ROLE OF RELIGION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SOUTHERN KADUNA

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Abstract

This study examines role of religion in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. The study was guided by two research questions. 2 hypotheses were formulated ant tested. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design which explores and describes the opinions, feelings, views, preferences and attitudes of the selected sample of the population of the study. The population of this study consisted of 2760 cleargy menin religious insitutions in southern Kaduna. The sample of the study is 249 respondents (clergy men). The instrument used for data collection was "Religion and Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (RCRQ). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. Chi-Square Statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that religious leaders have significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. The study also found that religious affiliation and conviction has significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. It was therefore, recommended that government should give more attention to involving religious leaders in conflict resolution and peace building processes. They need to integrate all sorts of leadership at the community level, which would boost their level of understanding regarding each other.

Keywords: Religion, Conflict resolution, Religious leaders and Religious affiliation

Introduction

Confounding the expectations of secularists, religion has a strong – perhaps growing – significance as a key source of identity for millions of people, especially in the developing world. In recent years, religion has made a muted but tangible impact in Western development circles, most commonly reflecting the view that religious hatreds and differences are central to many recent and current conflicts in the developing world. Although religious believers would normally regard their chosen religious expressions as both benevolent and inspiring, religious faiths are sometimes linked to violence and conflict both between and within religious groups

(or at least entities with a religious veneer, for example, various armed groups around the world, such as al-Qaeda, which claim religious justification for their activities). In this regard, we can note the ramifications of 11 September 2001 (Haynes, 2005, 2005). In the half decade since then, a massive literature has appeared on religious contributions to conflict and violence (Haynes, 2007). Yet, alongside the now conventional understanding that religious hatreds and differences are central to many recent and current conflicts in the developing world, there is a mounting body of evidence that religious forces can play constructive roles in conflict resolution.

Kaduna State is currently enmeshed in a humanitarian crisis. The southern part of the state has become the epicentre of deadly violence, most of it inflicted by herdsmen on farming communities. This is situated within two wider contexts: Attacks by Fulani herdsmen on farming communities, and reprisals, particularly in the North Central region. Further into the past, the epicentre was Plateau State (mainly the Barkin Ladi area), then Nasarawa State, and finally Benue State.In these areas, whole communities have been displaced, many lives have been lost, and many of the farmers unable to plant and harvest for years. The main theatre of this violence has now moved from these North Central states into a North Western state, escalating historic tensions in Southern Kaduna. In Birnin Gwari in the Kaduna Central zone, cattle rustling continues to be a major problem, but in the Kaduna South zone, things have gone several notches higher especially as the victims are people, not cattle.

Religious communities also directly oppose repression and promote peace and reconciliation. Religious leaders and institutions can mediate in conflict situations, serve as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies. No major religion has been exempted from complicity in violent conflicts. Yet we need to beware of an almost universal propensity to oversimplify the role that religion plays in international affairs. Religion is not usually the sole or even primary cause of conflict. The role of religion as a force in peacemaking is usually overlooked. Religious affiliation and conviction often motivate religious communities to advocate particular peace-related government policies. Religious communities also directly oppose repression and promote peace and reconciliation. Religious leaders and institutions can mediate in conflict situations, serve as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies. This form of religious peacemaking garners less public attention but is growing in importance. Interfaith dialogue is another form of religious peacemaking. Rather than seeking to resolve a particular conflict, it aims to defuse interfaith tensions that may cause future conflict or derive from previous conflict. Interfaith dialogue is expanding even in places where interreligious tensions are highest. Not infrequently, the most contentious interfaith relationships can provide the context for the most meaningful

and productive exchanges. It is against this background that this study seeks to examine the role of religion in conflict resolution in Nigeria: A case study of Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine role of religion in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.
2. Examine the role of religious affiliation and conviction in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna?
2. What is the role of religious affiliation and conviction in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are formulated to be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Religious leaders have no significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.
2. Religious affiliation and conviction has no significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Concept of Conflict

Conflict has a multiplicity of definitions, but they all point to the same thing. David Francis (2006) defines it as the pursuit of incompatible interests and goals by different groups; for Oquaye (1995), it is the sequence of interactions between groups in society, between groups and governments, and between individuals; Lewis Coser (1995) sees it as the struggle over values, claims to status, power and scarce resources in which the aims of the opposing parties are not only to gain the desired values but also to neutralize, injure or eliminate rivals; William Zartman (1997:167) sees it as a normal state of human interaction; as an inevitable aspect of human interaction, an unavoidable concomitant of choices und decisions.

Otite (1999) views conflict as a natural announcement of an impending reclassification of a society with changed characteristics and goals with new circumstances of survival and continuity, and this entails struggle, competition, rivalry for objects to which individuals and groups attach value, which could be material or non-material. Perhaps, a more comprehensive definition of the concept

of conflict is that given by Miller (2005) as a confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends (which) may be either manifest, recognizable through actions or behaviours' or latent' in which case it remains dormant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangements as governments, corporations, or even civil society.

Given the gregarious nature of man, which is seen in his activities within the state and with other fellow men, there is bound to be a struggle for various interests, and this is probably the reason for various interests, and this is probably the reason for Rummel's definition which states that: A situation of conflict is created by attitudes transformed into interests. Interests, which are a drive toward specific goals, are a necessary condition of a situation of conflict. These are capabilities and expectations, particularly those defining the credibility of – the will to carry out – promises, threats, authority, expertise, love. Capability involves the resources we have to manifest our interest. Together, interests, capability, and will define a situation of conflict (Rummel, 1977:6). Thus, interests play very important roles in all the conflicts that necessarily arise in human society. It is very difficult to imagine a conflict-free world as long as the world is comprised of human beings, who are by nature interest-seeking.

Empirical Studies

Khan and Khan (2022) carried out a study titled "In the Fire of Local community Conflicts: The Role of Religious Leaders in Conflict Resolution, Examples from Pashtun Culture Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan" The study deals with the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution. A sample size of 361 respondents was selected in the district Dir Lower Tahsil Maidan through Random Sampling Technique. Chi-square (x^2) statistics were used to determine the association between independent and dependent variables. Most respondents (52.1%) stated that religious leaders in Pashtun cultures symbolizepeace. Similarly, more than two thirds of the respondents (70.9%) agreed that religious leaders do resolve conflict by taking inputs from religious and cultural values. Most of the respondents (58.4%) opined that the participation of religious leaders is considered necessary in jirga/ culture base peacemaking. Moreover, Religious leaders among Pashtuns are considering customary leaders, having a strong influence over Pashtun costumes, and were found significant in conflict resolution respectively. The study concluded that religious leadership among Pashtun had always contributed positively to conflict resolution. The study also recommends that government should give more attention to involving religious leaders in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes. This needs to integrate all sorts of leadership at the community level, which would boost their level of understanding regarding each other.

Haynes' (2009) work on Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace-Building: The Role of Religion in Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia, argued that religion can both encourage conflict and build peace, reflecting growing evidence that religious forces can play a constructive role in helping to resolve conflicts. Religious individuals and faith-based organisations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important roles, not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation. Brief case studies of religious peacemakers – from Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia – demonstrate attempts, characteristically partially successful, to reconcile previously warring communities, thereby helping to achieve greater social cohesion, and providing a crucial foundation for progress in enhancing human development.

Method

This study is conducted in Southern Kaduna is an area inhabited by primarily various non-Hausa speaking peoples living in the south of Zazzau Emirate of Kaduna State. It is located in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria. Southern Kaduna consists of 12 Local Government Areas out of a total of 23 in Kaduna State. Some view it as being less of a geographical identity and more of an ethnic identity concept.

Southern Kaduna is composed of closely related ethnic groups and several subgroups united by a common culture and history. James (2000) classified these people based on their ethno-linguistic affinities under the topic "The Middle Belt (Composition of the Nok Culture Area)", and grouping the subgroups into the following groups: the Southern Kaduna population is estimated to be over 4.5 million people out of the estimated 8.5 million population in Kaduna state in 2016. The common general language spoken in the area is Hausa Language as medium of communication.

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design explores and describes the opinions, feelings, views, preferences and attitudes of the selected sample of the population of the study. The population of this study consisted 2,760 cleargy men in religious insitutions in southern Kaduna. The sample of the study is 249 respondents (clergy men) of the entire population. This sample was determined using Taro Yamane (1967) who states that for a study of a known population the formular should be used:

The instrument used for data collection is a researcher (self-developed) structured questionnaire. The self-developed questionnaire was based on the research variables in line with the research questions. The instrument were titled "Religion and Conflict Resolution Questionnaire (RCRQ). The questionnaire items was structured in such a way as to elicit responses in accordance with the objectives

of the study. It was divided into clusters A, B, C, and D in accordance with the study variables. Each of the variables has four items which were designed to elicit information from the respondents to aid the researchers in their investigation to answer the research questions. The researchers employed a four point Likert-type modified rating scale with the response mode of Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2 and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1 respectively. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. The arithmetic mean was used to determine the mean score on each item so as to accept or reject its influence based on the cutoff point of 2.50. The Chi-Square Statistics were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

The result is presented in line with the research questions and objectives of the study:

Research Question 1: What is the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna?

Table 1: Results showing the role of religious leaders in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

s/no	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Decision
1	Religious leaders used their good offices and positions to mobilize and reconcile conflicting interest.	198	17	25	9	3.62	.810	Accepted
2	Religious leaders advise all strata of government on how best to understand and reconcile people who are being ravaged by conflict	152	48	28	21	3.33	.978	Accepted
3	Religious leaders employ persuasion, diffusion of tension, sanction, reward and punishment to achieve peace in conflict prawn areas	193	34	10	12	3.64	.776	Accepted

4	Religious leaders utilized their symbol of justice and authority to avert and manage conflicts where they occurred that would have ruined the unity of people.	152	30	29	38	3.19	1.143 Accepted
5	The religious leaders use negotiation as an instrument of conflict management as a sustainable road map to peace and unity among conflicting parties	148	45	32	24	3.27	1.019 Accepted
	Clusters Mean and Standard Deviation Scores					**3.41**	**0.95** **HE**

Table 1 shows the mean and standard deviation of items 1-5 as follows: 3.62, 3.33, 3.64, 3.19, and 3.27 with a corresponding standard deviation of ..810, .978, .776, 1.143, and 1.019 respectively. The table also revealed a cluster mean of 3.41 and a standard deviation of 0.95 above the cut-off mean point of 2.50. This means that respondents have accepted that religious leaders used their good offices and positions to mobilize and reconcile conflicting interests. They further accepted Religious leaders advise all strata of government on how best to understand and reconcile people who are being ravaged by conflict while on the third item, the respondents also accepted that Religious leaders employ persuasion, diffusion of tension, sanction, reward and punishment to achieve peace in conflict prone areas, accepting the fourth item that Religious leaders utilized their symbol of justice and authority to avert and manage conflicts where they occurred that would have ruined the unity of people, the last items the respondent accepted that, the religious leaders use negotiation as an instrument of conflict management as a sustainable road map to peace and unity among conflicting parties. The result means that religious leaders had significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Research Question2: What is the role of religious affiliation and conviction in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna?

Table 2: Result showing the role of religious affiliation and conviction in conflict resolution in southern Kaduna

s/no	Item Description	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Decision
6	Religious affiliation and conviction often motivate religious communities to advocate particular peace-related government policies.	126	25	36	62	2.06	1.295	Accepted
7	Religious affiliation directly oppose repression and promote peace and reconciliation.	130	28	65	26	3.05	1.097	Accepted
8	Religious affiliation uses interfaith dialogue as a form of peacemaking	109	22	94	24	2.36	.923	Accepted
9	Religious affiliation helps to mediate in conflict situations, serve as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies.	131	23	66	29	2.67	1.123	Accepted
10	Through religious affiliation there is recognition of emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of the conflicting parties, which help to address conflicts between them.	117	29	54	49	2.35	1.119	Accepted
	Clusters Mean and Standard Deviation Scores					**2.5**	**1.12**	**HE**

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of items 6-10 as follows: 2.06, 3.05, 2.36, 2.67 and 2.35 with a corresponding standard deviation of 1.295, 1.097, .923, 1.123 and 1.119 respectively. The table also revealed a cluster mean of 2.5 and a standard deviation of 1.12 above the cut-off mean point of 2.50. This means that respondents have accepted that religious affiliation and conviction often motivate religious communities to advocate particular peace-related government policies. While on item two they also accept that religious affiliation directly opposes repression and promote peace and reconciliation. The respondents further accepted that religious affiliation uses interfaith dialogue as a form of peacemaking. Accepting the ninth item religious affiliation helps to mediate in conflict situations,

serves as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies. Lastly the respondents accepted that through religious affiliation there is recognition of emotional, psychological and spiritual needs of the conflicting parties, which help to address conflicts between them.

TESTING OF HYPOTHESIS

Hypothesis 1: Religious leaders have no significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Table 3: Chi-Square Analysis on the role religious leaders in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna

Responses	Fo	Fe	Df	x^2	p	Remark
Strongly Disagree	22	62.3				
Disagree	24	62.3				
Agree	34	62.3	3	245.410[a]	.023	Significant
Strongly Agree	169	62.3				
Total	**249**					

Table 3 shows that x2(df, 3) = 245.410a, p = .000 < 0.05. Since the p value is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This result implies that religious leaders play significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Hypothesis 2: Religious affiliation and conviction has no significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna

Table 4: Chi-Square Analysis on the role religious affiliation and conviction has in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna

Responses	Fo	Fe	Df	x^2	p	Remark
Strongly Disagree	38	62.3				
Disagree	63	62.3				
Agree	25	62.3	3	91.032[a]	.023	Significant
Strongly Agree	123	62.3				
Total	**249**					

Table 4 shows that x^2(df, 3) = 91.032[a], p = .000 < 0.05. Since the p value is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that religious leaders play a significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna.

Discusion of Findings

The first finding revealed that religious leaders have significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. This result implies that religious leaders

used their good offices and positions to mobilize and reconcile conflicting interests, advise the government, employ persuasion, diffusion of tension, sanction, reward and punishment to achieve peace in conflict prawn areas and utilized their symbol of justice and authority to avert and manage conflicts where they occurred that would have ruined the unity of people. This finding corresponds with Khan and Khan (2022) who aver that religious leaders do resolve conflicts by taking inputs from religious and cultural values. The study further revealed that religious leaders are considered necessary in culture base peacemaking. Moreover, Religious leaders among Pashtuns are considering customary leaders, having a strong influence over Pashtun costumes, and were found significant in conflict resolution respectively.

The second finding revealed that religious affiliation and conviction has significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. This result implies that religious affiliation and conviction often motivate religious communities to advocate particular peace-related policies, directly oppose repression and promote peace and reconciliation, use interfaith dialogue as a form of peacemaking, help to mediate in conflict situations, serves as a communication link between opposing sides, and provide training in peacemaking methodologies. This finding corresponds to Haynes' (2009) who found that religion can both encourage conflict and build peace, reflecting growing evidence that religious forces can play a constructive role in helping to resolve conflicts. Religious individuals and faith-based organisations, as carriers of religious ideas, can play important roles, not only as a source of conflict but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and contributing to advocacy, mediation and reconciliation.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that religion plays a significant role in conflict resolution in Southern Kaduna. Specifically, religious leaders and religious affiliation and conviction, mobilize and reconcile conflicting interests, advise the government, employ persuasion, diffusion of tension, sanction, reward and punishment to achieve peace in conflict prone areas and utilized their symbol of justice and authority to avert and manage conflicts where they occurred that would have ruined the unity of people.

Recommendations

The following recommendations
1. Government should give more attention to involving religious leaders in conflict resolution and peace building processes. There is the need to integrate all sorts of leadership at the community level, which would boost their level of understanding regarding each other.

2. Religion should not limit their strategies only on religious leaders, effective medium- and long-term peacemaking requires that peacemakers look more closely at the structural problems that underlie the conflict, aiming to work towards aggressively addressing the important background issues that make future conflict more likely.

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