



RELIGIOUS INSINCERITY AS A MAJOR CHALLENGE TO NIGERIA'S INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT: A KAP ANALYSIS ON IMO STATE RESIDENTS

¹ANELE, Miracle Chukwuemeka

²DIBIA, Peter Nnadozie

Department of Mass Communication, Imo State University, Owerri

Corresponding author: ANELE, Miracle Chukwuemeka, **Email:** Anelemiracle.am@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The researcher in this study tried to examine how religious insincerity is been perceived as a major challenge to Nigeria infrastructural under-development. This study was anchored on the Functionalists' Theories of Religion. The researcher adopted the mixed method combining the use of qualitative and quantitative designs. Focus group discussion method was used for the qualitative data in this work, whereas survey method was used for the quantitative data in this work. The population of the study is 2,373,040. The Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator was used to arrive at a sample size of 384. The instrument used for its data collection was the questionnaire and in-depth interview guide. Finding from this study showed that misuse of Nigerian funds and resources, selfishness, unaccountability, loss of sincerity and integrity of Nigerians has limited Nigerians rural, urban and international infrastructural developmental growth. It was concluded that Nigeria have more insincere religious people who are not truthful to their religion faith nor act out their religious good moral in their daily lives. The researcher recommends that people should be truthful to themselves to work on becoming the change they want to see in the world. Peoples sincerity or insincerity in everything they do will either speak good or bad of them once they have any human transactions.

Key words: Challenge, religion, insincerity, infrastructure, underdevelopment

Introduction

The creator of the universe intended to build civilizations that will function in an orderly manner and foster human relations, this He did when the earth and man were created. For Onah, (2017), "Man learns through his religion that certain actions are good or bad and this directs him towards living a virtuous life. This is needed for good relationship among individuals and for national development. This has been proven to have an effect on society and the impending changes (Yakubu et al., 2021). As long as humans honour, respect and adhere to religion and its moral beliefs and practice, the society at large will benefit from its good. In Nigeria, religion is attributed to often involve religious people who are hypocrites and insincere to their religious faith beliefs, practicing something entirely different from how their so-called religion predicts and expects them to act. We have cases where the so-called believers while clinging to their religious beliefs still act ignobly (Takambou, 2021).

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Nigeria as a nation is faced with puzzling challenges limiting its development in infrastructures. Among the challenges limiting Nigerian infrastructural progress pace is the high rate of religious insincerity and hypocrisy in the Nation (Blue print, 2019). Nigeria is blessed with three major religion, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR), other religion practiced by foreigners or few Nigerians include; Hinduism, Bahai, Judaism, The Grail Message and the Reformed Ogboni Fraternity (School Software, 2022). According to latest census, Christianity is the most practiced religion by Nigerians as half of the Nation practices Christianity, followed by Islam which is practiced by about half of Nigerians population (Stoll, 2022). According to World Bank's 2020 Human capital Index, Nigeria was ranked 150 out of 157 as a nation that has human capital development. The nation still has a great deal of development work to do, including reducing its reliance on oil for exports and revenues, diversifying its foreign exchange sources, bridging the infrastructure gap, creating strong institutions, addressing governance issues, and improving public financial management systems (World Bank, 2023). Nigeria is as well ranked as a developing country (International Monetary Fund, 2018).

Nigeria is still battling with remaining a developing country even though most Nigerians see no reason why the nation should be likened to a developing country rather than an under-developing country. The 2018 Human development Index ranked Nigeria 157 out of 189 as a developing nation, although the reason for Nigerians developing country status is traced to their poor health care, infant mortality, poor transportation means, corruption, religious intolerance, and high illiteracy rates, among many others (United Nations Human Development Reports, 2018; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2018). Nigeria's GDP is too low to safely qualify for the list of developed nations, and the country's industrialisation lags significantly behind that of the majority of the nations that received this ranking (Stets, 2019). "Development as suggested in Sens' book, "development as freedom," emphasizes human liberties in contrast to more limited conceptions of development, such as those that link development to increases in the gross domestic product, industrialization, technological advancement, or social modernization (Takambou, 2021).

A sincere look at Nigeria several years back, in contrast to how it is today, we will be forced to believe that the country Nigeria has enough potential to head in the right direction, however, this is not what we see in the Nigerian today reality (Stets, 2019). People tend to struggle with their sense of right and wrong. When viewed from a different perspective, an action that is deemed desirable and "moral" from one person's point of view may actually be the face of visceral immoral behaviour. Thus, a uniform yardstick for judging what is "moral" and "immoral" has been a major concern for many schools of philosophical, religious, anthropological, psychological, and political thoughts. Philosophers have at some point asked, do moral instincts develop separately from religious ones? Because they failed to take into account the intricate interactions between cognition and culture. Numerous scientific investigations have been unsuccessful in separating "religion" from "morality" (Muskaan, 2020).

This detrimental impact of religion on interpersonal relationships is a sign that fundamental principles that support religious doctrine and encourage peaceful coexistence have deteriorated (Pew Research Center, 2016). Any society that fails to uphold these ideals will be forced to deal with social issues including dishonesty, unfairness, the spread of hate speech, moral hypocrisy, insincerity, betrayals as well as all of its concomitant outcomes that foster division and hatred. Religious pluralism is taking a negative

toll on human relations and economic development, both at the international stage and in Nigeria (Akah, 2016). According to a recent Gallop poll survey, Africa is home to the greatest number of religious countries in the entire world. This Gallop poll study seems to confirm the widely held belief that the least developed countries tend to be those with the strongest religious traditions. Even though African countries are seen as being both deeply religious and underdeveloped. It is believed that religious misrepresentation of faith has hindered this countries development greatly (Takambou, 2021).

One of the universal element of the religious life is involvement in religious institutions, moral behaviour, proper belief, and worship (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023). Among these, the moral behavior and proper belief is of utmost importance in the several religious groups scattered in Nigeria. The politicization of religion, as seen in Nigeria, has not really aided in good government, rather it has worsened it by far. Numerous Nigerian political figures are chosen or elected at the national level based on their religious beliefs rather than their moral character and integrity (Yakubu et al., 2021). Religion forms a moral foundation for billions of people throughout the world. Religion influences morals and values through multiple pathways. It shapes the way people think about and respond to the world, and fosters good habits, good social and moral behaviour and hardwork. Religion is positively associated with the values of security, conformity, tradition and benevolence (The Conversation, 2021). Being religious should to a great degree make us morally sound and full of integrity, but reversed seem to be the case on most Nigerian who are religious (McKay & Whitehouse, 2014). The high rate of unfinished infrastructural projects, low quality projects and project embezzlement is quite alarming (Idaeho & Adeshina, 2021). This is done by so called religious persons, leaving us to wonder why what their religion morally believes and what they actually act out are quite different from each other. These have overtime led to the infrastructural underdevelopment in Nigerian sectors, roads, constructions and what have you (Jee Africa, 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is blessed with myriads of religious sect and groups. The thing with having these several religions in a nation is that they come with different beliefs and lifestyle which sometimes contradict each other. The various religion in Nigeria is believed to have an upper-hand at the reason why this nation is still underdeveloped in its numerous regions. Religion is seen by many as the opium of the masses which eventually affects the whole Nation, this is the case of Nigeria since almost all Nigerians profess to be loyal to a particular religion, yet the country is getting worse over the years, leaving one to ask whether these religions has made any of its believers better human beings as they claim to profess. Even though religion is not the only visible problem hindering Nigeria's growth, there are other problems, the likes of ethnicity, tribalism, corruption, insincerity, greed, disunity, strife, jealousy, all forms of individual wickedness, amongst others. Religion is however one of the noticed and outstanding reason why Nigeria has been having little developmental progress. There is this heightened rivalry between different religious group in Nigeria. There is this religious favours and disfavours to people of the other religion which turns out to be a very potent reason why Nigeria is still unchanged and under-developed after many years of their existence and independence. It has been several years since Nigeria became independent yet they are still battling with having the most basic needs and amenities that every nation should have, haven been independent for a while. One of the unresolved problem traced to Nigerians underdevelopment is Nigerians religious insincerity and their lack of integrity, by this we mean, having a questionable integrity problem, by mostly the professing religious Nigerians. The greed and insatiable needs of Nigerian men and their religious bias

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has stood out as a formidable reason why contracts are awarded, funds released yet there are no commensurate quality and finishing of the said contract.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised, they include:

1. What is the knowledge of Imo state residents on the various religion professed by Nigerians?
2. What is the attitude of Imolites towards religious insincerity as a major challenge to Nigerians development?
3. What is Imolites practice of religious insincerity in their day-to-day life?
4. What are Imo state residents perceived limitation as a result of Nigerians religious insincerity?

Significance of the study

This study is wired to be very useful to the almost every human in every society, since man is a social being and religion is part of man's social world. Both social students, scholars and social anthropologists are going to be significantly helped through the findings of this study.

Scope

This study is limited to Imo state residents who are adults, who having the religious right has chosen to profess a particular religion in relation to their day-to-day life.

Literature Review

Religion Explained

In simple language, religion is a person's belief in anything they hold to be holy, sacred, unbreakable, spiritual, divine, or deserving of extra respect. It is also frequently seen to include how people approach questions regarding the end of their life and what will happen to them after they pass away. Many traditions express this relationship and these concerns in terms of one's attitude toward gods or spirits; more humanistic or naturalistic forms of religion express them in terms of one's attitude toward the larger human community or the natural world. In many faiths, people are seen as having spiritual or moral authority and texts are considered to have scriptural value(The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023).

According to Little (2013), religion is distinguished by its singular capacity to offer people explanations for life, death, existence, and meaning. Answers should be given to questions about who we are, why we are alive, what sustains our existence, what would be our purpose while alive, how this purpose can be fulfilled, on what metrics fulfillment of purpose should be measured, and ultimately, what will happen to us when we stop existing. The responses to these questions determine how a person behaves and interacts with others in society.

Rexach-Rivera (2014) defined religion as a disciplined body of ideas, cultural practices, and worldviews that connect people to a higher order of existence. People who practice a certain religion

frequently act or behave in ways that are consistent with particular cultural norms, including how they dress, speak, behave in public, and how they commemorate holidays or other special occasions. Religion aids in the development of ethical frameworks and serves as a check on values in daily life, enhancing a person's character. Religion acts as an agency of socialization. Religion fosters the development of virtues like compassion, empathy, respect, and harmony as well as a connection to the supernatural and the conviction that a higher power controls our daily lives.

It is believed that religion is a reality in human experience that permeates all aspects of life. It depicts how people interact with God or the supernatural realm. In religions, rituals, creeds, and symbols, this link is expressed. Diverse viewpoints, nevertheless, argue that religion is an organized system of rituals, worship, and beliefs that are centered on a Supreme Being known as God or the Deity. It is also interestingly found that practically everyone who practices a religion holds the belief that a divine power created the world and governs their life. In conclusion, it appears that religion is merely seen as a way to display one's faith and beliefs. It is said to be the conscious and sub-conscious response to the ultimate source of existence referred to as God in whichever name or language (School Software, 2022).

Worshippers and believers engage in and are frequently commanded to carry out devotional or contemplative practices including prayer, meditation, or specific rituals. One of the key components of the religious life is involvement in religious institutions, moral behavior, proper belief, and worship.

Religion and Economic Growth in Nigeria

Numerous factors influence a country's degree of development. Economic considerations are frequently highlighted by economists (Alesina&Rodrick, 1994), but political and social factors can also play a significant role in determining growth (Barro, 1996). Religion is a source of extreme violence, intolerance, and breaches of human rights, but it is also a source of nonviolent conflict resolution, the defense of human rights, honesty in governance, and peace and stability in fractured society (Appleby, 1996 as cited in Ajaegbu, 2012).

Studies on the effects of diversity in Nigeria and other nations indicate that while diversity is a necessity but not sufficient condition for conflict, it is not the only one. In other words, violence and division are not necessarily inevitable simply because distinct ethnic, communal, religious, and racial groups exist in a nation (Eghosa & Rotimi, 2005 as cited in Ajaegbu, 2012). This is seen by the work done by Nigerian churches, who support some of their devout members by influencing not only how they view success and the need for wealth, but also by helping them find employment, raising both their standard of life and that of the nation as a whole.

Other research has concentrated more on specific religions in different historical eras. For instance, focusing on Judaism and Islam has yielded a wealth of insightful information. Critics criticize the perceived connection between religion and progress. Samuelsson (1957) as cited in Ajaegbu (2012) and Cohen (2002) contend that there is either no logical basis for associating religion with economic development or that there is insufficient empirical support for such an association. Wallerstein (1974) as cited in Ajaegbu (2012) avers that extreme suspicion about the idea that religion should direct capitalism's progress. He maintained that any elaborate system of ideas can be used to further any specific social or political goal. Any relationship between economics and religion is probably one in which the latter is cause and the former is effect.

Nigerians National Development versus Religious Conflict

The numerous ethnic, religious, and regional differences in Nigeria are sometimes used to describe the nation as being severely divided, with important political issues being fiercely contested, some might even say violently along these lines (Smyth & Robinson, 2001). The subjects that spark the most acrimonious debate are those that are regarded as essential to the existence and legitimacy of the state, and over which contending parties frequently employ exclusive, winner-take-all tactics. These include citizenship, resource distribution, and governmental power management. Due to the fact that there are, virtually by definition, fewer points of convergence and consensus among the constituent groups than are necessary to effectively attenuate or limit the centrifugal forces tearing the society apart, highly split states are more likely to be fragile and unstable (Eghosa & Rotimi, 2005).

Nigeria can be rightfully referred to as one of the most severely split governments in Africa due to its complex web of politically significant identities and history of ongoing conflicts and instability. Nigeria has experienced a persistent territorial or state legitimacy dilemma from its establishment as a colonial state, which frequently undermines its efforts to achieve national cohesiveness, democratization, stability, and economic transformation (Soyinka, 1997 as cited in Ajaegbu, 2012).

Christian, Muslim, and traditional religious identities are typically divided into three categories in Nigeria. With hundreds of diverse ethnic groups and subgroups, villages, clans, and kin groups; and including the worship of various gods and goddesses, traditional religion is the least politically active of the three. Conflicts have often been sparked by traditional religious masquerades in areas of the Kogi, Kwara, and Nassarawa States (Eghosa & Rotimi, 2005). However, religious distinction and conflict have largely been driven by Christian and Muslim identities, with Nigerian Muslims being more likely than Christians to demonstrate or articulate a religious identity. Several sub-cleavages exist beneath the general Christian-Muslim classifications, each of which has at least one conflict among groups have occasionally arisen because of political salience or the potential for political salience. There are numerous Christian denominations, such as the Protestants (Anglican, Baptist, Methodist, and Lutheran), the Seventh Day Adventists, the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Catholics, the Evangelical Church of West Africa, as well as a number of "homegrown," "white garment," (Aladura and Celestial), and Pentecostal congregations. The Nigerian government is currently spending heavily on security while diverting funds intended for national development and raising people's standards of living. This is a blatant example of how religion has hampered the growth of the Nigerian economy.

The Positive Role of Religion in a Nations Economic Development

Ajaegbu (2020) and Singh (2017) assert that there are two ways in which religion and religious activity might affect society. First off, participation in religious activities like attending church is a social activity, making it comparable to gatherings of football or tennis teams, scout troops, political parties, etc. These gatherings can serve as tools for creating networks that might be useful for regional economic activity as well as for developing trade links with nations whose citizens share similar religious beliefs. This suggests that when worshippers gather to follow their religion, they might also take advantage of the occasion to

engage in profitable entrepreneurial endeavors that could advance a nation's objectives for economic and development (World Economic Forum, 2018). The second and more significant way that religion affects society is through the moral lessons that its believers or top religious figures impart. It is believed that these ideals will have an impact on actual behaviour and, consequently, on how society functions. It will not only boost economic growth but also the socio-economic well-being of the populace if values that promote economic advancement are consciously preached (Ajaegbu, 2020).

Empirical Studies

A study by Ajaegbu (2012) on religion and Nigerians National development stated that the level of development of a country is affected by many factors. Economists tend to emphasize the impact of economic variables however; political and social factors can also be very important determinant of national development. It was noted that the relationship between religion and development is likely to be complementary as long as religious beliefs and practices promote 'moderation' rather than 'extremes'.

Over time, Yakubu, et al., (2021) did a study on religious pluralism and the challenge of development in Nigeria. Their study examined religious pluralism and the challenge of development in Nigeria. It was established that historical experiences reveal that societies such as Nigeria which tie political battle for supremacy, socio-economic dominance and cultural superiority complex to their religions breed developmental crises. The interactions between the three dominant religions in Nigeria, namely: Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam have been largely governed by divisiveness, hatred, bigotry and violence. The consequence is developmental deficit.

Okwuchukwu (2019) research on religious education and societal development discovered through personal observations and through the tools of analytical and deductive reasoning via library research methodology, that certain aspects of certain religious teachings have great positive impact on societal cohesion which leads to development in the Nigerian society while some others rather sow the seed of discord, injustice, hate and rancor that have led to killings, oppressions and upsurges that have characterized the Nigerian social space for decades on end and have drastically militated against social development of Nigeria.

A study by Takambou, (2021) showed Nigerians view on religion being a major instrument to Nigeria's disunity and divided state. In their exact word, "Actually, religion has not in anyway helped Nigeria". He further added that, "many people are religious because they are "desperate". "They are poor, they go to church looking for hope." For instance, Nigerian Muslim scholar Bakari Arabi emphasizes that, in his opinion, "religion is always a blessing. While acknowledging the pervasive issue of corruption in African nations, Muslim scholar Arabi contends that this is against Islamic teachings. He emphasizes that while shady business dealings, dubious government contracts, and the laundering of public funds may be accepted in African society, they are considered corrupt practices in Islam and are, thus, forbidden. That is a bad way to utilize religion. Genuine believers in their religion and their collaborative efforts to advance society do not lose their legitimacy as a result of the negative instances of religion that we have seen when it comes to development. Amartya Sen concludes that in fact, religion has always helped in development in Africa, however, sectarian politicians are, of course, prone to taking advantage of religious and community divisions; in fact, they have done so multiple times.

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According to Arema (2021), study on the role of religion in economic development, it was found that religion can influence the society positively in two ways: by using religious activities to establish networks that can lead to an increased economic activity in the region. The second potent influence of religious activities is the impartation of value-based sermons that supports sincerity, goodness and integrity in people which when practiced leads to economic growth. The study's findings suggest that religious leaders should stop trying to hide their ignorance of the Nigerian economy's steady slide toward collapse. They need to become awake and save Nigeria from corrupt politicians who use their positions of power as a way to feed their insatiable thirst for cash.

Gbadegesin (2016) study on religion and challenges of development in Nigeria, avers that regarding society growth, religion might be beneficial. It is undeniable that neo-liberalism, in part because it supported such an extreme materialist, market-oriented ethnicity that was rejected, has sparked new inquiries about the role of religion and spirituality in progress. This essay does not claim that religion has a universal influence over how development is shaped, but it does contend that by imparting the moral values required for the intended development, religion can help shape and mainstream society.

Umeanolue (2020) study found that religion influences politics in post-independence Nigeria. Without mincing words, the role religion could play in Nigerian politics is limited by the individual's orientation and the nature of the society. In spite of these limitations, religion continues to influence political decisions of successive governments of this country. This suggests that Nigeria has often generated negative impacts, but politicians and adherents of religious faiths need to recognize the right of individuals to freedom of religion.

McKay and Whitehouse (2014) in their study on religion and morality found that the relationship between religion and morality is a deep and emotive topic, they add that, "religion" and "morality" are largely arbitrary and do not refer to coherent natural structures (as we have suggested), efforts to establish connections between religion and morality, conceived as monolithic entities, are destined to be facile or circular (or both). The relationship between religion and morality expands into a matrix of separate relationships between fractionated elements. Thus some aspects of "religion" may promote some aspects of "morality," just as others serve to suppress or obstruct the same, or different, aspects. In short, in discussing whether religion is a force for good, we must be very clear what we mean by "religion" and what we mean by "good."

A study by Umar et al. (2019) found that there is a wide gap between provision and needs. Several factors contribute to this in no small measure. They range from lack of political will, poor leadership commitment, challenges of infrastructure financing, dearth of public-private-partnership synergy, bribery and corruption, inarticulate legislation, mismanagement of Resources, the challenge of Insecurity, political instability to economic recession. Etc.

Having reviewed the above studies, the researcher observed that there are no studies on tracing Nigeria's underdevelopment to religion, and there are limited studies on the impact of religion on Nigeria, its economy and on the country's overall growth. This is the gap the researcher tries to close in this study.

Theoretical Framework

Functionalists' Theories of Religion

This theory was propounded by Emile Durheim, Max Weber, Clifford Geertz and Malinowski in 1893. These are all social-anthropologists. Durkeim who was regarded as the greatest figure in the history of modern sociology states that the real essence of religion is more of social dimension than the transcendal order. Religion from his point of view arose from *collection representation*(from the French word “collective conscience”).

Durkheim in summary submits that “religion is something eminently social,” by which he means that “religious representations are collective representations which express collective realities.” His idea of collective representations or collective conscience can be interpreted as the ultimate (our added emphasis) source and sustainer of moral values, cultural ideals, religious aspirations and all other determinants of prevailing collectivity. (Capps, as cited in Gbadegesin, 2016).

Durkheim perspective of religion was based on some assumptions that: A religion is a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to the scared things (set apart and forbidden). According to his interpretation, religion has beliefs and practices which bonds it into one single moral community called a church, which is to be adhered to by its followers and professors.

Max Weber further explained this theory with regards to how religion impacts the individuals and causes advancement in the society. He argues that the religious ethos of inner-worldly asceticism became a motivational force contributing to the emergence of a bourgeois, modern Western type of capitalism (Weber, 2003 as cited in Gbadegesin, 2016). This ethos is characterized by self-control, methodical life conduct directed towards work in a calling, and acquisition through a regularly and rationally pursued business. He asserts that the calling is not a condition in which the individual is born, but a strenuous and exacting enterprise to be chosen by one, and to be pursued with a sense of religious responsibility. Labour is not merely an economic means; it assumes a spiritual dimension. Covetousness, is a danger to the soul, is a less formidable menace than *sloth* (Glick, 1973 as cited in Gbadegesin, 2016).

Clifford Geertz’s conception of religion, though, is rooted in human culture and seems to synchronize both Durkeimean and Weberian conceptions of religion. Geertz argues that religion cannot be appreciated outside its cultural context; hence he proposes religion as a cultural system. He asserts that “the pathway to religion is culture, and culture is defined as “any historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life.” (Berger, as cited in Gbadegesin, 2016).

Geertz goes on to explain that religion can motivate people to do unimaginable things as long as it (religion) could be made to address human problems namely; the problems of evil and suffering. Religion becomes useful and resourceful for human beings in so far as it can “tune human actions to an envisaged cosmic order and projects images of cosmic order onto the plane of human experience (Capps, as cited in Gbadegesin, 2016).

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This theory in relation to the researcher's study shows that religion is an integral part of human existence. The different religion professed by man has some things in common, which is its godly morality in their beliefs and practices. If these beliefs and practices are upheld by individuals, groups, families and community of people, it impacts on the society's development advancement, it even tends to make the world a better place more than we can ever imagine. The issue of greed, insincerity, betrayal and hypocrisy would be a thing of the past when religious beliefs are meticulously applied by religious followers.

Methodology

The researcher adopted the mixed method combining the use of qualitative and quantitative designs. Focus group discussion method was used for the qualitative data in this work, whereas survey method was used for the quantitative data in this work. The researcher adopted the population of adults in Imo state who are aged 15yrs to 59yrs. According to Zhuji world (2023), the projected population of adults in Imo state was given in ranges: 15-29yrs old were given to be 1,225,664; 30-44yrs was given to be 735,063; while 45-59yrs Imolites was given to be 412,313. This gives us a total to be used in this study, which is 2,373,040. The Wimmer and Dominick sample size calculator was used to arrive at a sample size as shown below.

Sample Size Calculator

Confidence Level: 95% 99%

Confidence Interval (%):

Population size:
Do not use commas

Sample size needed:

The sample size arrived at was 384

The researcher purposively selected 27 Imolites; one from each local government in Imo State to be sampled for the focus group discussion session. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire and focus group discussion guides. The questionnaire was used to elicit the Imo state residents response on a quantitative level. The questionnaire instrument was structured in close ended questions with options in each question item presented there. The focus group discussion guide was structured in-line with the research questions raised in this study. The focus group discussion allowed the selected 27 Imolites to express themselves maximally regarding the questions raised for this study. The trustworthiness of the focus group discussion guide was validated by a communication expert, who helped raise the follow-up questions from the study's research question. The researcher employed the services of a professional communication scholar to validate the study's research instruments. The service of a statistician was hired and used to test the reliability of the instruments used for data collection. The reliability test showed that the instruments were reliable to be used for this study. The data got from this study questionnaire instrument was presented and analysed in simple percentage tables with mean scores. The table data was summarized and interpreted.

The data got from focus group discussion were summarized and presented in-line with the study’s objectives.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Quantitative Data Analysis

The researcher printed 384 copies of questionnaire for this section. These copies of questionnaire were issued out to the Imo respondents in different sampled location. There responses were noted and used for this study. 382 copies of the questionnaire were retrieved back. The questionnaire instrument data proceeds were presented in tables and analysed below descriptively according to the study’s research questions.

Research Question One: What is the knowledge of Imo state residents on the various religion professed by Nigerians

Table 1: Response of knowing the various religion in Nigeria

Options	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	382	100%
No	-	-
Total	382	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above table data showed that all the respondents know of the various religion in the country.

Table 2: Response on the religion Imolites know of

Options	Yes	No	Can’t say	Total (%)
Christianity	382 (100%)	-	-	382 (100%)
Islam	211 (55.2%)	71 (18.6%)	100 (26.2)	382 (100%)
Traditional African Religion	151 (39.5%)	124 (32.4%)	107 (28%)	382 (100%)
Judaism	89 (23.3%)	100 (23.2%)	193 (50.5%)	382 (100%)

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Others	165 (43.2%)	83 (21.7%)	134 (35.1%)	382 (100%)
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Source: Field Survey, 2023

The finding from the above table revealed that Imolites know more of the Christian, Islamic, traditional African religion and other religions more than they know of Judaism. This implies that Christianity, Islam and traditional African religion ranks highest in Imo state residents religion knowledge scale.

Table 3: Response on the religion Imolites profess

	Christianity	Islam	Traditional African Religion	Judaism	Others	Total (%)
The religion Imolites profess	255 (66.7%)	21 (5.5%)	65 (17%)	9 (2.3%)	32 (8.5%)	382 (100%)

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Data finding from the above table showed that among Imolites there are more Christians than people who profess other religion. This implies that Imo state has high religious people who are Christians.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of Imolites towards religious insincerity as a major challenge to Nigerians under-development?

Table 4: Response on the attitudes of Imolites towards religious insincerity

Attitude of Imolites towards religious insincerity	SA	A	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
I frown at people’s insincerity	121	105	74	82	2.92	Accepted
I detest people’s greed even as they confess claim to be religious	168	101	43	70	2.96	Accepted
Most so-called religious people still stab themselves behind their backs	173	134	52	23	3.19	Accepted
I seriously criticize people who lack integrity in their dealings with others.	134	97	83	68	2.77	Rejected

Most religious people are very careless and unaccountable when trusted with funds, so I avoid such persons	122	54	127	79	2.57	Rejected
I feel hopeful when I see or pass by Nigerians who are intentionally very sincere in all they do	194	131	44	13	3.32	Accepted
Average Mean	2.9					Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above data finding was interpreted using the average mean score decision. The above table average mean is 2.9 which is the benchmark that formed the decision on the interpretation that Imolites frown at people’s insincerity, detest religious people’s greed, religious betrayals by so called religious people, they are however hopeful when they encounter intentionally sincere religious persons.

Research Question 3: What is Imolites practice of religious insincerity in their day-to-day life?

Table 5: Response on Imolites practice of religious insincerity in their day-to-day life

Imolites practice of religious insincerity in their day-to-day life	SA	A	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
I believe I am very sincere religious person.	204	116	41	21	3.31	Accepted
Most people are greed driven, but not me, I am satisfied with what I have	221	141	18	2	3.52	Accepted
I am not a traitor, so I don’t back stab others, even my enemies	18	115	158	91	2.15	Rejected
I am very accountable with funds and I try to be very careful when using any fund entrusted to me	77	100	159	46	2.76	Rejected
I would say that I am a person of integrity, as my “Yes” is a Yes, and my “No”, a No.	102	38	168	71	2.43	Rejected
Average Mean	2.8					Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above data finding was interpreted using the average mean score decision. The above table average mean is 2.8 which is the benchmark that formed the decision on the interpretation, it was revealed that most

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Imolites believe they are religiously sincere and not greed driven, however, they believe some other professing religious people are greed driven and unsatisfied even when they have all they wish for always.

Research Question 4: What are Imo state residents perceived limitation as a result of Nigerians religious insincerity?

Table 6: Response on Imo state residents perceived limitation as a result of Nigerians religious insincerity

Imo state residents perceived limitation as a result of Nigerians religious insincerity	SA	A	D	SD	Mean Score	Decision
The case of disunity among religious people has limited the social growth of this nation	154	143	16	69	3.0	Rejected
The insincerity of religious people when trusted for a task makes us lose faith in a better Nigeria	30	142	163	47	2.40	Rejected
The carelessness of most religious Nigerians affects the misuse of Nigerian funds and resources	206	130	22	24	4.14	Accepted
The unaccountability of most religious Nigerians has made this Nation to be stagnant developmentally	187	169	20	6	3.40	Accepted
I think that selfishness of most religious Nigerians when tested with political positions is what has kept Nigeria to be under-developed	226	104	34	18	3.40	Accepted
The lack of integrity of most religious Nigerians has led to haphazard project construction and completion	83	129	141	29	2.69	Rejected
The greed level of most religious Nigerians has kept eating down the resources of Nigeria	131	73	162	16	2.83	Rejected
Average Mean	3.1					Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The above data finding was interpreted using the average mean score decision. The above table average mean is 2.8 which is the benchmark that formed the decision on the interpretation, it was revealed that most Imolites perceive that the carelessness of most religious Nigerians affects the misuse of Nigerian funds and resources, even their unaccountability is leading the nation to development stagnancy, some of them are very selfish when trusted with political positions resulting to the nations under-development in most sectors.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The researcher interviewed some Imolites to know their take on the religions they profess and their perception on how religious characters of most Nigerians affect the nation's developmental growth. The researcher asked the interviewee questions as stipulated in the in-depth interview guide. These questions are in-line with this study's research question.

The proceed of the interview was summarized below according to the research objectives and questions raised for this study.

What and what do you know as the various religion professed by Imolites and Nigerians?

The various religion that the respondents agreed to knowing were mainly the Christian religion who worship and fellowship in churches, the Islamic religion which worship at a mosque and the pagans also called traditionalists; these are people who uphold the Traditional African religion. There are non-famous religions like the Judaism, Olumba-Olumba, Amorc etc. There are as well those who do not belong to any religion, who are neither here nor there. In summary in Nigeria, Imolites know of three main religion, which are, the Christian, Islamic and Traditional African religion.

What is your attitude towards religious insincere persons you meet everyday and how does that affect your thought about some religion?

The interviewee expressed their dislike and disapproval of witnessing people who are actually from a famous religious background, who even profess this same religion misbehave or act opposite what their religious faith prohibits. This according to them is very common these days unlike in the early 70's and 80's. People just act according to their momentary feeling which is detrimental to other people and to the nation at large. Some persons even when claiming to be righteous act unrighteous. The several religions in the world has one thing in common; living right, not hurting others, being trust worthy, being accountable, being wise with their use of words on others, be law abiding citizens, being selfless just to promote peace, love and joy of others etc. most of these things are what most persons who claim to be religious throw to the bush consciously or subconsciously, making the world we live in to become worse every day. Usually, people frown at other people's ill acts and character disposition, same with those interviewed, they highly frown at these acts by people who are supposed to know and act better.

How would you rate your practice and how you represent your religion? Do you think you are religiously insincere in your day-to-day life?

The interviewees submit that they act responsibly and are true with their beliefs, words and actions. Almost all of them rated themselves religiously sound and saintly. This implies that Imolites profess to be sincere with keeping to their religions dictates, however, that cannot be entirely through because some of them don't really know themselves well to observe how the act when they want something dearly, or are exposed to wealth and some privileged positions.

How do you think the religious insincerity in the country has affected our Nations developmental growth?

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Actually, the interviewees aver that they feel a sense of hopelessness when they note the high level of insincerity among religious Imolites and Nigerians. The disagreement among people from different religious background drags the national peace and unity that Nigeria stands for, thereby reducing the supposed growth pace of the nation. Unaccountability of most Nigerians definitely paints a bad reputation for Nigerians outside the Nigerian borders thereby reducing proper development of our nation. The lack of integrity of most Nigerian who were privileged to smell authority positions resulted to non-quality, inconclusive and neglected projects all round Imo state and in almost every state in this nation. In summary unaccountability, loss of sincerity and integrity of Nigerians has limited Nigerians rural, urban and international developmental growths.

Discussion of Findings

Quantitative and qualitative findings revealed that Imolites know mostly of the Christian, Islamic and Traditional African religion than other religion in the country. Imolites have high religious people who are Christians. Ajoja and Nomor (2021) concurring with the above finding and aver that these three religions have been largely governed by divisiveness, hatred, bigotry and violence. The consequence is developmental deficit. The Functionalists' Theories of Religion concurs that the different religion professed by man has some things in common, which is its godly morality in their beliefs and practices.

Quantitative and qualitative findings showed that Imolites frown at people's insincerity, detest religious people's greed, religious betrayals by so called religious people, they are however hopeful when they encounter intentionally sincere religious persons. McKay and Whitehouse (2014) found that the relationship between religion and morality is a deep and emotive topic. Thus some aspects of "religion" may promote some aspects of "morality," just as others serve to suppress or obstruct the same, or different, aspects. Ajoja and Nomor (2021) concurring with this study's finding adds that societies such as Nigeria with political battle for supremacy, socio-economic dominance and cultural superiority complex to their religions breed developmental crises. Arema (2021) argues that religious values support sincerity, goodness and integrity in people which when practiced leads to economic growth.

Quantitative and qualitative findings concurs that most Imolites believe they are religiously sincere and not greed driven, however, they believe some other professing religious people are greed driven and unsatisfied even when they have all they wish for always. Takambou, (2021) declared that "many people are religious because they are "desperate". "They are poor; they go to church looking for hope." Gbadegesin (2016) contend that religion by imparting the moral values required for the intended development can help shape and mainstream society.

Quantitative findings showed that most Imolites perceive that the carelessness of most religious Nigerians affects the misuse of Nigerian funds and resources, even their unaccountability is leading the nation to development stagnancy, some of them are very selfish when trusted with political positions resulting to the nations under-development in most sectors. Qualitative finding adds that unaccountability, loss of sincerity and integrity of Nigerians has limited Nigerians rural, urban and international infrastructural developmental growths. Ajaegbu (2012) notes that the relationship between religion and development is likely to be complementary as long as religious beliefs and practices promote 'moderation' rather than 'extremes'. Okwuchukwu (2019) found that the seed of discord, injustice, hate and rancor that

have led to killings, oppressions and upsurges have drastically militated against social development in Nigeria. Takambou, (2021) finding implied that, religion has always helped in development in Africa, however, sectarian politicians are, of course, prone to taking advantage of religious and community divisions. Umeanolue (2020) states that politicians and adherents of religious faith actions have always generated negative impact in Nigeria. Umaret al. (2019) adds that the limitations include: lack of political will, poor leadership commitment, challenges of infrastructure financing, dearth of public-private-partnership synergy, bribery and corruption, inarticulate legislation, mismanagement of Resources etc.

Conclusion

Since the findings from this study revealed that religion is a part of Imolites and Nigerians since they know so well about it and even put that knowledge to practice by accepting and professing a particular religion. People are judged and criticized these days by their religious beliefs and the character they exhibit constantly. No doubt, Nigeria even as they are the most religious nation in the whole world still battles with several religious insincerity among its members, this takes a toll on the country's development in several sectors and in their life quality and output. We conclude that Nigeria have more insincere religious people who are not truthful to their religion faith nor act out their religious good moral in their daily lives, this gives room to several hypocrisy seen among Nigerians in every profession and position.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. We recommend that Imolites should hold on to their Christian religious faith and to stay loyal and adherent to their religions good moral and character examples, as this will make a better impact in the state and will with time reach out to other states.
2. The insincerity of many professing religious people is not acceptable to the society, we therefore recommend that religious people should be steady in their religious believes and should always back these beliefs with action even as they go about their daily activities.
3. Obviously, no one agrees to be insincere, we still recommend that people should be truthful to themselves to work on becoming the change they want to see in the world. Peoples sincerity or insincerity in everything they do will either speak good or bad of them once they have any human transactions.
4. A man who is tested with their weakness and still stands strong, same is a disciplined man, we recommend that Imolites and Nigerians should pin point their religious weakpoints and work on strengthening them, as this will make them better persons and speak high of their religion and faith to others.

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