Therefore, this study sought to explore the profound impact of ethics, education, and religion on the development of Nigeria.

Data Analysis

The data analysis explored the potential of ethics, education, and religion to transform Nigeria's development trajectory. This research employed the expository method and content analysis to thoroughly examine existing data and shed light on the relationship between these factors and their influence on Nigeria's development prospects. Given the importance of ethics in fostering moral value, integrity, and responsibility, it is clear that ethics can create an environment that promotes economic growth, efficient governance, and social harmony. An analysis of the qualitative data uncovered the deep integration of ethical principles within Nigerian society. An exploration was conducted using the expository method in order to analyse the present condition of education in Nigeria, with a focus on education systems. Regarding the religion, a content analysis uncovered the application of religious principles to governance and economic development.

Through the use of the expository method and content analysis, this data analysis offered valuable insights into the link between these factors and Nigeria's potential for development. By shaping human behaviour, values, and institutions, ethical governance, inclusive and quality education, and responsible application of religious principles can make a significant contribution to development.

Results

The Concept of Education

Education is broadly defined as any act or event that has a formative effect on an individual's mind, character, or physical ability. "Education" comes from the Latin word "educere," which means "to educate" or "to train." The process of acquiring knowledge and skills is known as education. It refers to the process of teaching and learning. Education has an impact on people's minds, character, and physical abilities. Education has a rich and storied history that stretches back millennia, evolving alongside human civilization. Education can also help people become more civilized and realize their full potential. Culture and cultural legacy can be passed down through education because man's primary occupation is to transmit knowledge, skills, and attitudes from one generation to the next. Some ancient Greek philosophers, such as Socrates and Plato, had conflicting opinions on education, but they both ultimately believed that education should be utilised to improve society as a whole. The Socratic Method is still used in modern educational techniques. Teachers pose various questions to students in order to help them improve their intellectual abilities, and students attempt to answer these questions using their arguments. These philosophers' ideologies are the basics of today's educational theories.

Plato, an Idealism proponent, stated that the goal of education is to improve people's talents so that they can better serve society. He also founded the Academy, the world's first university (Big-Alabo & Amaehule, 2022). Aristotle, the father of realism, on the other hand, assumed that only citizens could be educated. He believed that a well-educated person was happy. He argued that education should include academic, practical, and technological mechanisms. Education promotes the growth of both physical and mental abilities. In ancient Greece, education was viewed as a state function, with the goal of serving the state's goals. Education now serves the needs of citizens as well as the interests of the state or society. As a result, education is extremely important to us. It fosters character, disseminates knowledge, and aids in the advancement of society. Education not only completes a man, but it also subsidises to the development of society and the state. Schools are the bedrock of education. School contributes to the development of children (Kodari, 2019). This can only be accomplished through ethical education, so it is critical to teach ethics in schools.

The Concept of Development

Understanding the definition and essence of development is a key priority for humanity. Being able to identify whether a society is developed, developing, underdeveloped, or unlikely to develop has also presented some challenges (Efemini, 2010). According to Efemini (2010), Ake thinks that economic growth or industrialisation alone is not development. For him, "development is the process of social transformation in which people themselves are in charge of the process." This viewpoint is in line with the fundamental principle in classical economies, where development is evaluated by per capita income or economic growth. Efemini (2010) also states that "development is the quantitative and qualitative improvement in the material, emotional, and spiritual conditions of human existence." For Todaro and Smith (2006), the development is "both physical reality and a state of mind in which society has secured the means of obtaining a better life". From the lens of a people-centred development view, development means "a process by which the members of a society increase their personal and institutional capacities to mobilize and manage resources to produce sustainable and justify distributed improvements in their quality of life consistent with their own aspirations" (Korten, 1990). This view simply means that when the quality of life is improved by individuals based on their personal ambitions. According to Burkley (1993), development can also be seen as "a process by which an individual develops self-respect and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative, and tolerant toward others through becoming aware of his or her shortcomings as well as his or her potential for positive change." The development is simply defined by the United Nations Development Programme/UNDP (1990) as "a process of enlarging people's choices". This phenomenon arises from the collective endeavours, the acquisition of new knowledge, and the active involvement in the progress of their communities in economic, social, and political aspects.

The Concept of Development Ethics

The concept of "development" is inherently appealing (Gasper, 2004). The field of development ethics examines inquiries and controversies pertaining to the notions of societal and global development, as well as individual development (Gasper, 2004). The development ethics is a field of study that explores the consequences of the interconnectedness and inherent

conflict within the context of social and economic development, both at the national and international levels, as well as throughout time. The development ethics serves as a convergence point for theory and practice, encompassing various domains and forms of knowledge (Narayan et al., 2000). Goulet (2006) and Gasper (2004) assert that certain development ethics studies focus on core concepts and theories, whereas Drèze & Sen (2010) argue that some studies delve into specific sectors and policies. Development ethics offers a complete structure for addressing the ethical aspects of development. It highlights the significance of human well-being, global justice, social justice, and so on. By incorporating ethical principles into development approaches, we may establish a society that is more inclusive, sustainable, and just.

Discussion

Ethics and Development in Nigeria

The development of human personality is widely acknowledged as a crucial aspect of growth in various parts of the world. This phenomenon can also be seen through the perspective of the moral growth of the population that makes up the nation. Nigeria consists of 36 states and the federal capital area, covering more than 700 local governments in total. The nation is a melting pot of cultures, ethnicities, and languages, resulting in a wide range of moral principles. As a result, the wide range of perspectives and beliefs within the country presents obstacles for effective leadership. As previously discussed, Nigeria is a diverse and multifaceted nation made up of various components, each in need of continuous growth and advancement. Thus, if any element lacks proper development, the entire system suffers negative consequences. In essence, each part of the organism plays a vital and unique role in the overall development and progress of the entire system. It's important to recognise that every component plays a vital role in the system's performance, but there is a clear hierarchy in terms of their importance. According to Omoregbe (2012), the primary focus within a nation is on the human dimension, while the secondary focus is on the infra-human dimension. The development of roads, machinery, land, infrastructure, and other essential components within a country holds great importance, although it may be considered of lesser significance in comparison to other factors. As previously discussed, the primary focus lies in the realm of human experience. In essence, the development of a nation is intricately tied to the evolution of its human dimension, particularly the development and advancement of its people (Omoregbe, 2012). Thus, considering that human beings are at the core of development, it becomes crucial to recognise and nurture the ethical aspect of these individuals. Failing to do so would result in inadequate growth for these individuals. According to Izunwa (2015), ethics is the science that aims at procuring the unqualified or ultimate good of man. It critically investigates moral norms, virtuous acts, human conscience and acts in general. Moral maturity is commonly seen as a significant measure of human growth and is considered a key aspect of societal advancement. In essence, it is a fundamental requirement for the advancement of a society. It is believed by many that the coexistence of moral underdevelopment and development within a nation is an unattainable goal. It is crucial to prioritise the moral development of a population above all else, as neglecting this aspect may result in the corruption of the development process due to the unethical behaviour of individuals

(Omoregbe, 2012). One cannot deny that the presence of immorality among the people of a nation poses a substantial barrier to the growth and development of that nation.

Nigeria, when examined closely, falls under the category of a developing nation, despite its immense potential to transform into a developed nation, owing to its plentiful human and natural resources. The present investigation delves into the elements that have brought Nigeria to its current state. What drives the relentless pursuit of progress, even when a nation has an abundance of resources at its disposal? One possible explanation for these questions is that a significant number of Nigerians may lack adequate moral development, which could be impeding progress and development in this specific context. Nigeria is often seen as a nation with a high level of corruption, where unethical practices are prevalent in both governance and society as a whole. Truly, one cannot deny the prevalence of immoral actions in various aspects of our society. As a result, this decline has given rise to the dilemma of advancement. The prevalence of egoism and corruption among leaders in Nigeria is a matter that deeply troubles the average Nigerian, as it highlights the persistent issue of corruption in the country that seems to be difficult to eradicate. Furthermore, it is clear that the widespread presence of egoism within a society's individuals obstructs advancement. This is the same challenge that a nation faces when corruption thrives, just like the current situation in Nigeria. The presence of ethically upright and enlightened Nigerian leaders, alongside a highly developed citizenry, is essential in establishing a favourable atmosphere for growth within the nation. In order to achieve this goal, it is crucial to establish a strict adherence to ethical principles, where dishonest and selfish behaviours, such as diverting public funds meant for development, seeking bribes, engaging in sabotage, committing fraud, and other similar actions, are effectively discouraged. Nevertheless, if those in charge of maintaining moral standards are morally compromised, success will remain elusive unless pivotal action is taken. In order for a nation to progress, it is essential to focus on developing the ethical dimension of individuals within society. Without a strong moral foundation, a nation will be unable to move forward.

Education as a Catalyst for Development in Nigeria

Education plays a crucial role in nurturing growth and progress. The significance of education in development is clearly demonstrated by the current focus on education in the two Millennium Development Goals (MGDs) (McGrath, 2010). Soni (2008) argues that education remains a crucial element of the development process. Successfully navigating the complexity of a nation requires acquiring specialized knowledge to nurture its diverse components. Education is the key to developing this expertise. The emergence of various fields of study and specialised areas can be traced back to the intricate dynamics of contemporary society (Omoregbe, 2012). Education, from different perspectives, is a crucial factor in determining development. According to Ozturk (2008), for a nation to achieve sustainable economic development, it is crucial to invest a substantial amount of resources in the development of human capital. He believes that education deepens individuals' understanding of themselves and the world. The value of education in improving the well-being of individuals cannot be overstated and brings about substantial benefits to society. In addition, it amplifies individuals' productivity and nurtures their creativity, all the while encouraging entrepreneurship and progress in technology.

Education is deeply rooted in the fundamental nature of human beings and centres on their existence. The creation of a nation involves grappling with the complex needs of humanity's intricate essence. Thus, a developed nation can be characterised as a country that has made significant progress in meeting the varied needs of its population (Omoregbe, 2012). In order to fully meet the needs of individuals, it is crucial for them to have a deep understanding of these requirements and the most optimal ways to address them. Formal education plays a crucial role in enabling the acquisition of knowledge, which is vital for the development and growth of any nation (Omoregbe, 2012). It is widely acknowledged that industrialised nations prioritise substantial investments in their educational sectors, whereas underdeveloped nations tend to overlook and underinvest in their educational systems. When examining Nigeria, it is evident that the funding allocated for education is inadequate, which in turn hinders the country's progress towards development. Nigeria showcases a lack in different areas, leading to significant costs linked to the importation of technology that is not readily accessible within the country. One possible explanation for this is the lack of significant government investment in the educational sector to enhance research in areas where the nation is lacking. Without a doubt, the widespread corruption within the system has had a negative effect on the educational sector (Maiyaki, 2010). Nevertheless, several organisations and agencies have been advocating for a reform in this sector.

Religion and Development

The field of religion and development examines the potential of major global religious traditions, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism, to mitigate the negative consequences of market-driven society through their moral and ethical teachings. While the "development" is commonly defined by states, corporations, and international development institutions as economic growth and the necessary adaptations to attain it, religious perspectives examine the implications of this understanding of development. They advocate for a balanced approach that incorporates compassion, conscience, a keen focus on social equity, and responsible utilisation of science and technology in both the social and natural worlds (Bosco, 2010).

Religious groups and faith-inspired organisations worldwide have a significant impact on the most urgent development challenges around the globe (Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, 2015).

Religion has often been marginalised or overlooked in the context of international development efforts. Many religious institutions have viewed the work and ideas of development institutes with scepticism (Marshall, 2001). The significant role of religion in several aspects of Nigeria's development, including education, social amenities, science and technology, language, and peace and reconciliation, is so evident to be neglected. Nevertheless, Nigeria's current level of development is inadequate, necessitating that the several religions inside the country refrain from only relying on their achievements in terms of progress. However, it has been observed that religion has a significant role in the genesis and perpetuation of specific types of disputes and disruptions in Nigeria, which have effectively undermined peace and hindered development (Azuakor, 2020). Consequently, it is imperative to foster increased religious tolerance and collaboration across different faiths. Furthermore,

promoting acceptance and understanding of all religious beliefs is essential in fostering a more tolerant society. By embracing religious love universally, we can encourage greater growth and progress in our communities.

Religion has been regarded as anti-developmental by the secular approach to development. The historical integration of development within missionary endeavours, particularly in the context of establishing health and educational facilities in select African nations, has garnered significant recognition (Golo & Novieto, 2022). The authors argue that the exclusion of religion from development conversations stems from a flawed and fragmented comprehension of religion. According to Golo & Novieto (2022), in order to achieve sustainable development in modern Africa, it is essential for organised and institutional religions, together with their religious cosmologies, beliefs, and orientations, to be included and maintained as essential components of these processes. The inclusion of the social and spiritual dimension of development in the discussion on development is of special significance to us (Gathogo, 2023).

It is important to recognise that viewing religion as a means for development does not automatically mean that policymakers can readily integrate religion or religious institutions into their policy decisions, except in exceptional cases. Nevertheless, considering the aforementioned condition, it is nevertheless feasible to pinpoint several domains in which religion might potentially contribute positively to the process of development. Here, the authors quickly examine few of these disciplines, with concise illustrations:

a. Conflict prevention and peace building

Peace is an essential requirement for the development of humanity. Religious concepts of diverse origins, encompassing both original faiths and world religions, exert significant influence in either legitimising or deterring acts of violence.

b. Wealth creation and production

The influence of religious concepts on the development of capitalism in European history is generally recognised. Although not always explicit, these concepts have played a critical role in influencing people's views on the validity of money and the ethical importance of saving and investing.

According to Obaji (2023), the endeavours of political, economic, and military powers to effect societal transformation, particularly within the African context has experienced significant challenges. Amidst pervasive poverty, corruption, and ineffective governance, it is crucial for the global community to tackle these problems by promoting creativity, innovation, and cooperation. By incorporating empirical data and employing an interdisciplinary methodology that encompasses development and theology, the study explores the church's involvement in promoting societal change in African nations, with a particular focus on Nigeria. The significance of religion as a resource within development frameworks is frequently disregarded, despite its deep impact (Obaji, 2023). The author emphasises the significance of ecclesiastical leadership in facilitating the collaboration between religious communities and socio-political and economic institutions. The author advocates for a development framework that acknowledges religious practitioners as essential allies in the pursuit of societal change.

This sustainable transformative approach to development provides valuable insights for scholars and practitioners alike (Obaji, 2023). It effectively bridges the divide between theoretical concepts and practical applications, while also urging church and civil leadership to actively address societal challenges and ease positive transformations within nations.

To promote genuine peace and support overall progress in Nigeria, it is essential for the country's two main religions to actively participate in honest conflict resolution initiatives. This dedication is crucial for achieving reconciliation and subsequently facilitating progress and development (Azuakor, 2018; Paul Okwuchukwu, 2019). Indeed, it is imperative to acknowledge the significance of African Traditional Religion, which is currently undergoing a renaissance, in the pursuit of conflict resolution and reconciliation. According to Azuakor (2019), the Igbo traditional milieu, which was primarily influenced by African Traditional Religion (ATR), implemented guidelines in a non-coercive manner akin to the contemporary government. However, these rules were still intended to promote fundamental aspects of civilization such as discipline, peace, and harmony (p. 149).

Conclusion

The study underscored the complex nature of development and underscores that the need for development arises from the birth and growth of a society. This study emphasised the significance of considering multiple factors to promote the growth of development. Thus, the study delved into the exploration of ethics, education, and religion as crucial instruments for advancement in Nigeria. Furthermore, the study revealed that considering the utmost significance of human development, the ethical considerations of these individuals should be given priority. In any community where morality prevails among the population, the society would serve as a conducive environment for development. This is because the presence of moral values fosters growth and development. The study further demonstrated that development is defined by a variety of factors, likening a nation to a complex organism made up of various components, each necessitating progress. As a result, multidisciplinary expertise—which is only attainable through formal education—will be needed. It was noted that the significant role of religion in several aspects of Nigeria's development, including education, social amenities, science and technology, language, and peace and reconciliation, is so evident to be neglected, and also that the Nigerian populace is gradually doing away with ethical and moral values, which is why corruption is thriving, hence hindering development in the country. The government, too, is not investing much in education, which is one major reason why the country is struggling to develop. Finally, the study proposes that the government increase funding for education and that educational institution incorporates ethics into their curricula.

Suggestions for Future Research

In general, subsequent research on rethinking Nigeria's development ought to employ an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating ethics, education, and development studies into their respective fields of study. Having this insight will help create a more comprehensive grasp of the transformative power of ethics and education in the process of building inclusive and sustainable development. An interdisciplinary approach should delve into the connections

between ethics, education, and religion, as well as their relationship with other areas of development like governance, human rights, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. This research aimed to explore the interplay and possible clashes between ethical principles, educational practices, religious teachings, and other developmental goals in order to foster a holistic and unified approach to Nigeria's development. Another area of study involves policy analysis, where one would evaluate the current policies and frameworks in Nigeria that pertain to ethics, education, and religion. The goal is to identify their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This research aims to examine policy initiatives with a focus on understanding the underlying factors and potential impacts, implementation strategies, funding mechanisms, and institutional frameworks, with the goal of offering recommendations for policy improvements that can amplify the transformative power of ethics, education, and religion in Nigeria's development processes. Additionally, there is an inclusive approach that aims to explore methods of fostering inclusivity and diversity within the realms of ethics, education, and religious teachings in Nigeria. This research should delve into the ways in which ethical considerations, educational practices, and religious beliefs can contribute to the resolution of gender inequalities, the advancement of social justice, and the inclusion of marginalised communities within society. It is important to consider the impact of various religious practices, including traditional and original ones, on promoting ethical behaviour and development.

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