

**THE ACADEMIC STUDY OF RELIGION IN NIGERIA:  
PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES**

**BY**

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BENIN CITY**

**DECEMBER,2022**

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**BEING A RESEARCH WORK PRESENTED TO THE  
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS, FACULTY OF ARTS IN PARTIAL  
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BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A) HONORS DEGREE, UNIVERSITY OF  
BENIN, BENIN CITY.**

**DECEMBER,2022**

## CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this project work was carried out by Ozigbo Osarumwense, with Matriculation number ART1701775 in the Department of Religions, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

This project is dedicated to God Almighty.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My utmost gratitude goes to God Almighty, for the gift of life, good health, wealth, knowledge, understanding and perseverance needed for the success of this work. I am indebted to my parents Mr Daniel Ozigbo and Mrs Omozee Okungbowa as well as my siblings for their undying love towards me. I also say a very big thank you to my friends, Frank Omere, may God Almighty in his infinite mercy abundantly bless you.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This work is on the Academic study of Religion in Nigeria : prospect and challenges the aim was to examine Religious studies the aim was to examine Religious studies the aim was to examine Religious studies as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities so as to ascertain some of the prospects and challenges that confront students in this area of study . Empirical and analytical method were employed in this research work and it was revealed among others that graduates of religion studies are not in any way limited in terms of employment or career prospects due to the perceived status of their discipline .The study showed that they can easily function in embassies, ministries Tourism and culture ,Pilgrims Board and so on. One of the recommendations from the study is that parents disarging their wards from studying religions studies due to fear of carrier .prospects or been able to gets suitable Jobs.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

The study of Religion as a discipline in Nigerian Universities poses a lot of unanswered questions for many students, especially undergraduate students. Most of the students who find themselves in the discipline in tertiary institutions find it difficult to accept it as a befitting course of study. In addition, some are of the opinion that it should not be a course to be studied in the university.

Parents are not left out of the puzzle too. They do not see it as befitting course for their wards to study in the tertiary institutions. They prefer their children to study any other course apart from Religious Studies. Many students and parents even go as far as rejecting the course, preferring to wait for another year to re-write the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board Exams (JAMB) and possibly get a better course to study.

It is therefore true that the study of Religion in Nigerian tertiary institutions faces a lot of challenges. According to Manly (2018), the study of religion as a discipline is faced with hiccups which have greatly affected

its place in the academic program of most Nigerian tertiary institutions. In other words, the study of Religion as a discipline in Nigeria tertiary institutions is faced with many challenges, for both the would-be students and parents alike.

Therefore, this study is set out to examine the challenges and prospects of the study of Religion in Nigeria universities. The study seeks to identify those areas that make it difficult for most students to appreciate its study. Furthermore, the study will also look at the prospects it offers to those who have already studied it or currently studying it as a discipline in Nigerian universities.

## **1.2 Clarification of concepts**

**1.2.1 Challenges:** By the term challenges in this research, the researcher refers to those obvious or perceived obstacles limiting the study of religion in Nigerian universities.

**1.2.2 Prospects:** By this term, the researcher refers to those benefits and opportunities that can be accessed through the study of Religion as a discipline.

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

Religious studies in Nigerian universities is not really a choice course for many students. Many see it as not befitting enough to study at the tertiary education level. As a result, they prefer to take transfers to other disciplines no matter the cost. The question is that why do such students detest the course so much?

Therefore, the problem of this study is to examine the study of Religion in universities in order to identify the challenges it poses to students and also to identify the prospects or benefits it affords to those that study it.

### **1.4 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research is to investigate the challenges and prospects of studying religion in Nigerian universities. In order to achieve this aim, the following objectives were set:

- i. To examine the academic study of religion
- ii. To understand the challenges of studying religion
- iii. To identify the prospects of studying religion

- iv. To proffer solutions to the challenges posed by the study of religion

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

This study has the following significance for those that will come across it:

- i. It will be of immense benefits to students who are currently studying religion as a discipline in Nigerian universities as it enlightens them more on the various challenges they face in their study.
- ii. It will educate student of religion about the benefits or prospects that the discipline has to offer.
- iii. It will broaden the understanding of graduates and undergraduates of Religion concerning their career choices and areas they can develop their careers.
- iv. It will help to stop the drift from Religious Studies Department in Nigeria universities by creating more awareness on the discipline.
- v. Parents who were initially ignorant about the benefits of the study will become enlightened about the prospects of their children studying the course.

## **1.6 Scope of the Study**

The scope and limitation of this study is within the study of Religion as a discipline in Nigerian universities. Specifically, it does not wish to discuss the subject in polytechnics or colleges of education but only within confines of Nigerian universities.

Time and financial implications of carrying out the research is one of the limitations of this study. Another limitation of the study is the unwillingness of some students who have transferred to other departments to grant this researcher an opportunity to interview them or open up to the real reasons why they transferred.

## **1.7 Research Methodology**

Empirical and analytical method of research will be used in the research. This will help the researcher to investigate the actual reasons behind the problems faced with the study of religion in Nigerian universities. More so, secondary and primary sources will be useful in this research. Books, journals, online materials will be sourced by the researcher in order to understand the opinion of scholars concerning the challenges and prospects of the study of religion in Nigerian universities. In addition, John Harris

Library in the University of Benin, Edo State library and the National Library will be consulted during the course of this study.

For the primary sources, interviews will be conducted by the researcher among students and staff of the University of Benin in order to understand their perspectives concerning the subject.

## **1.8 Division of work**

This work is divided into five chapters. Chapter One is on the General introduction. This covers the Background to the Study, Statement of the Problem, Aim and Objectives of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope and Limitation of the Study as well as the Research Methodology. Chapter Two is the section covering review of literature for the study. Chapter three is where the researcher dwells on the various challenges confronting the study of Religion in Nigerian universities. Chapter four is on the prospects or benefits that are available for would-be graduates of the discipline. The last chapter is on the evaluation, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Academic Study of Religions**

The study of religion in Nigerian universities is often misunderstood by many. Some see it as course that is meant to train Pastors and Imams for clerical duties and hence often look down on the discipline. There is a need therefore, to clarify this misunderstanding. An Article, Religious Studies as an Academic Discipline in Nigeria University by J.K. Ayantayo is one of the Literature that was reviewed in this project work in order to understand the academic study of Religions as a course in Universities. According to him, the study of religion is one of the most misunderstood disciplines.

“Going by its name, some thought that the course is about teaching the Bible and the Quran which is more or less equivalent to what is taught in Churches and Mosques” (Ayantayo, 2018, p.11). This position is not true and it should be understood that Religion as an academic discipline goes far beyond such misconception. It is totally different from what is being taught

in Churches and Mosques. The academic study of Religion is more encompassing than merely subjecting it to such level of ignorance.

In essence, the academic study of religion can be best understood when one examines the following statement:

Religious studies is about the academic study of religions and religious concepts which are expressed in texts, rituals, and belief systems with a view to underscoring their relevance in the understanding of God-man relationship and the overall culture of man as expressed in his notion of the divine. (Ayantayo, 2018, p.11)

The point of clarification by the above author is that there is little or no place for the study of religions. Rather, it is the inquiry into certain religious concepts that are expressed in books, religious rituals and belief systems of a people. The aim according to the author is to help locate the notion of God as held by man. Hence, Religious Studies is not the way it really appears to those outside the field of study. More importantly, it is not just about the regular study of the Bible and the Quran that occurs in churches or mosques.

In addition, according to the article under review, “the academic study of religion analyses the influence of religion on other aspects of culture, as well as the influence of culture on religion” (Ayantanyo, 2018, p.11). That is,

the religion and culture of a particular group of people is interwoven. One can only decipher the relationship between the two and the relevance they contribute to each other through the academic study of religion.

More so, religious studies as an academic discipline cuts across other academic fields such as philosophy, history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, and theology (Ayantayo, 2018). That is, there is an element of religion in other academic disciplines and it's is so because the study of religions is so broad and all encompassing. Furthermore, in this article under review, the author also stated that one of the beauty of religious studies as a course of study is the way it treats all religious traditions equally while studying or teaching them (Ayantayo, 2018). In other words, there is no religious bias in the teaching or studying of religious traditions in the universities. One does not bring his or her faith into the study or teaching of the subject matter. A Christian lecturer can teach Islamic courses with absolute objectivity and a Muslim lecturer can teach biblical courses without being biased due to his faith. This writer agrees with Ayantayo's position because she has once been under tutelage of a religious studies course in Islam where the lecturer who taught the course was an astute Christian.

Another beauty of the academic study of religions is that it covers so many interesting areas of specialization. The course is so wide that its areas of specialization touch many other branches of religion that are relevant in understanding the God-man relationship. Ayantayo, in this article suggests that “religions from all cultures and all times, spreading from local level account to the global ones” (Ayantayo, 2018, p.12). The notable areas of specialization in the Department of Religious studies in the university according to Ayantayo (2018) include the following:

- i. African Traditional Religion
- ii. Anthropology of Religion
- iii. Biblical Studies
- iv. Christian Theology
- v. Church History
- vi. Comparative Religion
- vii. Religious Economy
- viii. Geography of Religion

- ix. History of Religion
- x. Interactions of Religion
- xi. Islamic Studies
- xii. Religion and Law
- xiii. Phenomenology of Religion
- xiv. Philosophy of Religion
- xv. Psychology of Religion
- xvi. Religious Ethics
- xvii. Sociology of Religion

At the post-graduate level, interested students can major in any of the areas highlighted above in the academic study of Religions.

Another literature that was reviewed in this project is the work of Sam Gill titled, “The Academic Study of Religion”. According to the author of the work, “the emergence of an academic study of religion has been disappointing despite the boost it received thirty years ago when religion entered the curricula of universities” (Gill, 1994, p.965). Gill’s position is

that the academic study of religion is not a very popular area of study in most universities. Although Gill's conclusion was on the popular state of Religious Studies in America but the same can be said of Nigerian universities too. That is, the academy study of religion in Nigerian universities is not very popular compared to other choice courses. More so, it is obvious from Gill's article that religion as an academy discipline is a new area of study in universities, not only in Nigeria but also across the globe. This, according to Gill may be one of the reasons while it is often misunderstood to be a course that only focuses on teaching the Bible or the Quran. In essence many people are not properly or adequately informed about the course because it is relatively new in most universities' curricula in Nigeria.

Furthermore, Gill in this article, stated that the academic study of religion is dignified from other disciplines due to some certain criteria that bounds its study. (Gill, 1994). According to him they are as follows: The study shouldn't be reliant upon or require the teacher or students to have any particular religion belief or affiliation, race, culture or gender" (Gill, 1994). That is, one who teachers or studies the course as a discipline does not have

to be a Christian, Muslim, Buddhists, African Traditional Religions practitioner. Hindu and so on, to be a stakeholder in it.

Secondly, according to the author “the academic study of religion must be sensitive to multi-culturalism: the awareness that there are many peoples, cultures, and religions, none of which has any exclusive claims to be made with regard to religion as an academic subject” (Gill, p.969). That is, the fact that the world consists of religious pluralism and the understanding that people differs in their faith is one criteria that academic study of religion puts into cognizance.

Thirdly, according to the author, the study of religion as a discipline in universities should be known and accepted as a purely academic discipline that creates an atmosphere for the discussion of all religions from the historical and cultural perspective. That is, “Religion cannot be considered as synonymous to members of specific traditions. It is not the sacred ultimate concern or believe in god (or some disguising euphemism)” (Gill, p.965). In addition, the article went further to state that “the methods of the academic study of religion are necessarily comparative. Religion is a category who subdivisions are categories that demand comparison” (Gill,

p.965). It was also suggested that the academic study of religion should be comprehended but that “religion designates a significant aspect of a major portion of the human population” (Gill, p.965). All these criteria according to Gill make the study of religion as an academic discipline very unique.

One other literature that was reviewed in this study is the work of Donald Wiebe titled “Why the Academic study of Religion: Motive and Method in the study of Religion”. Like Gill, this author also opines that the academic study of religion is virtually a comparatively recent development in universities across the globe. (Wiebe, 1998). According to this author, it is true that the study of religion has been in existence since time immemorial. Many philosophers, theologians and even atheists have been rigorously involved in the study of religion many centuries ago. The likes of Aristotle, Philo, Socrates, Tertullian, Origen, Clement of Alexander and so on, have all been carrying out scholarly works in the field of religion dating back to as early as the first century. He however, seems to aver that the academic study of the subject, especially in universities is just a recent development compared to other disciplines such as medicine, pharmacy, engineering and so on.

In addition, Wiebe in his article opined that “the academic study must be a vocation in very much the same sense that Max Weber speaks of science as a vocation” (Wiebe, 1998, P.403). In essence, those that would be involved in the academic study of religion must do it by exerting all professional attitude and style in the process. It should be seen as a vocation in which one can be proud of and not just a mere faith-based academic exercise. Students, teachers and researchers in the subject must be diligent and critical in their study and teaching of the subject matter.

The aim of the process, according to this article is that any study of religion “must take preliminary a ‘religious studies’ that is concerned only to ‘understand’ rather to explain the phenomenon of Religion” (Wiebe, p.403). Finally, Wiebe added that in the academic study of religion, there must exist a certain relationship between motive of the study and the method employed in the study (Gill, 1994).

One more literature that was reviewed by this researcher is titled “Challenges of Religious Education: Implication to the Learner” written by Ngozi Manty Amaechi. According to the author of the article, the notion that religion is on the demise is erroneous. Instead according to her, “we still

discover religion at the centre of global issues and cultural conflict” (Amaechi, 2018). To her, religion and religious studies is becoming even more popular. She believes that the study of religion should be held in high esteem because “we still find religion everywhere, on television, in films, in popular music, in our towns and neighborhoods” (Amaechi, 2018).

Amaechi added that the more and more universities are becoming involved in the teaching and learning of religion. According to her:

Whatever one may say about religion and its study in tertiary universities, one thing remains uncontested and that is, that most universities are subscribing to it more than before. Unlike before whereby it was offered merely and almost anonymously as one of the many general studies courses, today, we have full time departments of religious studies. (Amaechi, 2018)

Another factor that was considered by the author in this article under review which makes the academic study of religion necessary is “the fact that without religious education, man’s knowledge is incomplete” (Amaechi, 2018). Especially in Africa, we live religiously, eat religiously, talk religiously, do tasks religiously and we also sleep religiously. To the author of the article, since religion forms the essence of the human life, there is therefore, a continued need to study it even in the higher institutions of

learning. More so, every man has a religious consciousness that is fundamental to his or her being. For instance,

We find that, in the context of African Traditional Religion, that the fate of a new born child is religiously bonded as soon as the child sees the light of the day. Though the child is yet to speak or profess his faith, the parents express their prayerful wish for him or even their religious experience through the name they give him. (Amaechi, 2018)

In addition, religious education or the academic study of religion affords students the opportunity to broaden their understanding about life. The article also suggested that “religion forms our understanding of life” (Amaechi, 2018). That is, for man to have a complete understanding of life he lives in, the study of religion is very fundamental because it is religion that teaches us the sacredness of life (Amaechi, 2018). Furthermore, as suggested in the article under review, religious education or the academic study of religion helps us to “rediscover the values that seem to be as elusive as the fictional scarlet pimpernel” (Amaechi, 2018). It is these values that sharpens our character and help us to become persons in the immediate environment and become useful to the larger society. The author of the

article also opined that “religious education is involved in teaching values and moreover, in teaching the highest values” (Amaechi, 2018).

Another scholarly work that was reviewed in this study is the work of Gilbert Alaribe and Laurence Okwuosa titled *The Study and Teaching of Religion in Schools, and Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria*”. One of the areas discussed in this scholarly work has to do with the intellectual pre-occupation of religion. They suggested that “Theology and Anthropology are the two major subject matters that every academic study of religion has to be concerned with” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.2). That is according to them, the study of God and its relation to man has to be at the forefront of every academic study of religion. In essence, “God and the world are the two major subject matters in the academic study of religion” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.2). What the authors seem to suggest is that a holistic teaching and learning of religion in the universities or other tertiary institutions must involve the discourse or knowledge of God as well as the discourse or knowledge of man. These two are inseparable pairs in the study of religion. God created the world and man to be able to manage the world effectively. He must have a comprehensive knowledge of the creator. This is

where the academic study of religion becomes very crucial to the Nigerian student. “The implication is that the subject matter of God in religion must remain open-ended, an ongoing, inconclusive object of academic conversation” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, P.2).

In addition, the study of the various religions of the world which consists of varying anthropological elements affords humans an important perspective of the humanistic condition. Moral, social, psychological, mental and cultural insights are some of the dividends man gains from the academic study of religion in the universities. Gottlieb, the authors averred that: “it is certain that religion is one of the sources of our most comprehensive understanding of human existence, because it deals and serve as the building blocks of the social reality. (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.3).

Religious Studies is the most common name adopted by most tertiary institutions in English-speaking countries. However, before the adoption of that name, “the study of religion in seminaries, schools, and universities was done under the following cognate terms: divinity, religion, doctrine, dogmatics, spirituality, mysticism” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.7).

The history of Religious studies can be traced to the period of enlightenment (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, pp.7-8). According to them, the first stage is known as the tribal phase global religious tradition. During this period, “religious practices aimed simply to sustain the values of the local group against hostile invasions” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.8). That is, religion simply exerted the effect within a small group of local tribes and also helped in moderating hostile confrontations from neighbouring tribes or clans. This stage or period is what the authors described as the first phase.

The second phase in the history of religious life on earth was the era of trade and military expansion (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.8). During this period, the influence of religion transcended tribal boundaries. The era was when tribal groups confronted and conquered other tribes, seized or destroyed their religious practices while replacing it with their religious ideas and practices. It was a period of religious imperialism.

The third stage according to the authors “was the phase where there was concern to seek a truth in matters of religious faith about which there was a universal agreement” (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.8). This period witnessed the era when reasoning prevailed in religious matters. Of course,

this happened due to the enlightenment drive in the world when reasoning became dominant over many traditional and institutional matters. During this period, people began questioning the veracity of major subjects of discourse that were existing including the issues of religious concerns. “By the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, religion had become an object of systematic inquiry or study, to be analyzed by philosophers, anthropologist, sociologist and psychologists using the methods from their specialized disciplines (Alaribe & Okwuosa, 2017, p.8). From the mid 60’s and henceforth, the teaching and studying of religion became gradually legislated by most countries as a subject that should be taught in schools and other education facilities. Religion therefore, became an object of scientific study and religious scholars were expected to remain neutral in their presentation of the subject and not permitted to allow their religious worldview to colour their teachings.

## **2.2 Career Development**

“Career Prospects of Graduates of Religious Studies” by Wilson Eze Ehianu is one the articles that was reviewed in this section of this project. According to the article, many students and parents continuously enquire from him

about the career prospects of graduates of Religious Studies. They actually want to know the chances they have in securing or attracting jobs in a Nigerian labour market that is highly competitive. This question from students and parents cannot be unrelated to the perceived low profile status of religion as an academic discipline.

In addition, according to the author of this article, “valuable lecture hours are spent convincing students that they have bright career prospects as students of religious studies and the need for them to approach their studies with all seriousness” (Ehianu, 2019, p.179). As stated by Ehianu, there is a need for people (both students and parents) know that there are avalanche of jobs that graduates of religious studies can attract and effectively perform well in the Nigerian market. He went further to encourage such students to put in frantic efforts in their studies in order graduate with good grades that will place them in a vantage position in the labour market.

Despite his counsel to religious students about their career prospects, many still remain adamant and not convinced. “In facts, many of them remain opaque to reason because they have made up their minds” (Ehianu, 2019, p.179). It seems this is one of the challenges students face when

studying religious studies; they probably feel less motivated due to the fear of not being able to secure jobs after graduating. However, Ehianu in his article feels otherwise. To him, there are so many areas of the economy that a graduate of religion can fit in; ranging from teaching jobs to administrative jobs and even charity officers to mention a few.

Another area that the article dwelt on is on the misconception that is often held by many regarding the academic study of religion. According to him, this misconception “is due to the unwarranted bias against the subject coupled with the misconception that all who study it must not only be clerics but cannot so easily secure employment in the public service since they are erroneously regarded as economically unproductive” (Ehianu, 2019, p.179). Ehianu also opined that this is just a misconception that should be discarded by prospective and undergraduate students of Religious Studies. He further suggested that “the importance of skilled personnel in the field of religion to the present socio-political, economic and religious situation of Nigeria cannot be over emphasized” (Ehianu, 2019, p.180).

The article also noted that many students who find themselves in the Department of Religious Studies did not intentionally enroll for the course as

their choice of study. He averred that so many never applied for the course; it was only foisted on them by admission officer of the Universities or by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (Ehianu, 2019, p.180). He also attributed the lack of interest in the course by students to the facts they didn't really bargain for such discipline. As a result many do not take their studies serious. Furthermore, according to Ehianu (2018), some other undergraduate students of religion merely use the course as a gateway to enter into the University due to less competition for admission in the department with the mind of later transferring to other areas of studies or department.

### **2.3 Career Choice**

One of the problems facing prospective students of religious studies is making a choice of careers. The need to secure a job after schooling in the higher institutions is always placed in the forefront and most time influences their choice of study in the university. This section focuses on the factors that affect career choices among students in universities. As stated by Kazi & Akhlaq, "career is one of the biggest dilemma and challenge in any student's life" (2017, p.187). This is a crossroad at which many students

make or mar their future. According to the article titled Factors Affecting Students Career Choice by Asma Shahid Kazi and Abeeda Aklaq, certain factors affect the career choices of students and they are enumerated in this section as follows:

Influence of parents- Many parents wield a big influence on the career decisions of their wards. They want their children to study courses that only recommend to them, and this goes a long way to affect the student's desire to study religious studies in the university. According to Kazi and Aklaq, "a crucial influence in decision making regarding career is the home environment as it lays the foundation of a child's personality" (Kazi & Aklaq, 2017, p.187). For this reason, most parents would want to dissuade their children from studying religious studies at the tertiary level.

Another factor that influences the career choice of students is the pressure from their peers. Often, peer influence shapes or determines the career choice of many students who want to study a course because it measures up to the standard of their peers. As stated by the author of this article, "sometimes the choices of the peers also become a determining factor in choosing a profession" (Kazi & Aklaq, 2017, p.187). For this reason, it

becomes absurd or awkward for a student to public declare an intent to study religion in the university because he or she will be laughed at the many times students of religious studies especially in University of Benin are being subjected to mockery due to their course of study. This peer factor must be overcome in order for religion as an academic discipline to thrive.

Prospective level of income is another factor that the article under review highlighted. Due to perceived unattractive financial package or salary that a course such as religious studies will command, many students end up shying away from studying it. Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) considered financial reasons as one of the factors limiting against choice of careers among students. The need to go for courses that will attract fat financial reward or salary becomes the basis of choosing an academic line of study.

Another factor that influences career choice of students in the tertiary institutions is the media. The way the media highlights some course of study or would-be profession makes it look attractive for study. According to the authors of this article, “besides the home, another major determinant of career choice is media” (Kazi & Aklaq, 2017, pp.187-188). They added that “talk shows, documentaries, movies and dramas portray career such as law,

media and advertising as very glamorous and appealing, thus drawing students towards them” (Kazi & Aklaq, 2017, p.188).

Another article reviewed in this study is titled “Why major in Religious Studies”? It is an article on Philosophy of Religion from the University of Tennessee Chattanooga. This article addresses a number of issues relating to career choice among students of religious studies. It was stated in this article that “Religious studies is devoted to the contemporary academic study of religion and explores the role of religion as a phenomenon in human life and culture, in peace and in conflict” (University of Tennessee, 2021). More so, it was averred in article that the academic study of religion has a distinctive multidisciplinary character, drawing up resources and approaches from archaeology, art, anthropology, history, literature, philosophy, psychology and sociology (University of Tennessee, 2021).

From the above assertion, it is clear that the academic study of religion positions and equips students for multi-faceted job opportunities because it cuts across many disciplines. That is, religious cuts across multidiscipline such as archeology, anthropology, sociology, literature,

philosophy, psychology, just to mention a few. In other words, a graduate of religious studies cannot be short-changed in the labour market in terms of job prospects. In this article, the former Secretary of State to the United States President, during the Obama regime posited that; “if I went back to college today, I think I would probably major in comparative religion, because that’s how integrated it is in everything that we are working on and deciding and thinking about in life today” (John Kerry cited in University of Tennessee, 2021).

There cannot be shortage of jobs for graduates of Religious Studies due to the importance of the subject to some of the challenges faced in our modern day society. Most of the ethnic, religious and political crisis in the world today, have religious undertone. Most diplomats spend precious time travelling round the world to resolve disputes that mostly circles around religious differences or ideology. It is probably because of this volatile situation or circumstances around the globe that motivated John Kerry to make such statements of wanting to go back to college to study comparative religion. Recall that John Kerry who was cited in this article from the University of Tennessee is a highly respected diplomat from the United

States of America (USA) and was a former Secretary of States in the Barrack Obama regime.

In addition, according to this article under review, Religion as an academic discipline in Universities prepares students for a life in critical thinking that will enable them to excel in any field of work. That is, “religion departments train students in critical thinking and cross-cultural understanding. Such skills are in high demand in many professional fields” (University of Tennessee, 2021). In essence, what the article seem to suggest is that most jobs, even the professional ones requires people who can process information by critically thinking about data or information before them. That is what the kind of skills that most professional jobs require is the ability to critically think and have cross-cultural understanding. Religious Studies, according to this article offers such training for their students.

From the review of this article, it is clear that getting jobs as a graduate of religious studies, shows that one should be able to fit into various and numerous facets of work environment.

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3.0 CHALLENGES OF THE STUDY OF RELIGION

#### 3.1 Introduction

Some of the literatures reviewed in this study have shown that the academic study of religion could be very fascinating because it cuts across multidiscipline. That is, there is an element of religion in almost all areas of studies in the universities. More so, the reviewed literatures have also shown that academic study of religion is also very relevant to societal growth because it intersects almost all the areas of life, be it social, economic, spiritual, psychological, philosophical and so on.

However, the fact remains that Religious Studies in universities is faced with multidimensional challenges. That is, the problems that confront the academic study of religion are numerous;

Over the years, the study of religion is faced with hiccups. Such problems have deterred a smooth teaching and learning in the academic discipline as many would-be learners run to other courses of study, while some students in it pass sleepless nights, yet, find it difficult to pass the course. (Amaechi, 2018)

What Amaechi seems to suggest is that with such issues confronting the academic study of religion, the aim of the course as a discipline in Nigerian universities, as well as other universities in the world would be defeated. That is, the teaching process will be difficult to attain due to lack of interest from the students. In addition, such hiccups will become a stumbling block to the lack of interest from the students poses a major challenge to learning. That is so because many of the students prefer to transfer to other areas of study or department perceiving it as a better course of study. It is true that many of the students in the department of religion did not actually choose the course as their original course of study. According to Ehianu (2018), many of the students in the department of Religious Studies did not actually apply for the course asserting that most of the students were forced to enlist for the course. In a situation like this, such unwilling students would definitely exhibit a lackadaisical attitude towards their studies. Such is one of the challenges that the religion as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities face.

In fact, in Nigerian universities, many students turn down admissions because the course of study offered to them is religious studies. Such people

would rather reject the admission and try another exam instead of studying religion as an academic discipline. More so, “some people as a result of this, kept repeating exams upon exams just to be sure of what they are going to study for the sake of the future” (Ukpa, 2020, p.80), and of course get any other course apart from religious studies. This attitude is becoming very rampant among students seeking admission into Nigerian universities. In fact, this researcher recalls a scenario in her first year in the department of Religions, University of Benin, when a parent came to school to threaten his daughter to either facilitate a transfer away from Religions Education Department or forfeit the admission and return home with him.

It must be stated here that most of these challenges facing the academic study of religion may be ill-conceived or due to ignorance. According to Ukpa, people reject religions studies due to misconception. “This is not because of its name (referring to religions studies) and lifestyle of those who graduated with the certificate, rather it is as a result of people’s perception and concept about religion” (Ukpa, 2020, p.80).

Therefore, this section of this study is on the challenges confronting the study of religion as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities.

Attempts will be made to examine the various problems that discourage people from enrolling for religions studies as their choice course of study in the university. In addition, efforts will also be made to understand the numerous challenges that make people already in the court want to take transfer to other departments. More so, in this section, oral interview will be conducted and data gathered from some students in University of Benin who were previously enlisted in the Department of Religions, in University of Benin, but took transfer to other departments. The following are some of the challenges facing the academic study of religion in most Nigerian universities.

### **3.2 Social Stigma among Peers**

One of the challenges facing the study of religion in Nigerian universities is the factor of social stigma. Many people do not want to study the course because it is seen as lacking a good status compared to other courses. Peer pressure comes into play here. Some students get stigmatized for studying religion when they are among their peers discussing their course of study. While most of their friends mention Medicine, Engineering, Law, Accounting, Mass Communication and the likes as their areas of study, the

ones studying religion becomes a laughing stock in their midst. Their friends will be wondering what sort of course is religions studies. More so, they would begin to inquire from the religions students where she is going to find work after graduating.

This researcher was once confronted by her peers during their first holiday after her first year exams. She was scornfully asked by her friend; “are you suddenly planning to become a pastor or a reverend after graduating from religious studies?”. This question embarrassed this researcher so much that she wanted to almost abandon the religions studies as a discipline and re-write JAMB again in order to get a better course. Thankfully, that didn’t happen as she is here writing her final year project as a 400level student of the Department of Religions, University of Benin.

However, such is the challenge of social stigma from peers that confronts the academic study of religion in Nigerian universities. Many people have given up the study of the course due to such stigmatization from peers. According to one former student of the Department of Religions, in the University of Benin, who transferred to International Studies and Diplomacy (ISD) Department in her 200 level, said shame and

embarrassment from her friends at home made her seek transfer from religion to International Studies and Diplomacy (ISD). In her words, “I was constantly laughed at and asked embarrassing questions about my study of religions in Uniben. When I could not take it anymore, I bought a transfer form and worked my study to International Studies and Diplomacy (ISD). (O. Eseosa, Personal communication, 2022). Many also have transferred under similar circumstances without fighting to remain in the Department of Religion.

Another student was also interviewed in this study and she opined that even her parents used to abuse her and tease her for not being able to read and get admitted into choice courses like Law, Mass Communication or English and Literature just as some of her friends in the neighbourhood were able to do. “This kind of stigmatization made me to abandon the study of religion altogether” (A. Osas, Personal communication, 2021). This particular student abandoned the study of religion due to peer pressure and social stigmatization from her relatives. According to her words, “after abandoning the study of religion after my first year if studies, I kept on writing Jamb for up to three times before I was able to get admission again

into a better course that would not make them to stigmatize me again” (A. Osas, Personal communication, 2021).

### **3.3 Priesthood or Church Administrator**

One popular challenge that faces the academic study of religion in Nigerian universities is the misconception or notion that graduates of the course will end up as Pastors, Imams or even Church Administrators. Due to the name of the course, it is often believed that the only job a graduate of religions studies will get is in the Church or the Mosque or any other religious or worship centers. According to Ukpa, “This rumour that religions knowledge is only for those going into ministerial assignment has been hovering over place especially in tertiary institutions” (2020, p.84).

This misconception has a way of playing on the mind of would-be students. Once that rumour or misconception gets into their mind, they would never be able to enlist into the course area of study. In fact, those who eventually get admitted into the Religious Department will find it hard to settle down or concentrate in their studies due to the mindset that they are going to end in ministerial assignments.

This challenge is also responsible for the frequent drift of students from the Religions Studies department to other department of study. According to one of the persons interviewed in this study, the thought of ending up as a pastor or minister of the gospel was what made her to change from the Department of Religions Studies to another department. In her words, “I was initially made to believe that every graduate of religious studies is going to become a pastor or minister of the gospel” (F. Nwabueze, Personal communication, 2021). Nwabueze added that it was this fear of becoming a ministerial officer in the church that persuaded him to change his course of study from religions study to International Studies and Diplomacy (ISD). He posited thus: “I cannot see myself spending four hard years in the university studying a course that will make me end up becoming a priest. I decided to change to International Studies and Diplomacy (ISD) when the thought kept on disturbing me” (F. Nwabueze, Personal communication, 2021).

It is obvious from the above that the thought of going into ministerial assignments of religion in Nigerian universities. It has contributed to the high traffic of students from religions studies department to other choice

departments. However, this is a gross misconception that must be confronted by major stakeholders in the field of religion in order to stem the drifting of students away from the area of study of religion.

### **3.4 Job Opportunities**

Another factor that discourages people from the academic study of religion is the dear of not being able to secure a job. It is highly believed that graduates of religion have limited opportunities in the labour market due to the religious understanding of the course. “Students of higher learning are full of fear concerning what they will gain from studying religion as a course” (Ukpa, 2022, p.84). This factor or fear remains at the forefront of most students thinking before, during and after the study of the course. Ukpa (2020) also stated that even among some lecturers and school management teams, there exists the fear that graduates of religion have limited opportunities for jobs considering the current state of Nigeria’s economy.

It is not surprising that the lack of job opportunities poses a serious challenge to the academic study of religion. Even parents are the worst hit by this challenge. Studies show that many parents were not previously aware

of such an area of study until their wards were admitted into it. “My father was so shocked that I have been admitted into the university to study religions studies” (O. Oboh, Personal communication, 2022). According to this interview, the parents especially the father was so dumbfounded to learn that such a course exist in universities. Interestingly, when the researcher inquired from the interviewee of what became of his father’s dismay, it was discovered that the father’s main concern was how he was going to get a job after his studies. According to him, the father’s concern was that apart from being a pastor in the church, what other kind of job he can attract from the society.

So the challenge of a lack of job opportunities to the academic study of religion cannot be over emphasized. There is certainly a lack of awareness by most of would-be students, parents and graduates of religions studies in the universities. There is therefore, a need for an urgent and adequate dissemination of information in order to sensitize people on the subject matter.

### **3.5 Science Driven World**

One other challenge facing the academic study of religion is the fact that we live in a world that is currently driven by science and technology and there is a systematic relegation for unscientific things. Religious Studies for instance falls into this category. It is obvious that religion as an academic discipline does not stand a chance in competing with other scientific courses because the world as it is today is more desirous of technology and scientific invention. The drive for students to enroll for courses such as electrical-electrical engineering, mechatronics engineering, computer engineering, medicine, aeronautic studies, or maritime studies have constantly been on the increase.

It seems that Religious Studies will not continue to command or attract students for its study due to a more scientific and technological oriented world. While the western world is exploring more and more avenues in the space and how they can make it habitable through scientific innovations, you are busy studying religions studies” (A. Akan, Personal communication, 2022). The above was a data gotten from the field of this project. It was one of the respondent’s responses when he was asked what he

feels about people studying religions studies. The respondents did not only hide his rejection or disdain for the academic study of religion, but also used the opportunity to tell his researcher that what the world needs now is science and technology. According to the respondent, the world today is moving or living in a jet age and this is due to scientific innovations. He suggested that people should spend more time in studying courses that can contribute towards a technological and innovative growth of the world and that he doesn't believe that the academic study of religion is one of such courses that can contribute to such growth.

### **3.6 Government's Policy**

Another challenge to the academic study of religion is the philosophy or direction of government's policies. These policies do not seem to favour the study of religion in Nigerian universities. That is, most government policies tend to tilt more towards sciences than Arts. The policies seem to always be in favour of the sciences and in a situation like this, people or students become discouraged to the academic study of religion because they feel disadvantaged from the inception that it does not enjoy backing.

According to a lecturer in the Department of Religions Studies and Cultural Management in one of the Nigerian University; “Government policy on education and other related issues tilts more towards the Sciences than Arts in a ratio of 60 – 40 % (Anonymous, Personal communication, 2022). According to this lecturer, when students feel that their area of choice or study is not in the interest of the government of the day, they do not want to study such courses as it looks like a waste of time to them. This factor is solely the fault of the Nigerian government, because it is a bit biased to seem to favour only a sector of education over others.

### **3.7 Not a Professional Course**

Another challenge to the study of religion as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities is that it is seen as an unprofessional course of study. Unlike law, medicine, accounting that is practiced professionally, the study of religion is not seen to be a professional course. One good thing about professional courses is that you can become self-employed even if there are no government jobs or private sectors employment. But Religious Studies as an academic discipline does not offer this opportunity for self-employment. “I choose to study law because I feel after graduation, I may not have to

depend on government to offer me a job before I can make money, I can become my own boss because it's a professional course" (F. Osuegbu, Personal communication, 2022). This challenge is another problem facing the study of religion and all such unprofessional courses. But religion seems to be the worst of the unprofessional courses for obvious reasons. That is, graduates of other courses, though not professional, stand a better chance of employers in a competitive labour market of Nigeria, than graduate of religion. (A. Nkem, personal communication, 2022).

In fact, it is widely believed that most parents encourage their children to study courses such as medicine and surgery, law, pharmacy, botany, accounting, psychology and the likes because they are professional courses in which the children will not become dependent on government for gainful employment. They are of the opinion that with the study of such professional courses, their children can set up their own offices and start making money for themselves. (A. Nkem, J. Omoruyi, personal communication).

### **3.8 Lack of Interest in the Course**

Another major challenge in the academic study of religion is the student's attitude towards the study of the course. Data collected from the Department of Religion, University of Benin shows that there is a considerable high level of lack of interest among the majority of students studying the course. Many show a lackadaisical attitude towards their studies because of a lack of interest in the area of study. "I just get tired of coming to school for classes most times because I cannot see myself studying religions studies" (Anonymous student, Personal communication, 2022). According to this student who does not want her name to put in print, the reasons why she is not often in classes for her studies is due to a high level of lack of interest in the course she was admitted into. Many students in the Department find themselves in the same situation. It is as if they have a choice, they would have long transferred to other departments.

This point was also corroborated by Ehianu in his article in the book titled *Readings in Religions*, a book published in the Department of Religions, University of Benin. According to him, most students are disinterested in the study of religion because actually many of them never

applied for the course in the first place. No matter the amount of time you spend in convincing them and advising them of the viability of the course, their perception remain unchanged because of a sheer lack of interest (2018, p.179). This is a major problem because it is student-centered. In fact one particular student who was interviewed from the Department of Religions, University of Benin declared that, “the reasons why my results have been so bad or poor between 100level and 300level is because initially I was not interested in the course, so I didn’t pay attention to my studies” (Anonymous, Personal communication, 2022). The student however, confessed that the moment she started concentrating on her studies at 400level, she is hoping that her results will be much better. The reason according to her is that she developed a certain interest in the course when she got to the final stage and her attitude towards classes and her studies improved tremendously since then.

Therefore, a lack of interest on the part of the students towards the study of religion as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities poses a serious challenge to the study. To worsen it, it is not an outwardly induced factor, but one that is created by the student himself or herself. Generally,

when someone shows a lack of interest in any task undertaken, the result of such task is sure to be poor and the same is the situation with this challenge to the study of religion.

Finally in this section, according to an online article titled “Challenges in Studying Religion in Tertiary Institutions: The Nigerian Experience”, the following reasons were given by the author as to why students get disinterested in the study of religion as an academic study line in Nigerian tertiary institutions: Religion as indefinite science, religions studies is a philosophical stationed course, lack of employment, the notion that religions studies is for church administrators, inferiority complex among students (Ukpa, 202, pp. 83-85).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 PROSPECTS OF GRADUATES OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

#### 4.1 Introduction

**There are a lot of prospects that is in offer for students of religious studies. In this section, this study shall look into some of the prospects of graduates of religious studies.**

#### 4.2 Teaching

One of the job prospects for graduates of religions studies is in the field of teaching. Most schools, whether primary secondary or tertiary institutions are constantly in need of well-groomed teachers. One of the areas in high demand of teachers is in the field of religions studies, especially in Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) and Islamic Religious Knowledge (IRK). Therefore, the educational sector in Nigeria avails a lot of opportunities for graduates of religious studies.

Although some may argue that teaching religious studies may not attract good salaries, but the teaching profession still remains one of the most respected profession in the world and with time that respect will be

matched by an equally befitting remuneration. For instance, the northern part of Nigeria has a lot of openings for graduates of religious studies, especially those who can teach Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK). This is true because the Muslim dominated areas of the North may not have its entire disposal a commensurable amount of teachers in that field.

According to Ehianu, “Teaching jobs abound in the North for graduates of religion, more so, the course content prepares them not only for CRK but IRK (Islamic Religious Knowledge) as well” (2018, p. 180). In fact, parents and students should be rest assured that the study religion as an academic discipline in Nigerian universities has a lot of job prospects and teaching is one of such prospects. The fear of where they are going to work after graduating, which dominates the minds of most parents and would-be students of religion. That is even if all other jobs prospects fails, they can be rest assured that the teaching profession or teaching industry presents them with a lot of opportunities.

A lecturer of Philosophy in then Bendel State University, Ekpoma, once told a religious studies student in his department that Religious Studies is better than philosophy because at the end one who studies religion can go

to the secondary school and teach, unlike to graduate of philosophy who has no such opportunity (Ehianu, 2018).

Therefore, the teaching profession is one sure area that graduates of Religious Studies can exploit for jobs after graduating from the University. And of course, the teaching profession is a very amiable profession.

### **4.3 Administration**

Administrative sector are areas that graduates of religious studies can also excel at in terms of jobs. Religious Studies students are in the field of humanities is very relevant to nation building. According to Ehianu, “Nation building lies squarely in the domain of humanities which help to sensitize awareness of our roots, our inter-group relations; loyalty to the nation, create the ability for the reasoned and critical judgment of national issuer affecting the country generally” (Ehianu 2018, p. 180, citing Igbafe).

It is clear from the above statement that religion which is an aspect of the humanities, is very essential to nation building and graduates of the discipline can effectively serve or work as administrators in any of the sector he or she is employed in. this is true because,, “Science and technology does

not building nations; administrators do” (Ehianu, 2018, p.180). Any sector of the nation that is properly administered will definitely produce good results because administrators form the bedrock upon which a nation cross. Graduates of religion are therefore positioned to effectively work as administrators due to their training under the humanity faculties of most Nigerian universities. Ehianu added that “the place of the graduate of religion is the personnel/administrative department of whatever establishment they find themselves” (2018, p.181). The truth is that, most decisions concerning the growth or development of an organization is taken in the administrative department. That is, if any company or organization is to grow, the collective decisions of the administrators is very integral to it. That has been the case, the graduates of Religious Studies and all other students from the Humanities because an integral part of the growth of the various establishments they find themselves working. This also supports the claim that there are a lot of job prospects for graduates of administrators in any establishment or organization.

Such is the importance of religious studies that in 2006, a graduate of religion from the University of Benin made history by winning the first prize

in a competition organized by the National Stock Exchange thereby putting the study of religion as an academic discipline in the national map (Ehianu, 2018, p. 181).

#### **4.4 Foreign Affairs Personnel/Embassy**

Religion is at the center of most of the crisis bedeviling the world today. Most of the wars in the currently ongoing in the world are one way or the other connected to faith and belief systems. The Middle East is engulfed in crisis that is majorly between Islamic countries and the Jewish Christians. In Nigeria today, the Boko Haram insurgency is based on their peculiar belief about the practice of religion. They preach that Western Education is Haram. More so, the quest for the establishment and expansion of a caliphate by the Islamic state in the Sahel (Isis) was prominently a religious based agitation. Therefore, one can see that religion is the bedrock of most of the crisis disturbing the peace of the world today, and if any person is more qualified to understand such global crisis, it must be someone who is well educated in religion.

It is can be agreed from the above calculation that a graduate in religious studies who has been well equipped with the understanding of major religious movements and faith in the world is well advantaged to understand the situation going on with these wars. That is no one is in better position to examine and understand the religious crisis going on in the world today than a graduate of religious studies.

As earlier stated in this project study, a former Secretary of States (Secretary of Foreign Affairs) in the United States of America, Kerry once declared that if he is going to ever go back to higher institution, it will be to study comparative religion as a discipline because according to him, religion is the underlying factor to most of the global crisis being experienced today.

Kerry is a diplomat, a foreign secretary to one of the most developed nations in the world and he is of the opinion that religion is a very necessary tool in functioning as a foreign diplomat. It is therefore clear that graduates of religion who study religion as an academic discipline can serve as foreign diplomats, foreign affairs personnel in the present condition of the world. That is, such enviable and amiable job opportunity such as a foreign diplomat is readily available for graduates of religious studies. They are the

ones that know or understand the nature of religious crisis and well trained to resolving such crisis.

#### **4.5 Charity Officers**

Another job prospect for graduates of religious studies in Nigerian universities is the capability employed in charitable organizations. Any student who read religion as an academic discipline can be gainfully employed as a charity officer in charitable organizations or a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). According to Ehianu, “a charity officer works for or is a trustee of a charitable organization” (2018, p.181). Under this setting, the graduate of Religious Studies can function as a staff in various capacities within the charity organization. The roles they can fit into varies from such areas as project management, business development, finance, marketing, public relations officer, fund raising or even volunteer management (Ehianu, 2018).

There are so many charitable organizations located in different parts of the country and all these present decent job opportunities for religious studies graduates to work in. More so, the necessary tools or skills to

function effectively in such capacities have already been imbedded in these students through the various courses in the faculties of Arts or Humanities which they emanate from. It is important to state here that whatever non-professional job a graduate from other department in the Humanities or Faculty of Arts can do, a graduate from the department of Religious Studies is also equipped to do. In fact, most job advertisements from the banks, ministry and department agencies, or any other governmental and non-governmental agencies do not specifically request the services of a particular field of study. That is they do not make their invitation to interviews restricted to areas of studies. All they do is to place adverts for interested candidates who have Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) or Bachelor of Arts (BA), or Higher National Diploma (HND) or Ordinary National Diploma (OND) qualifications. They do not mention that applications must come from graduates of Mass Communication, or international studies and diplomacy or philosophy. They actually open it up for all graduates irrespective of their areas of studies.

#### **4.6 News Analyst**

Graduates of religious studies can also function in the capacity of a news analyst. Their knowledge from courses undertaken in the Humanities qualifies them to function effectively in this field. In addition, when it comes to issues of religious or ethnic discourse which is the primary area of training of religious studies graduates they do excel very well. Moreover, “in a multi-religious country such as Nigeria, knowledge of the various religions remains a tool for understanding and analyzing religious perspective behind national and global events” (Ehianu, 2018, p. 181). That is, what Ehianu seems to suggest here is that considering the various religious religions such as Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion, Hinduism, Buddhism and all such faiths. What the Nigerian society actually needs is someone who can have enough understanding of the various faiths doctrine looking in the news media or other kinds of media. This is where a graduate of religion becomes very difficult.

In addition, when a graduate of religion combine his or her educational training with other certificates such as journalism, nursing or counseling such a graduate stands a better chance to excel in such jobs than

those who have just one certificate in the field. One of Ehianu's advices to graduates of religious studies is that they should get additional certifications in areas of journalism or media training while undergoing their studies in the Department of Religious Studies (Ehianu, 2018). This suggestion from Ehianu will further equip Religious Studies graduates to a holistic understanding of religion, ethnicity and journalism because they have dual certificates in the area. In addition, when they report news or documentaries on religious violence, religious disputes, ethnic disputes, these graduates will do tremendously well because of their added advantage. Therefore, parents of graduates in religions need not be worried about where their wards can work because their opportunities abound for them.

#### **4.7 Pilgrims Board**

Graduates of religious studies can also function as pilgrims board members or staff either in the state or Federal government level. Since the board is primarily meant to cater or manage religious related issues then graduates of religious studies stands a better chance of working more effectively there.

#### **4.8 Ministry of Culture and Tourism**

The same can be said of their prospects as staff of ministry culture and tourism. Their training and curriculum of studies afford them the chance to learn more of culture of the people and this is a an added advantage for them.

#### **4.9 Self-Employment**

Graduates of religious studies can also gainfully venture into entrepreneurship or other privately managed enterprises. Their training in the humanities and arts further equips them for this aspect of employment.

#### **4.10 Chaplains in Military, Hospitals, and Schools**

Graduates of religious studies can also function in the capacity of chgaplains in the military schools, hospitals and schools due to their training in religions of the world.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **EVALUATION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Evaluation**

This study has been able to examine the challenges and prospects of graduates of religious studies under the topic Academic Study of Religions in Nigerian universities: Prospects and Challenges. During the course of the study, various challenges were discovered that tend to discourage student from pursuing a carrier in religious studies. Issues such as social stigmatization, fear of unemployment among many others were one of the challenges confronting the academic study of religions in Nigerian universities. Despite these challenges, this study found out that there are many opportunities that abound for graduates of religious studies which should be the point of focus for students of religious studies. That is, there are lots of carrier prospects for such students and, therefore, they should not be deterred by the numerous challenges confronting them.

### **5.2. Conclusion**

This work concluded that despite the fear and resentment many student or prospective students encounter towards the academic study of religions in Nigerian universities, amiable carrier prospects are still very much available for those that want to delve into the area of study. As such, the fear of being unemployed should not be entertained by prospective students or those students who are already admitted into the program. The study concludes that graduates of religious studies can easily function in embassies, ministry of tourism and culture, pilgrims' board amongst many others. Therefore, it should be noted that embarking on the academic study of religion in universities is not a futile effort as feared by many, including parents and prospective students.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

1. Prospective students should not entertain any fears in enrolling for religious studies in Nigerian universities due to fear of unemployment because there are a lot of carrier prospects for graduates of the program.
2. Parents should stop discouraging or chastising their wards for studying religious studies because it is not a study in futility,

3. Due to the broadness of the of religious studies, as a course in the humanities, graduates of religious studies stand a good chance of effectively executing their job descriptions than graduates from other humanities.

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### **Interviewee List**

<b>S/N</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Address</b>
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1	Eseosa Oviri	F	25	Benin City
2	Amen Osas	F	24	Benin City
3	Frank Nwabueze	M	Adult	Benin City
4	Odion Oboh	M	Adult	Benin City
5	Ambrose Akan	M	27	Benin City
6	Fidelis Osuegbu	M	Adult	Benin City
7	Anonymous	F	Adult	Benin City