

Religious Education, Peacebuilding and Management of Global Politics for National Development

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Abstract. Contemporary society is experiencing rapid transformation in nation building and sustainable development, yet many of these changes create uncertainty despite advances in information technology and scientific progress. National growth should therefore be measured not only by technological development but also by attention to moral and societal values. This study examined how education can enhance religious conflict regulation, peacebuilding, and the management of global politics for national development. A descriptive research design was adopted involving 250 respondents selected from the University of Lagos and Babcock University, Nigeria, using purposive random sampling. Data were collected using a 25-item questionnaire titled *Religion, Education, Peacebuilding and Management of Global Politics Questionnaire (REPMGPQ)* and analysed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that divisions among religious bodies contribute to political instability, while effective use of technology can promote shared positive cultural values and improve young people's psychosocial wellbeing. The study recommends a holistic and inclusive approach to curriculum enhancement to promote peaceful coexistence and national development.

Keywords: Religion, Education, Peacebuilding, Globalization and Politics.

1. Introduction

The role of education in relation to religion, peacebuilding and global politics are enormous as it can offer opportunities for character formation, upholding social and moral values of any nation through its curriculum development and implementation. Therefore the correlation among religion, education and management of global politics continues to be of national interest to stakeholders in nation building. Despite the government commitment to regulations, religion often make strong claims on people's allegiance, thereby affecting the submission to national and global political authority. The level of uncertainty and sense of insecurity that has engulfed the world in the last couple of decades, according to Anetor (2016) has made it clear that the

true progress of humanity must be measured not only by the advancement of science and technology but also by the priority given to spiritual values and growth of moral life. Therefore, in order to address these uncertainties in our society today Avbenake (2016), states that a systematic and intensive ethical analysis involving not only scientist but also policy makers and the global public is needed. There is the need to bridge the gap between science and society by providing a reliable basis for management of political decision making process. Religious regulations are therefore achieved when various bodies act with equity, fairness, impartiality and respect to the rights of others in their operations.

Religion can be understood as a conceptual system of beliefs and values, often associated with specific organizational structures or institutions that shape the lives of individuals and communities. Religion can be a powerful motivator, sometimes even more so than political or economic interests. It provides a framework that transcends immediate, worldly concerns, and can inspire profound dedication, even to the point of self-sacrifice (British Academy for the humanities and social science, 2015). This transcendent vision of world order and political authority is a key reason why religion is relevant to the study of international relations. Religious education, therefore, involves learning about diverse religions to foster a deeper understanding of their beliefs, values, and practices. This understanding is crucial in promoting tolerance and mutual respect among people of different faiths.

The effective management of global politics requires leaders to develop the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of an interconnected world, and to work towards a more just and equitable global order. This includes adopting an interdisciplinary approach, cultivating global leadership skills, developing effective global governance strategies, and mastering negotiation and diplomacy. A crucial aspect is understanding the intricate interplay of political dynamics that shape the international landscape. While religion is sometimes assumed to be a primary cause of conflict, both within and between societies, there are also concerns about the ways in which religious beliefs may be used to justify or tolerate violence, as well as contribute to peacebuilding. The relationship between religion, conflict, and peacebuilding can be seen in how religion can contribute to structural violence through discrimination and exclusion, both domestically and internationally. It is important to avoid simplistic categorizations of any religion as inherently "bad" (violent) or "good" (peaceful and non-political). A more cautious and nuanced approach is needed.

Therefore, education is crucial for management of global politics as it empowers individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values needed to make informed decisions that benefit the environment, society, and economy, enabling them to actively contribute to a sustainable future by addressing issues through responsible actions. It therefore becomes necessary to equip the society with the right values and attitudes needed to cope with crisis-ridden environmental conditions.

Over the years, much of the research on global politics has focused attention on relationship between countries in terms of power, alliance and development, involvement in international organizations, political and economic dependence with little consideration given to religious-oriented causes and outcomes on global politics. Rather than pointing to the general differences between Muslims, Christians and other religious bodies, there is the need to draw attention to the benefits of religious regulations regardless of the religious traditions involved. The need to promote mutual understanding and dialogue according to Okafor (2016) is a major issue in the management of multiculturalism, global peace and security in a society deeply divided along ethnic, religious, tribal and geographical lines like Nigeria. Nigeria is a developing African nation with well over 350 heterogeneous groups struggling over limited resources. Allegiance to ethnic groups and religion comes first before the Nigerian state due to limited resources and lack of political will to develop and improve the lives of the people. Therefore an average young Nigerian is armed with different belief systems, cultural values ideas as their crucial asset when they interact with their peers.

Efficient administrators according to Jean-Marie, Normore and Brooks (2009) sees human differences in terms of deficiencies and frequently labeled these differences as genetic and moral failings. Generations of mainstream educational and political leaders should focus on developing a shared vision of learning in terms of religious beliefs system, cultural values, sustaining beneficial moral values, facilitating collaborations with individuals, religious bodies to respond to diverse needs, acting with integrity and fairness and promoting social and political justice, especially when social change challenges local religious norms. In order to prepare leaders to meet these responsibilities with skill and forethought Jean-Marie, Normore and Brooks (2009), asserts that University leadership preparation programmes must recognize they are a key position to impact the practices and behaviours of future leaders. Given that values are about the choices we make, and the growing plurality of religious beliefs there is the need to examine the issue of a broader curriculum focusing specially on the ways that social justice concepts could be integrated into existing curriculum. For most political scientists according to Brubaker (2016), religion provides expostulate rationalization and justification of conduct that can be explained in non-religious terms. Commenting further Brubaker (2016), asserts that this is because religious justification can transform attacks from religious prohibited suicide into religious sanctioned martyrdom rewarded in the afterlife where the sins of the martyr who has died for the sake of God will be washed away.

Obviously successful management of global politics depends largely on demand for results and achievements of our leaders. These have necessitated the need for accountable management especially among religious bodies in their daily operations so as to be held responsible for their group actions. Therefore, the success of religious conflict regulation will be predicated on the role of education in information dissemination and the level of awareness of such policies which have direct and significant effect on the effective output of the global politics especially in character formation and social justice.

Regulation is an abstract concept of management of multifaceted system according to a set of rules and developments. Regulations can also be defined as an act of controlling of an activity or process usually by means of rules. Therefore, religious regulations are measure taken by the state to regulate religious bodies in terms to bolster national security, fight extremism and restrict faith based activities practiced outside those approved by the state. It is usually a policy statement or directive made and maintained by an authority to protect national security against threats from religious bodies.

Nigeria is a highly populated nation, since independence in 1960, the nation has struggled in futilely to establish the relationship between religion and the state. The nation's political attempt aimed at effective governance have led to frequent re-drafting of her written constitution which cannot be said to be an acceptable document to all the geo-political regions even after five amended constitutions (1960, 1963, 1979, 1989 and 1999). In all these drafted Nigerian constitutions, the positions of the law is that religious beliefs is not to influence any public or governance. According to Canci and Odukoya (2016), religion plays a critical role in Nigerian society and has expressed itself as a potent force in the geopolitical development of the country. This force that has been used to unite Nigeria is the force that has led to numerous conflicts in the country. A typical example is a situation where some states respond positively to either Islam or Christianity like the sharia law; persecution in terms of zoning approvals; tax exemptions and public incorporations; Boko Haram insurgency which aims is to impose Sharia on the entire nation; herdsman, IPOB, MASOP. Religion and ethnic nationalism has led to conflicts about control of state power, unequal allocation of resources, citizenship issues. Since 1999 when Nigeria transited into civil rule, the country has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of conflicts. Religion has been used as a tool for violence for any social change especially in terms of mobilization structure for conflicts.

The greatest challenge is to note the needed changes in social norms and use reasoned persuasion to bring about their inclusion in the instructional programs of the school. An organization as important as a school needs to be well structured and the curriculum which is important to the achievement of the educational and global needs have to be relevant and comprehensive in solving our immediate problems. The question still remains the extent that religious regulations compliments global politics and are the young ones aware of these existing regulations or have good understanding of the effects of this regulations. The challenge therefore is to nurture the youths developing background in such a way that they become abreast in the world of today. This will help to identify the roles to play and develop a creative and innovative skills sensitive to changes needed in dealing with religious conflicts situations for sustainable nation building.

The school, social and organizational entities have an important role to play in upholding moral values in our world today. Conflict is inevitable and it is assumed that it will develop only if managers failed to apply sound management principles in directing the affairs of those involved. The role of the school which trains tomorrow's leaders can at the same neither be ignored nor maligned. It is obvious that the key to harmonious coexistence and conflict situation in a society

dominated by advancing technology lies in better public engagements and enlightenment. New developments demand that the school and global community take appropriate action to ensure that technological advances will be controlled so that it will not rub off our moral values as humans. This is because according to Anetor (2016) the increasing use of web based technology to gather and interpret information thereby influencing the practice of our faith in contemporary life as we embrace technology. However, despite the Inter-Religious Dialogue used in the past, minimal success was achieved because both sides turned the dialogue sessions to occasion of trading accusations and counter accusations to put their opponents on the defense. All the parties involved are operating on delusion which are many a time are completely false ideas about themselves. Bidmos (2010), asserts that a pragmatic way of preventing misconceptions and fallacies about the other religion is using education to plant the correct information in the minds of children. The major goal is to achieve religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence. The study therefore sets out to examine how education could be used to enhance religious conflict regulations, peacebuilding and management of global politics for national development.

1.1 Purpose of Study

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Examine the extent to which religious bodies influence global politics for national development.
2. Assess the role of religious education in peacebuilding and management of global politics for national development.

1.2 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do religious bodies influence global politics for national development?
2. What are the roles of religious education in peacebuilding and management of global politics for national development?

2.0 Methodology

The descriptive research design is adopted for the study. The research population comprised of all final year students of the University of Lagos, Akoka Yaba, and Babcock University, Ilisan Remo, Ogun State Nigeria. The final year students of both universities were used because of the length of duration in school in terms of knowledge and skill acquisition to be able to independently take personal decision in matters relating to religious activities. The two universities were chosen because of the urban and semi-urban nature of the institutions respectively for inclusive opinions. To determine the sample, the simple random sampling technique was used to select five faculties from each University. The sampling method used after stratification into courses was purposive sampling technique from which 25 students were

selected from five faculties. A total of 125 students per University, which gives a total of 250 students used for the study. The instrument for this study was a self-structured questionnaire: Religious Education, Peacebuilding and Management of Global Politics (REPMGPQ) with 20 items which was used to obtain data to test the stated hypotheses. The instrument was a modified 4-point Likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD). The data obtained was analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The research questions were answered using percentages and mean scores.

3.0 Results

3.1 Research Question 1: To what extent do religious bodies influence global politics for national development?

Table 1: Religious bodies and Global Politics

S/N	Items	A %	D %	Mean
1.	Differences in religious ideologies and beliefs is a source of political instability in our nation	99.3	0.7	3.83
2.	I perceive the other religious bodies in my country as security threats to the nation	97	3	3.69
3.	National politicians mobilize supporters along religious lines to favour the religion of their choice	94.7	5.3	3.54
4.	Various religious bodies seek institutional monopoly of the country	97	3	3.66
5.	Long lasting tensions between various religious groups aggravate political instability	92	8	3.44
6.	Strong social support for suicide bombers has led to their celebration as spiritual hero	96	4	3.51
7.	I do not agree that all religious bodies should have equal footing through regulation by the government.	100	0.0	3.78
8.	Public regulation of religion promotes persecution of some religious bodies	100	0.0	3.64
9.	Religion provides a mobilisation structure for conflicts	97	3	3.44
10.	Religious violence in Nigeria has a global dimension orientation	96.7	3.3	3.87
11.	Religion has been used as a tool for violence for any social change	100	0.0	3.87

12.	Religion has been a determinant for any political action	98.3	1.7	3.77
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Table 1 shows that percentage distribution of the influence of religious bodies on global politics for national development. The study revealed that the respondent agreed with 100% that public regulation of religion promotes persecution of some religious bodies and that all religious bodies should have equal footing through regulation by the government respectively. The study revealed that all the 12 items of the questionnaire had very high positive percentages indicating that the respondents were in agreement with the statements. Therefore it can be deduced that religious bodies influence global politics for national development.

3.2 Research Question 2: What are the roles of religious education in peacebuilding and management of global politics for national development?

Table 2: Education and Management of Global Politics

S/N	Items	A %	D %	Mean
1.	My university integrate student's learning with religious sustainable development practices	71.7	28.3	2.93
2.	Development of a curious mind set on the students towards problem solving technique in religious crisis management.	90.7	9.3	3.32
3.	There is lack of awareness on religious conflict regulations among students	100	0.0	3.79
4.	Training sections are not organised to strengthen decision making in relation to religious matters	98.6	1.4	3.76
5.	My University promotes the knowledge of preservation of our moral values and social justice through exhibition and displays	95	5	3.57
6.	My University encourages social and religious consciousness among the students for participation in religious activities	94.4	5.6	3.57
7.	There is lack of improvement on the use of technology to propagate the culture of live rather than death in our society	73.3	26.7	3.07
8.	Professional development programmes are not available for both students and lecturers in religious crisis management	97	3	3.45

9.	Innovation and creativity are institutionalised in our various universities to complement religious global politics	84	16	3.23
10.	Creativity and knowledge sharing are encouraged for religious and socio-economic development.	89.6	10.4	3.42

Data presented in table 2 revealed that respondents agreed on all the 12 items on the questionnaire. This is shown by the percentage and mean ratings of all the items falling above the criterion mean of 2.50. This implies that respondents agreed that there is lack of awareness on religious conflict regulations among students; training sections are not organised to strengthen decision making in relation to religious matters; professional development programmes are not available for both students and lecturers in religious crisis management and the University promotes the knowledge of preservation of our moral values and social justice through exhibition and displays with a percentage rating of 100%, 98.6%, 97% and 95% respectively. It can be deduced that lack of appropriate education influences global politics for national development.

4.0 Discussion

The result of the study reveals that religion has both positive and negative influence on global politics for national development. This is because respondents agreed that differences in religious ideologies and belief system are a source of political instability in our nation with a high percentage rating of 99.3%. The study showed that national politicians mobilize supporters along religious lines to favour the ideologies of the religion of their choice. Also public regulation of religion promotes persecution of some religious bodies and respondents equally agreed that religious bodies should have equal footings through regulation by the government with high percentage rating of 100% and 100% respectively. Ushe (2015) asserts that religion which used to be the cohesive factor and core of national unity, peaceful co-existence and national development has become a tool for political manipulation, violence, destruction of lives and property in Nigeria in contemporary time. Corroborating the findings Ibenwa (2014) in his studies stated that a progressive society must be anchored on stern qualities of sincerity, honesty, selfless service to humanity, contentment among other qualities is essential for building a progressive Nigerian society. Despite the emergent consensus on the right to freedom of conscience and practice of religious belief on the need for separation between church and government of the day, religions often make strong claims on people's allegiance, and most times make these claims on all people, rather than their particular faithful. For example, Islam has traditionally held that all people owe obedience to Allah's will, also violent fundamentalists feel justified in killing and persecuting infidels. According to Brubakar (2016) one of the paramount social problems was determining whether and to what extent religious bodies should

be tolerated. This is because some of the actions which are inspired by religion are either obviously or typically unjust. This is because there are different religious ideologies, disrupting international laws, undermining secular governance, creating frictions and conflicts. This usually promotes exclusion and extremism through hindering interfaith dialogue and cooperation among different religious bodies.

The findings of the second research question of the study revealed that there is lack of awareness on religious conflict regulations among students and training sections are not organised to strengthen decision making in relation to religious matters. Professional development programmes are not available for both students and lecturers in religious crisis management. The role of education is inevitable in producing new generation that will be active participants in the transformation of our society. Therefore learning should focus on the values, attitudes and behaviors which will enable individuals to learn to live together in a world characterized by diversity and pluralism. There is the need to organise training sessions that can build up their sense of interaction among different religious bodies and at the same time improve their understanding of each other. These will help for various religious bodies to appreciate the strength and uniqueness of each religion and boast more tolerance and respect among themselves for national development.

Corroborating the findings, in their study Idrisa, Hassana, Ya'acoba, Gillb and Awalc (2011) revealed that education contributes to the formation of national identity. Commenting further Idrisa, Hassana, Ya'acoba, Gillb and Awalc (2011), assert that education has a very important role in transmitting and fostering values that determine, in turn, behaviours, attitudes, and reactions specific of responsible citizens. Therefore, there is the need to use education to instil on our youths to leverage on political skills that include interpersonal influence, networking ability, social astuteness, image management and apparent sincerity for leader effectiveness in global politics for national development. Adequate knowledge and awareness campaign will reduce manipulations from the political elites for their selfish interest; promote our value systems, social morals, understanding and empathy. Ethical leadership and capacity training through promotion of integrity, honesty and compassion for others, thereby promotes human rights and justice (Respect for human dignity). Drastic efforts should be made to changing the international discourse on religion and peace through promoting non-violent resistance and international and national anti-discrimination laws for peace-generating dynamics as applied by Martin Luther King Jr in the United States of America. Imbibing the skill of building resilience against violence through inculcating confidence in our various professions, ethical and moral qualifications not driven on self-interest. Given the critical importance of education in the development of human person, there is the need for technological resources to be guided by morality in order to genuinely serve human interest.

5.0 Recommendations

Sequel to the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. Given the importance of religious education to peacebuilding, global politics and national development there is the need to design our curriculum programme to be able to inculcate a sense of citizenship, tolerance and harmony whereby students learn the importance of contributing to their own community, the society at large and to the nation through peaceful coexistence. Therefore, the need for an inclusive education that can offer opportunities for character formation, upholding social, cultural and moral values of its citizens. This becomes necessary to equip the learner/society with the right values and attitudes needed to cope with crisis-ridden environmental conditions especially from religious activities.
2. As a result of pluralistic society, there is the need for continuous advocacy and sensitization programmes on the causes and effects of various religious activities on individuals and the society at large. This will help to strengthen decision making in relation to religious matters among learners and citizens at large. Thus, encouraging democratic decisions to emerge from processes that are informed by deliberation on the part of the citizenry, rather than from a mere summative of preferences in favour of a particular religious body. Therefore, establishment of professional development programmes in schools in religious crisis management that will promotes the knowledge of preservation of our moral values and social justice through peaceful co-existence.

6.0 Conclusion

This study concludes that relevant education is imperative to effective management of global politics for national development. Effective management of global politics through education can be used to promote a given ideology or to teach a value system desired by the society. Conflict is inevitable and it can harm or impede the attainment of national goals. The task of regulating personnel is not to suppress or resolve all but to manage it so as to minimize the harmful aspects and maximise its beneficial aspects. According to Michalis (1957) “let us help children develop creative persistence in continuing to try to solve conflicts that appear at the present time to be irreconcilable”. There is the need for reorientation of the public by fostering understanding, sense of perception to be neutral, fair in judgement and attitude, embracing empathy and a sense of humanity when dealing with people of different religious belief. Our curriculum should be designed to contributes to social development (lifelong learning), and promote critical thinking and problem solving. This is because these children interact with via television, radio, the press, social media and experience in a variety of non-school educational agencies. By addressing these challenges and implementing relevant and comprehensive curriculum structures, effective policies, Nigeria can effectively govern and address national and global issues for sustainable development of the country.

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