

RELIGIOUS STUDIES GRADUATES AND UNEMPLOYMENT: ANY PROSPECT?

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Abstract

Religion is a reality in human experience and pervades through life. It describes man's relationship with the supernatural world or the reality generally referred to as God. Religion in some places is regarded as an inferior course, so easy that students can use it to complete the number of subjects they do. The negative belief about religion makes some parents to stigmatize it as they see it as a course that does not bring much money as courses like medicine, surveying, law, to mention but a few. Sequel to the negative belief, graduates of Religion are faced with unemployment upon graduation. The way the course has been underrated is such that people think that anybody doing Religion will be a pastor or an evangelist. With this notion, graduates of Religion are not easily employed in the national labor force except the classroom to teach the course. This paper therefore throws light to the relevance of religion and the wider scope/opportunities open to graduates of Religion in the society especially the contemporary Nigeria. The researchers adopt a historical method of research in this work

Keywords: Nigeria, Religious Studies, Graduates, Unemployment, Prospects.

Introduction

Religious studies originated in the nineteenth century, when scholarly and historical analysis of the Bible had flourished, and Hindu and Buddhist texts were first being translated into European languages. Early influential scholars included Friedrich Max Müller, in England, and Cornelius P. Tiele, in the Netherland (Stienbock, 2009). Today Religious Studies is practiced by scholars worldwide. In its early years, it was known as Comparative Religion or the Science of Religion and, in the USA, there are those who today also know the field as the History of religion (associated with methodological traditions traced to the University of Chicago in general, and in particular Mircea Eliade, from the late 1950 through to the late 1980). The field is known as *Religionswissenschaft* in Germany and *Sciences des Religions* in the French-speaking world.

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The term "Religion" originated from the Latin noun "Religio", that was nominalized from one of three verbs: "relegere" (to turn to constantly/observe conscientiously); "Religare" (to bind oneself [back]); and "reeligere" (to choose again). Because of these three different meanings, an etymological analysis alone does not resolve the ambiguity of defining Religion, since each verb points to a different understanding of what Religion is. During the Medieval Period, the term "Religious" was used as a noun to describe someone who had joined a monastic order (a "religious"). Despite this change in meaning, it is important to note the term "Religion" is primarily a Christian term. Judaism and Hinduism, for example, do not include this term in their vocabulary. Religion as a course or subject that is studied in school is looked down upon by some parents, educational planners, the society and even the students themselves. To the extent that those offering the course are seen as not serious and would not have a place to work except the Church. This piece therefore is to show the prospects of graduates of Religion.

What is education?

According to Cremin(1977) Education is deliberate, systematic and sustained effort to transmit, evoke or acquire knowledge, attitude values, skills or sensibilities as well as any outcome of that effort . It involves the transmission of what is worthwhile to the learner to enable him perform the role which Society has allotted to him. It involves the preparation of the learner to take his place in the society.

Davis (1993) asserts that:

Education seeks to provide men and women with minimum of skills for them to take their place in the society and to seek for further knowledge. Provide men and women with vocational training that will enable them to be self supporting. Waken interest in and a taste for knowledge. Make people critical. Keep in touch with and train them to appreciate the cultural and moral achievement of mankind.

In all these , we find that education take place within the society. Consequently , the society demands from its members that they acquire at school a minimum body of knowledge and skill and certain desirable attitudes and modes of behaviour such as self discipline and a sense of responsibility. In other words . the value of any study or any education is its relatedness and usefulness to social

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life. Education in a multi-cultural or multi-religious society therefore, should teach pupils something about other culture and other religions than the one to which they belong.

Why study the world's Religions in the college and university curriculum?

Religious Studies is intellectually exciting because it provides access to the mystery of the other.

Religion is one of the primary disciplines for investigating the boundary questions of life and death, of love and hate, that characterize the human condition. All persons crave for self-transcendence in one mode or another. Religious Studies provides the opportunity to understand, with depth and nuance, the many beliefs and rituals that move persons to appreciate the alternative world of the Religious reality.

+Religious Studies is academically enriching because it is a trans disciplinary mode of inquiry that engenders deep intercultural literacy.

Serious study of the world's religions inculcates unique cultural sensitivities among students, since it straddles the boundary between objective evidence and subjective experience. Religious study is methodologically diverse, globally aware, and academically transgressive. Religious study is rigorously and playfully open to a multicultural and international way of being that bursts the boundaries of the conventional and the everyday.

+Religious Studies is personally meaningful because it raises questions of purpose and value along with developing important life skills.

Religious studies enable the development of crucial aptitudes -- critical thinking, communication competence, interpersonal awareness, and intercultural literacy - - necessary for success in a global society. Pal (2006) is of the view that the aim of liberal education -- healthy, holistic education -- is about gaining wisdom, not the accumulation of knowledge as such. Practically speaking, religious studies can enable students to better practice the task of selfhood by both building self-esteem and making possible the acquisition of competencies crucial for one's well-being in increasingly diverse world cultures

What Is Unemployment

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In economics, unemployment refers to the condition and extent of joblessness within an economy, and is measured in terms of the unemployment rate, which is the number of unemployed workers divided by the total civilian labor force. Hence, unemployment is the condition of not having a job, often referred to as being "out of work", or unemployed

The terms unemployment and unemployed are sometimes used to refer to other inputs to production that are not being fully used, for example, unemployed capital goods.

The history of unemployment is the history of industrialization. It was not considered an issue in rural areas, despite the "disguised unemployment" of rural laborers having little to do, especially in conditions of overpopulation.

Causes of Unemployment

The government defines those who want to work as people who have actively looked for work within the past four weeks and determines the number of people currently unemployed through a monthly survey called the Current Population Survey.

According to Abbot (2011) people can be unemployed for many reasons:

- They quit their position and are looking for a new one.
- They were laid off due to lack of work and haven't yet been rehired.
- Their company reduced the work force, and they are seeking a new position. This can be due to a local condition, when the company closes a plant or division, or a national condition, when the economy slows and many companies reduce their work force.
- They have recently returned to the work force - perhaps from pregnancy or attending school - and haven't yet located a position.
- The need for their skill set has gone down, and there are limited positions available, which may lead to unemployment until they train for a new position.
- Technology has reduced the need for their type of position.

Unemployment levels are increasing dramatically in many parts of the world.

There are several causes behind this increasing rate. But the main reason for the high level of unemployment is technological progress. In a fewer year far less working hours are needed to produced all the goods that are required, hence there will be less demand of labour. This can lead more to the raise of unemployment ratio.

On the other hand, traditionalism, ignorance and over population etc are some other major cause that lead to the raise of unemployment.

Today, unemployment is the major crisis worldwide, to keep check on it is very much essential.

Studying religion allows you to explore how religious beliefs and practices shape and influence the world we live in .Jobs directly related to a degree in Religion include: Further education teacher, Higher education lecturer, Primary school teacher, Secondary school teacher .Jobs where your degree would be useful include: Advice worker, Archivist, Charity officer, Civil Service administrator, Community development worker, Editorial assistant, Newspaper journalist, Social worker, Youth worker

Remember that many employers accept applications from graduates with any degree subject, so one should not restrict his thinking to the jobs listed here.

Religious studies graduates can also work in a variety of different roles in a range of employment sectors. Typical employers include:

- national and local government, including the Civil Service and government agencies, as well as non-governmental organisations (NGOs);
- schools, colleges and universities (for teaching and research positions);
- charities, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations;
- social services and other caring professions;
- the church and other religious organisations;
- Financial and legal firms;
- the National Health Service;
- Advertising, sales and marketing companies;
- media companies.
- Libraries, charities, museums, television companies and publishing houses also employ theology and religious studies graduates in a range of roles

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Studying Religion gives you:

- research, analysis and presentation skills;
- the ability to interpret and synthesize information and formulate questions and solve problems;
- the ability to understand the meaning of complex written documents;
- organisational and time management skills;
- teamworking and communication skills;
- writing skills, including accurate referencing and the ability to construct a reasoned argument;
- IT skills;
- empathy and the ability to understand people and take on board others' views;
- the ability to work methodically and accurately;
- independence of mind and the ability to think for yourself

Some graduates choose to increase their knowledge of religion/theology through a postgraduate qualification such as a Masters or PhD. Areas of research include theology, religion and culture, and religious conflict. Vocational postgraduate courses in areas such as teaching, journalism, librarianship or law are also available.

Other graduates choose to undertake further study in areas such as marketing, finance, human resource management or business/management in order to enhance their knowledge of a specific career area.

SKILLS GAIN ON THE STUDY OF RELIGION: The study of Religion can help one gain the following skills, Clear & Logical thinking, Critical evaluation, Literacy and Expression, [Negotiating](#), Organizing, [Planning](#), [Problem solving](#) Research, [Working to deadlines](#)

To the many employers who recruit graduates in any discipline, these skills will be more important than the actual subject of your degree.

Below are just some of the careers or fields you might pursue with a background in Religious Studies (further study may be required):

- a university professor
- a high-school teacher

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- a social worker
- a psychologist
- an English as a second language (ESL) instructor
- an international development worker in a non-governmental organization (NGO)
- a community economic development officer in government
- a minister or other religious leader
- a curator of exhibitions in a museum or art gallery
- international business, including marketing and management
- medicine and other health professions
- law
- journalism or publishing

writing on Career prospects Uka (2010) asserts that graduates of the Religious Roots of programme will be able to pursue a number of different career paths in which theological, religious, and cultural expertise are needed.

At present, expertise in religious perspectives and questions is increasingly valued in various functions in society and different kind of companies and corporations.

The task of forming a successful career based on knowledge of religion requires an openness to diverse perspectives and a readiness to construct relevant connections.

Conclusion

This paper so far has succeeded in throwing light on the issue that graduates of Religion can have good employment opportunities upon graduation like their counterparts in other disciplines. The wind of unemployment will not only blow Religious studies graduates but every other in different academic field. There are areas of success to graduates from Religious studies as enumerated in the paper. So the paper suggest that the subject Religion be made compulsory from nursery to tertiary. This will also bring the fear of God in the society. Religious graduates should not entertain any fear of unemployment if they can rise to their task, they stand better chance than others in the competitive market of employment ,taking into cognizance the kind of training they have undergone. All that remain to further enhance more seminars, conferences and publications to sell the discipline to many that are yet aware of its relevance and importance. Graduates of Religion require

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enough promulgation and propagation of the discipline, and thus prove to the world their skills. Romer (2011) reports that graduates unemployment is contributing immensely to social vices and negative development in the economy. Therefore, all hands must be on the deck to urgently address this issue so that we can evade or totally eradicate these social vices that is presently pressing hard on the society.

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