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The Impact of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on Moral Lives of Christian Youths in Kaduna State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

People in a religious society arc expected lo live peaceful and harmonious life. The purpose of religion is to provide social cohesion to help maintain social solidarity through shared rituals and beliefs, social control to enforce religious-based morals and norms to help maintain conformity and control. In Kaduna Slate, elhnoreligious conflicts crises have been a continuous phenomenon from the Kafanchan crisis of 1987 to this present day of Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes.. The adverse effects have not been limited to the destruction oflives and properties but even the moral lives youths in the State. The incidence among the Christian youths has been exceptional because of the religious dimension of these crises. This paper examined the moral impact of those elhnoreligious crises on the moral lives of Christian youths in the State. Data were collected from 746 respondents with a structured questionnaire through a stratified random procedure across churches in all the local government areas of the state. Statistical analysis of the data was carried out with the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), IBM version 26. The procedure adopted in the presentation of results includes descriplive statistics. Results revealed that the crises have greatly affected the moral lives of Christian youths across the state. Among others, (he study recommended that Churches leaders adhere to the teaching of Jesus Christ on crises management and that Government should enforce the protection of life and properties of citizens which is their primary duty.

Keywords: Ethnoreligious conflicts, Moral lives, Existential, Conformity.

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Introduction

Religion is the collective practice of marking off and maintaining distance between the sacred and the profane, which is typically done through rituals, such as those associated with the daily or weekly visit to the church or mosque: prayer is an obvious example of an 'occasional (sacred) ritual' marked out from ordinary mundane (or profane) life (Thompson, 2018). It serves several functions which include giving meaning and purpose to life, reinforcing social unity and stability, serving as an agent of social control of behaviour, promoting physical and psychological well-being, and motivating people to work for positive social change. Intra and inter violent conflicts in a religious society like Kaduna is therefore a contradiction and could be according to Collier and Hoeffler (proponents of Greed and Grievance theory) responsible for wars as advanced by Thompson (2018) and Saygi (2020). The authors respectively explained that Greed stands for the claim, that combatants in conflicts are motivated by opportunistic reasons such as cost/benefit calculus, alternative income and risk. On the other hand, grievance refers to the idea that people at the opposite, rebel over issues of inequality, discrimination, authoritarianism, deprivation along others and that these are the causes of violet conflicts or wars. On violets crisis, Barkindo (2018) observes that Politicians ride on the back of ethnic, religious and regional identity to get to office, encouraging division and consequently leading to violent (Ibrahim and Nguru,.2020).

The Religion reinforces and promotes social inequality and social conflict. It helps convince the poor to accept their lot in life, and it leads to hostility and conflicts motivated by religious differences (Barkan, 2012). The Fulani herdsmen and farmers clashes in the country have a drastic effect on food security and have caused a loss of 814 billion in three years (Omanumi 2016). The Christians in the north are in serious dilemma according to Mambula (2015) who argued against Christian's reprisal, participation and killings as non-Biblical and ethical providing evidence from the teachings of Jesus. The author made reference to Jesus' refusal to accept the complete success of his mission by compromise with evil. Alozieuwa (2016) who respectively sympathised with youths in Bauchi state for the spiritual and moral danger of the Ombatse occult crises involving Eggon Christians. The author outlined that the occult has impacted the Christian Bible teachings and clergies in Eggon and described situation as a mixture of politics and ethno-religious in which Christian youths must be careful about. Herbert and Husaini (2018) were of the view that continuous occurrences of killings will invoke retaliations which will lead to quest for revenge and continues until relationship and trust between Christians and Muslims totally deteriorated which goes against the moral teaching of the Gospel. This paper therefore investigated the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on the moral lives of Christian youths in Kaduna State.

Materials and Methods

The study adopted ex-post factor approach with a structured questionnaire as the main instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was face validated by experts in educational measurement and curriculum studies in terms of clarity of items, appropriateness of language used and relevance to the objectives of the study. Sample selection was carried out with the stratified random procedure across the different churches within the 21 local Government Areas of the state. The respondents comprised of all Christian youths within 18 and 35years age bracket. A total of 760 respondents were selected. But 14 of the respondents could not return the copies issued to them. Data collected were analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), IBM version 26. Statistical procedures used were basically descriptive. Decision on expressed opinion was based on a midpoint average of 2.50.

Results and Discussion

In Table 1, the opinions of the respondents on the impact of ethno-religious conflicts on moral lives of the Christian Youths were rated and mean scores were computed to determine direction of opinion. Among the moral impact of ethno-religious conflicts on the youths as indicated in Table 1 is that some of the youths who participated in the conflicts usually end up doing things, they practiced for activating themselves during conflicts, long after the conflicts is over. In the first item of the table, 275(36.9%) and 151(20.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the suggestion that most of the fighting youths end up as smokers. Only 64(8.6%) and 256(34.3%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the suggestion. This opinion is reflected in the second item of the table where the respondents agreed that seductive substances consumed by the youths' impact on them to be seeking for mood enhancing substances which eventually make them to end up as drunkards. In response to the suggestion, 183(24.5%) and 259(34.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the suggestion. Only 233(31.2%) and 71(9.5%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the suggestion.

Another adverse moral impact of the ethno-religious conflicts is the exposure of youths to looting and violence during such conflict. In item 3 of the table, 166(22.3%) and 423(56.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the suggestion that religious conflicts expose youths to looting during conflicts make some of them to end up as thieves. Only 71(9.5%) and 86(11.5%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the suggestion. In relation to violence as suggested in item 4, 42(5.6%) and 386(51.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the suggestion that violence experienced during such conflicts impact on the youths to disobey their elders. Though 240(32.2%) and 78(10.5%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the opinion but the mean score of 2.53 imply that most respondents agreed with the suggestion.

As one of the adverse moral impact of the ethno-religious conflicts, 301(40.3%) and 436(58.4%) of the respondents were of the view that habitual raping of women and children was a common phenomenon as some of the vices associated with the conflicts. The mean score of the item was 3.39 which mean that almost all the respondents agreed with the view. Closely associated with raping is the associated killings accompanying the conflicts which 64(8.6%) and 540(72.4%) of the respondents agreed impact on the youths to become addict killers and there become handy for hired killings. The mean score

for the item (6) is 2.79. In item 7 of the table, 182(24.4%) and 267(35.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that some of the youths who participated in such conflicts sometimes engaged in ritual killings for power

The respondents did not agree that most of the displaced ladies often end up in prostitution, In response to item 8 where the suggestion was made, only 23(3.1%) and 421(56.4%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed with the opinion respectively. But 79(10.6%) and 223(29.9%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the suggestion and the mean score was 2.33 and it is lower than the midpoint average of 2.50. The respondents however agreed that the hardship created by the conflicts sometime make some youths to engage in immoral practices like gay and lesbianism to make ends meet. The mean score of the suggestion in item 9 of the table is 2.59. Among the fallout of youths' participation in the ethno-religious conflicts is that some of the youths that were involved in violence become hostile even to their parents. In the last item of the table where the suggestion was made, 181(24.3%) and 440(59.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively with the suggestion. Only 95(12.7%) and 30(4.0%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the suggestion. But the mean score was 3.03, suggesting that most respondents agreed with the suggestion.

This paper found that continued occurrences of ethno-religious conflicts was adversely affecting the moral lives of youths in the state. The adverse effects are manifested in youths' involvement alcoholic and drugs use, practices they adopted during violent conflicts. The effects of drugs and alcoholic use general encourages violence, disobedience, indulgent in decadent acts like rape and to some extreme hired killers. Those apart, it was found that some of the youths engaged on ritual for power a contradiction to the injunction to Biblical injunctions. Apart from the spiritual contradictions which does not align with the teachings of Jesus Christ, this study found that ethno-religious crises have different more adverse impact on female youths, those included indulgency in prostitution arising from accompanying hardship and lesbian for a livelihood. Among the males, it was found that, there were reports of some youths getting involved in gay practices just for economic gains. The moral aftermath of the crises has found in this study so overwhelming that youths generally do not discriminate between Christian morals and that of unbelievers. The findings of this paper are consistent with the report of Hopkins, (2013) who reported that continuous occurrences of killings will invoke retaliations which will lead to quest for revenge and continues until relationship and trust between Christians and Muslims totally deteriorated which goes against the moral teaching of the Gospel. The finding reflected Alozieuwa (2016) who sympathised youths for the spiritual and moral danger of the Ombatse occult crises in Eggon of Bauchi state and outlined, that the occult has impacted the Christian Bible teachings and clergies among Eggon ethnic group.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings of this study have implications for teachers and the general Christian public on the moral role crises could play in the lives of Christians, particularly youths. Christianity is not expected to be easy. The finding shows the need for dependence on Christ and instructions on morals among youths in these days of anti-Christ. The study found that ethno-religious crises adversely affected the moral dispositions of Christian youths in the state. The aftermath has seen youths indulged in characters unbecoming of Christians morals. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made: There is need for Churches leaders to adhere to the teaching of Jesus Christ on crises management. Government should enforce the protection of life and properties of citizens which is their primary duty.

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Tables

Table 1: Opinions of Respondents on Impact of Ethno-Religious Conflicts on the Moral Life of Christian Youths in Kaduna State

Sn	Impacts of ethno-religious conflicts on moral lives of youths	SA		A		D		SD		Mean
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
1	Most of the fighting youths end up as smokers	275	36.9	151	20.2	64	8.6	256	34.3	2.60
2	Because of the war seductive consumed, most of the youths end up as drunkards	183	24.5	259	34.7	233	31.2	71	9.5	2.74
3	Exposure to looting during the crises, some of the youths end up as thieves	166	22.3	423	56.7	71	9.5	86	11.5	2.90
4	Violence impacts the youths to disobey their elders	42	5.6	386	51.7	240	32.2	78	10.5	2.53
5	One of the war vices that sometimes become habitual is rape of women and children	301	40.3	436	58.4	9	1.2	0	0.0	3.39
6	After the violence, some of the youths become hired killers	64	8.6	540	72.4	67	9.0	75	10.1	2.79
7	Some of the youths engaged on ritual killings for power	182	24.4	267	35.8	55	7.4	242	32.4	2.52
8	Most of the displaced ladies often end up in prostitution	23	3.1	421	56.4	79	10.6	223	29.9	2.33
9	Because of hardship, some youths join gay and lesbian for a livelihood	245	32.8	198	26.5	55	7.4	248	33.2	2.59
10	Some of the youths that were involved in violence become hostile even to their parents	181	24.3	440	59.0	95	12.7	30	4.0	3.03