

Religiosity as a Predictor of Moral Rectitude among School-Leavers of Faith-Based Secondary School in Ogun East Senatorial District, Nigeria

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

Article history

Received 06 Apr. 2024

Revised 27 Sept. 2024

Accepted 30 Sept. 2024

Published Online 13 Oct. 2024

ABSTRACT

Moral decadence and all shapes of indiscipline are on the increase globally. It is generally assumed that imparting basic religious instructions to children will help to minimize the problem, but this is not certain. Therefore, this study investigated religiosity as a predictor of moral rectitude among school leavers of faith-based Secondary Schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. One research question and one research hypothesis were formulated and tested for this study. Two research instruments were used to generate data. Hypotheses were tested using correlation method. Descriptive research design was employed and sample of the study was selected using multi stage sampling procedure. One thousand nine hundred and twenty(1920) faith-based secondary school students form the sample size. The findings of the study identified significant prediction of religiosity on moral rectitude of school leavers of faith -based schools in the study area. Therefore, the statement of the null hypothesis was rejected. The result implies that religiosity significantly contributed to moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District. In line with the finding of the study, it was recommended that for the society to address moral laxity among adolescents, moral education should be made compulsory in schools and colleges . Regular webinar should be organized for school counsellors to assist them better in discharging their roles of imparting moral rectitude to students.

Keywords: Faith-based school, moral rectitude, Predictor, Religiosity, School-leavers, Nigeria.

Background to the study

The world is encountering high rate of immoral behaviour amongst adolescents over the years. In particular, Nigeria appears to be confronting numerous anti-social exercise. Nigeria, like all other countries of the world is not saved of the prevailing moral crises in the contemporary world. In fact, adolescents and the question of moral conduct are becoming prominent social discourse as adolescent perspective of right and wrong impacts on the society profoundly (Adeyeye & Olubitan 2017). There are myriads of problems confronting the adolescents in the societys. In the contemporary age, perception of adolescents has changed, no thanks to the advancement of technology as this has alter and adversely impacted on their moral rectitude . Moral decadence and all forms of indiscipline are on the increase (Adebisi, 2018). Adolescents are confronting extreme moral challenges in which many of them have deserted moral rectitude and assiduity for pursuit of money, because the society appears to stress concrete wealth at all expense, and as such, those who do not succeed, generally resort to anti-social and nefarious behaviours to get wealthy (Sofadekan, 2016). Many adolescents presently appear to have lost all forms of decent social, moral and ethical values. There is a ‘mad rush’ for accumulating wealth, power and superior status in the society. It appears the world has entered a century that is full of crises particularly crises in character, credibility and value-based competency (Sumama, 2017). Organized crime has become the biggest business of the day and crime is expanding with such rapidity that we are presently close to open rebellion and turmoil (Abdrahman, 2020). This is because youths’ understanding of moral rectitude tends to have huge implications for shaping the society’s perception regarding their participation in societal governance (Nisar & Rashid, 2019). Moral decadence saturates all aspects of public life. Many adolescents have become armed robbers, smugglers, pirates, rapists, sex maniacs, drunkards, pornographers, kidnappers, and drug pushers (Omordu, & Amaele, 2014). There is no denying that moral decadence has completely replaced core moral values in the present times. This ravaging phenomenon is the cause of some of the major problems Nigeria is facing as a nation (Adebisi, 2018). There is an urgent need to address this revolting circumstance which has eaten deep into the fabric of our society.

Religiosity is experienced as a source of motivation or orientation in life. Religiosity is concerned with the transcendent, addressing ultimate questions about life’s meaning, with the assumption that there is more to life than what we see or fully understand. Religiosity is essentially abiding by religious injunctions and doctrines which are often derived from divine power and authority, there is no doubt that if these injunctions, principles inherent in religion

are translated into moral instructions, they will go a long way in lessening to the barest minimum indecencies that obstruct the advancement of the society and at the same time maximize moral rectitude (Emmanuel, 2018). The development of any society pivots on the moral rectitude of the adolescents because they are the pilots of the nation (Mbachu & Okafor, 2015). Religious practices such as meditation, prayer and contemplation are intended to develop an individual's inner life . Adolescents require to show positive behaviours and acts as pillars of strength for the nation since they are pioneers of tomorrow.

Statement of the problem

Moral upbringing should address the myriad of problems most adolescents experience. The family, religious institutions and the society are major contributing agencies in the life of a child. When basic religious instructions are imparted early in life, it develops with them subsequently making the child to live a responsible and positive life during adolescent. When moral training is given to a child early in life, he/she is expected to live and not deviate from it. A popular quotation from the sacred book is ‘train your child in the way of the Lord when he grows up, he shall not depart from it’(Proverbs 22 vs 6). In Nigeria of nowadays, adolescents that are prepared religiously from childhood are deviating from the path threaded by their parents, what went wrong? Is the scripture not significant again? It has been observed that a high percentage of Nigerian adolescents who indulge in anti-social indecencies are products of lifestyles and practices that are not in conformity with decent moral and social values that were exchanged to the current generation of parents by the previous one (Adebisi, 2018). Adolescents who had received religious instructions, trained morally and brought up to abide by rules and regulations in the society from childhood are not living with the training that had been imparted on them? How can moral upbringing address the bunch of challenges facing adolescents? Why are adolescents trained with moral rectitude joining cult groups, turning themselves into sex maniacs and locks in all shapes of outrages in the society? The study investigated the predictor of religiosity on moral rectitude of adolescents in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate religiosity as predictor of moral rectitude among school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Emile Durkheim (1912) proposed a theory that centers on the social function of religion. In Emile Durkheim's view, religious beliefs are the symbolic expressions of social realities; without which religious beliefs would have no meaning. Durkheim is generally considered the first sociologist who examined religion in terms of its societal impact. Durkheim believed that religion is about community: It binds people together, promotes behaviour consistency and offers quality for individuals amid life transitions and tragedies. He accepted that the source of religion and moral rectitude is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of social order result from common values in a society. He saw religion as a source of social steadiness and a force for cohesion that helped bind members of society together. He saw religion as contributing to the maintenance of social order which cement the society and an instrument that secure a debilitated social order. His conviction can be summarized into four primary focuses: religion as a force administrative discipline, a means of bonding society together, vitalizing and building confidence, happiness and well-being among individuals in the society.

EMPIRICAL STUDIES ON MORAL RECTITUDE AND RELIGIOSITY

Religion plays a significant role in the advancement and maintenance of moral behaviour such as patience, helpfulness, honesty, selflessness, tolerance and obedience to God, so, it is believed that religiousness is associated with being a moral person. It is morally wrong for a religious person to lie, cheat or otherwise exhibit antisocial tendencies. In the study conducted by Ashiq (2004) on Self-Religiosity, Father's Attitude and Religious Education in the Moral Behaviour of Adolescents, the sample comprised 100 male Malaysian students in the age range of 15–17 years. Fifty subjects each were randomly selected from a religious school and a regular school. The study revealed that adolescents' religious orientation was the best contributor to their moral behaviour across the three variables, that is self-religiosity, father's religious attitude, and educational institutions. Self-religiosity was a good predictor of moral behaviour. This suggests that religiosity has a positive predictor upon the moral behaviour of an individual. Religious people have positive attitudes toward moral issues and they engage in moral and socially desirable activities. It was concluded that religiously-oriented students exhibited more moral behaviour compared to less religiously-oriented ones.

In a related study conducted by Nisar & Rashid (2019), on Religiosity for Promotion of Behaviour: Role of Islamic Worships in Moral Development of Muslim Youth. Participants were 20 young Muslims who were divided into five groups each for the

interview. The sample population consisted of 12 boys and 8 girls divided into four member group. The age group of all participants was between 18-22 years. They concluded that youth's participation in religious practices had predictor in their lives. Reply of all participants exposes the level of relationship between religion, spirituality, and moral rectitude and how strong and lasting this relationship is for youngsters.

In an online survey by Dunbar (2019) on religiosity and religious attendance as factors in well-being and social engagement. The results revealed that religiosity and attendance at religious service strongly affect engagement with the local community, the numbers of friends someone has as well as the level of trust in the local community and boundedness with friends and family. He concluded that it is active participation in the religious services that is important rather than merely a sense of being religious.

Research Question

What is the level of religiosity among school-leavers of faith-based Secondary Schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District?

Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between religiosity and moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District.

PARTICIPANTS

Sample of the study consisted school-leavers who have attended faith-based schools from one hundred and twenty-seven(127) faith-based secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District which consist 23 public and 104 private, day and boarding. Ogun East Senatorial District comprises nine (9) local government. They are ijebu-ode, Odogbolu, Ijebu North East, Ijebu East, Ogun water side, Ikenne, Remo North and Sagamu. There are four hundred and ninety-five (495) public and private secondary schools in Ogun East senatorial district, out of which one hundred and twenty seven (127) are faith-based secondary schools.

Multi stage sampling techniques was adopted. In stage i, Purposive sampling techniques was used to select 127 faith based secondary schools out of the four hundred and ninety five (495) public and private secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. Stage ii: Simple random sampling was used to select 64 faith based public and private secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. Stage iii: proportionate random sampling techniques was used to select thirty (30) school leavers from each of the faith based secondary school selected to

form a total number of one thousand, nine hundred and twenty (1920) school leavers of faith based secondary schools who constituted the sample size for the study.

INSTRUMENTS

Two research instruments were used to generate data in this study. They are:

Religiosity Assessment Questionnaire (RAQ) an instrument designed by Glock (1973) and revalidated by Stefan and Odilo Huber (2012). It comprises 15 items and was designed to measure the centrality, importance or salience of religious teachings to personality. It measures the general intensities of five core dimension of religiosity which are: public practice, private practice, religious experience, ideology and intellectual dimension. It has a reliability coefficient of 0.92. Split-half method was used to validate the instruments with a reliability coefficient of .960

Moral Rectitude Questionnaire (MRQ), an instrument designed by Forsythe (1980) and revalidated by William and William (1988). It comprises 45 items which was designed to measure the moral development and moral judgement of personality. For each of the items tested, five response alternatives were available: extremely uncharacteristic of me, somewhat uncharacteristic of me, neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic of me, somewhat characteristic of me, and extremely characteristic of me. It has a reliability coefficient of .94. Split-half method was used to validate the instruments with a reliability coefficient of .310.

Procedure for Data Collection

Names and contacts of faith-based schools visited were collated. The researcher visited the selected schools. Researcher identity card was shown upon arrival at the schools. Permission were sought to meet the Old students of the school especially the executives of the association. Enquiry on date, day and time of old students Association meeting were made from the authorities of the schools visited. Contacts were made to the executives of the Old Students Associations to brief them on the need to meet them during one of their meetings and intimate them of the purpose of the meeting. The respondents were met during one of the Old Students Association meetings. The researcher was assisted by two research assistants who were trained on the objectives of this research work and how to go about the administration of the instruments. The researcher and research assistants verbally intimate the participants of the purpose of the instruments and emphasize the need to give sincere responses to the items with the assurance that information supplied by them would be treated

confidentially and used for research purposes only. To facilitate this, names or personal identities of respondents were not required in the questionnaires.

DESIGN/STATISTICS. Descriptive survey design was employed in this study. Correlation method was used for the data analysis.

RESULTS

Table 1.1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants

| Demographic Characteristics | Categories | School leavers from: | | | | Total (N=1920) | |
|-----------------------------|------------|--|------|--|------|----------------|------|
| | | Islamic faith-based schools (n=999, 52.0%) | | Christian faith-based schools (n=921, 48.0%) | | f | % |
| | | f | % | f | % | | |
| School attended | day | 785 | 78.6 | 446 | 48.4 | 1231 | 64.1 |
| | boarding | 214 | 21.4 | 475 | 51.6 | 689 | 35.9 |
| Type of school | public | 623 | 62.4 | 339 | 36.8 | 962 | 50.1 |
| | private | 376 | 37.6 | 582 | 63.2 | 958 | 49.9 |
| Gender | male | 616 | 61.7 | 182 | 19.8 | 798 | 41.6 |
| | female | 383 | 38.3 | 739 | 80.2 | 1122 | 58.4 |
| Age (years) | 16-20 | 189 | 18.9 | 83 | 9.0 | 272 | 14.2 |
| | 21-30 | 268 | 26.8 | 301 | 32.7 | 569 | 29.6 |
| | 31-40 | 249 | 24.9 | 210 | 22.8 | 459 | 23.9 |
| | 41-50 | 293 | 29.3 | 259 | 28.1 | 552 | 28.8 |
| | above 50 | 0 | 0.0 | 68 | 7.4 | 68 | 3.5 |

Source: Researcher's Field Survey (2023)

Note. f= frequency, %= Percentage

Research question: What is the level of religiosity among school-leavers of faith-based Secondary Schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District?

Table 1.2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of participants on Level of Religiosity in Ogun-East Senatorial District (N=1920)

| Items | Responses (%) | | | | \bar{x} | S.D | Remarks |
|--|---------------|------|------|------|-----------|-------|---------|
| | (3) | (2) | (1) | (0) | | | |
| I kept myself informed about religious programs on radio, television, internet, newspapers and books | 35.7 | 41.0 | 18.2 | 5.1 | 2.07 | 0.858 | HR |
| I read the Holy Scriptures | 28.7 | 58.2 | 12.5 | 0.6 | 2.15 | 0.644 | HR |
| I attended religious services on campus | 28.3 | 46.7 | 15.0 | 10.0 | 1.93 | 0.910 | R |
| When I was younger, I participated in religious practices with my parents more than I do now | 34.1 | 36.8 | 16.4 | 12.8 | 1.92 | 1.005 | R |
| I tried to live my life in line with religious injunctions | 21.1 | 68.2 | 8.8 | 1.9 | 2.08 | 0.608 | HR |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|------|------|------|------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| When it comes to religious rituals, I behaved as my family expected me to | 55.5 | 31.8 | 8.6 | 4.1 | 2.39 | 0.809 | HR |
| I engaged in religious rituals because everybody in my family does | 11.7 | 35.6 | 11.9 | 40.8 | 1.18 | 1.096 | R |
| I am connected to a religious community | 16.1 | 80.9 | 3.0 | 0.0 | 2.13 | 0.417 | HR |
| I have made a personal commitment to live a virtuous life | 26.1 | 62.9 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 2.10 | 0.724 | HR |
| I prayed spontaneously when inspired by daily situations. | 23.3 | 73.3 | 2.7 | 0.7 | 2.19 | 0.500 | HR |
| I am interested in learning more about my religion. | 48.7 | 49.9 | 1.4 | 0.0 | 2.47 | 0.527 | HR |
| I experienced the feeling that God or something divine intervenes in my life | 31.8 | 55.4 | 8.1 | 4.7 | 2.14 | 0.754 | HR |
| I considered myself as a religious person | 8.5 | 87.9 | 1.7 | 1.9 | 2.03 | 0.420 | HR |
| I considered my religious belief as important to my daily life. | 13.8 | 75.4 | 4.1 | 6.7 | 1.96 | 0.668 | R |
| I believed in after life. | 33.9 | 56.4 | 4.9 | 4.8 | 2.19 | 0.738 | HR |
| Cumulative Mean | | | | | 2.06 | 0.712 | HR |

Note. 0= Not at all, 1= Not much, 2= A fair amount, 3= A great deal; \bar{x} = Rated mean score; S.D= Standard deviation score; Decision rule for remarks: Highly Religious (HR) = 2.00-3.00 mean score, Religious (R)= 1.00-1.99; Not Religious (NR)= 0.00-0.99.

Results in Table 1.2 showed the mean and standard deviation scores of respondents on the level of religiosity among school-leavers of faith-based Secondary Schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District. Eleven of the items have mean scores between the range of 2.00-3.00, and four items have mean scores between the range of 1.00-1.99. The cumulative mean score of all the items was 2.06 with standard deviation score of 0.712 indicating that respondents had high level of religiosity. This means that school-leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District were highly religious.

Tests of Hypothesis

There is no significant predictor of religiosity on moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based Secondary Schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District.

Table 1.2: Correlation Model Summary Indicating the Predictor of Religiosity on Moral Rectitude of School-Leavers of Faith-Based Secondary Schools

| | | Correlations | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| | | Religiosity Assessment | Moral Rectitude |
| Religiosity Assessment | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .555** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 1899 | 1740 |
| Moral Rectitude | Pearson Correlation | .555** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 1740 | 1751 |

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Dependent Variable: moral rectitude of school-leavers

Predictors: (Constant), religiosity.

Table 1.2 showed the predictor of religiosity on moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District. The simple linear regression model summary in Table 1.2 indicated that religiosity statistically predicted moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools ($F_{1, 1899} = .555$; $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the statement of the null hypothesis was rejected. The result implies that religiosity significantly contributed to moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun-East Senatorial District

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research question which states to ascertain the level of religiosity among school leavers of faith-based schools in Ogun East Senatorial district shows that religiosity among school leavers of faith based school in Ogun- East Senatorial District was high. This suggests that the schools has really justified the essence of establishing them. One of the core functions of faith-based schools is imparting religious tenets in students. If after leaving secondary schools, the students religiosity is still very high, it means the schools have successfully discharged one of the responsibility placed on them. They have been able to live up to the task. Faith-based school irrespective of whether they are private or public are run and financially supported by missionaries with vision of imparting religious tenets of the founder

on the students but not jeopardising the content in the National policy on Education in Nigeria.

Hypothesis which states that there is no significant predictor of religiosity on moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District was rejected. The results of the findings revealed that 36.1% of variation in school leavers moral rectitude was predicted by religiosity. Therefore, hypothesis one was rejected. This means that religiosity has positively and significantly predicted moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based secondary schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. The cause of this may not be unconnected with the teachings in the religious books.

Religion embodies basic teachings that can be utilized in ensuring societal development so it is expected that religious people should be of high moral pedigree. The result of this study is supported by Sulaiman (2022) who opined that religion is a system by which man recognizes the existence of super human controller of the universe, the recognition of God as an object of worship which ultimately leads adherents to practical piety and moral rectitude. The moral codes contained in the holy books are meant to reform man and make him of impeccable characters. All religious books contain moral teachings which if imbibed by adherents will help foster better relationship which will make the society a better place to live. According to Emile Durkheim (1912) religion is a source of social stability and a force for cohesion that helped bind the members of society together. The adherents of religion see helping others as a religious obligation, importance of helping others is embed in all religious doctrines. Religion plays a significant role in the development and maintenance of moral behaviour such as patience, helpfulness, honesty and obedience to God. It is believed that religiousness is associated with being a moral person.

Implications for Counselling Practice

The implications of this study is that counsellors need to make more effort in sensitizing students to be committed to their religion, highlighting importance of religious commitments as a source they can use to navigate the challenges of lives. Professional bodies like Association of Professional Counsellors(APROCON) and Counselling Association of Nigeria(CASSON) need to intensify efforts in organizing regular webinar for counsellors to imbibe values which can assist them perform their roles better in the society and how counsellors can use religious talk to change adolescent moral rectitude.

Limitation of the Study

This study focused on religiosity as predictor of moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. The study is delineated to school leavers from faith-based schools in Ogun East Senatorial District. The findings of the study is limited to the study area.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were suggested based on the findings of the study:

1. Moral education should be made compulsory in schools and colleges.
2. Religious institutions should create avenues for adolescents where their energies can be better channelled and proper orientation impacted.
3. Psychologists and counsellors should consider religious talk and moral value re-orientation as tools that can be used to solve some of the moral problems we have in schools and colleges

Conclusion

The finding of this study led to the conclusion that religiosity have positive predictor on moral rectitude of school leavers of faith-based school in Ogun East Senatorial District. Therefore, for the society to address the moral laxity among adolescents, their religiosity and moral training need to be given attention. There is need for family as the smallest unit of the society to pay more attention to inculcating moral values in adolescents. Religious institution, schools and the society at large can play complementary roles in discharging this duty.

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