

## Religio-cultural perspectives and their contributions to the historical development of education and the civilization of nations

Michael Maduawuchi Uzomah<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Philosophy, St. Albert Institute, an Affiliate of University of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.  
[uzomahmikeabuchi@yahoo.com](mailto:uzomahmikeabuchi@yahoo.com)

\*Corresponding author: [uzomahmikeabuchi@yahoo.com](mailto:uzomahmikeabuchi@yahoo.com)

Received: January 08, 2022 | Accepted: March 31, 2022 | Approved: April 15, 2022

### ABSTRACT

This treatise ruminates on the religio-cultural perspectives of education which undoubtedly consist the summit and fulcrum of education. This perspective of education, which is usually neglected and denigrated by some educationists, occupies a central place in the life and being of humanity because culture and religion are of the essence of man. These two all-essential elements of man's social environment are definitive of the personality and identity of man as a member of a given human society. Hence, they constitute the foundations of formal, semi-formal and informal education. The main objective of this treatise is to deductively demonstrate that culture has been crucial to the historical development of education globally. The methods adopted in this study is the expository analytic and the hermeneutical methods. With the aid of the expository method, this study reveals that education, culture and religion are intrinsically related and they essentially impact the social life of man. The research demonstrates that cultural and religious beliefs of peoples or nations have inexorably shaped their philosophies and conceptualization of education. Based on the findings of this critical analysis, the study concludes that the history and development of education cannot be plausibly recounted and substantiated if the contributions of major world cultures and mainstream religions are not considered. Therefore, the researcher recommends that curriculum studies and planning must necessarily integrate cultural and religious factors in order to make such studies existentially and pragmatically relevant to the social ethos, needs and historical challenges of the society.

**Keywords:** Civilization, Culture, Education, Religion, Society

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to hermeneutically establish the intrinsic nexus between culture, religion and education. The study seeks to demonstrate through a philosophical discourse that culture and religion play inviolable and inexorable roles toward shaping the development of the educational ideologies and systems of nations. In turn, educational ideologies and systems of nations enable and foster the development and civilization of societies. It is germane to assert that, if education has just a sole aim, object or goal, this would be that the essence of education is to transmit accumulated human experience and knowledge epitomized or reposed in the reservoir called culture to the present generation and posterity. Based on this assumption, this study reflects on the contributions of some selected world religions and cultures to the historical development of education. From time immemorial, education has been crucial to religion and culture, obviously because of their centrality on the valuation of human life in the society and their moral cum intellectual formation of the human person. As it were, religion and culture give their people a frame of orientation, as such, they act as the epitome of what is desirable-the good thing that ought to be done. Culture, which is the sum total of the way of life of the people, in all times has always played a subtle and yet fundamental role in the development of education. Perhaps, the fact responsible for this is that it is within the cultural framework of a people that a worldview is postulated and jealously transmitted to posterity. Remarkably, the fecund ideas epitomized in ancient, Greek, Jewish and western cultures were crucial to the civilization and education of their nations and peoples, respectively.

A hermeneutical investigation of this world cultures and religions demonstrates that the lived experiences and existential needs and peculiarities of these peoples inexorably define, influence and shape the evolution

and development of their respective educational philosophies and systems. This existential reality showcases the prime essence of education to the survival and flourishing of man and the society. Consequently, education properly understood and conceptualized, becomes the cornerstone of a blossoming society. Education, culture and religion are intrinsically related and they essentially impact the social life of man. The research demonstrates that cultural and religious beliefs of peoples or nations have inexorably shaped their philosophies and conceptualization of education. Having established this given, what follows is the thematic review of related terms through a hermeneutical analysis.

## **2. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The specific problem of this study borders on issues regarding the nature of the relationship existing between culture, religion and education. The clusters of questions that dictate the thrust of this philosophical discourse include: Is culture, religion and education related? If yes, what is the nature of the relationship existing between them? Is this relationship apparent or inherent? Does education enjoy an essential dependency on culture and religion? Or can education be successfully extricated from culture and religion? Responding to these questions, the paper through an expository hermenoutical analysis demonstrates that education is essentially founded on culture and religion. Hence, the most basic function of religion is to transmit cultural values and legacies to posterity.

## **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research, being a philosophical investigation, adopts the hermeneutics analytic method. This method takes the lived experiences as its central focus of analysis. The researcher employs this method to demonstrate the essential link and interdependency between culture, religion and education.

## **4. LITERATURE SURVEY**

### **4.1. Education, Culture, and Religion: Demonstrating the Nexus**

The vast spectrum of human knowledge, the processes by which humans come into cognitive awareness of the sea of episteme, acquisition of skills, learning to and living useful and productive lives, etc., fall within what is typified by the nomenclature 'education'. Education by its very nature is complex and exclusive. It consists of the universe of knowledge, and processes of experiencing (perceptual experiences) and living inside this universe of knowledge and taking cognitive and active account of this living experience. The whole span of man's life, existence and experience (from birth to death) is inexorably characterized by continuous and endless education. Each and every individual person is born a stranger and a neophyte to the society with curious and innate inclinations or dispositions to learn. In the course of time, in experience, humans learn how to exist and survive in the fleeting human society and world with its contingent challenges and prospects. To acquire the knowledge and technical know-how to tame the forces of the environment to suite the taste of man, thereby making life more bearable and good for them, all find their leverage in education. Moreover, even the development and cultivation of core moral values and ethical frameworks that guarantee harmonious and peaceful co-existence is the hallmark of education (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019).

The broad configuration of education above reveals the intrinsic nexus between education and culture. Education is essentially defined as the purposeful transmission of cultural valuables for the perpetuation of people and society. In an attempt to demonstrate the essential link between education and culture Peter (Cited in Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019), conceptualizes the act of education as the purposeful communication of elements or knowledge that are considered meaningful in a manner that is morally approvable. He further noted that education consists of the communication of factors that society considers worthwhile in ways that are morally approved. The term "what society considers worthwhile" represents a cultural factor transmitted to posterity.

A cultural factor in this context means anything pertaining to the sum total of a people's way of life. Whatever concerns and promotes man's existence in the society in terms of values, arts, skills, religion, worldviews, development, etc. ought to be reflected in their educational curriculum. "Culture epitomizes systems of knowledge, ideas customs, belief systems transitions, norms, institutions, food preferences, lifestyles, marriage rituals, frame of orientation and worldview (Offorma, 2016). One of the cardinal pillars of education is moral formation. Hence, the learning programs of schools usually incorporate the cultural values, norms and cultural heritage of a people. Culture plays an important role in the learning process of a people.

So, it must not be ignored by educational curriculum. A good curriculum must be sensitive to culture and must seek to promote culture. This is because peoples' being and essence are encapsulated by their culture. Therefore, an educational curriculum that promotes the core values of a people's culture, is a curriculum that advances the well being of the people.

Culture is regarded as an important feature in curriculum planning in the sense that it influences the content of every educational curriculum. The reason for this is the ineluctable fact that the prime essence of education is the inviolable task of communicating the cultural heritage of a people to posterity (younger generation of the society) (Offorma, 2016). In this light, a good and pragmatic curriculum is one that integrates core values of the culture of the people. As a unique social institution, one of the most fundamental ends of education is to develop the abilities of the individual and to create social principles that are pragmatic and germane for construction the future of the society. Social adaptation of young people who are the future of every human society in terms of acquisition of skills pertinent for development of the economy is equally one of the pertinent functions of education. Moreover, education is connected with culture in diverse areas, since it is an important part of education.

The conception of the relation between culture and education is all the more typical in recent years because the traditional ascription of education to the charge of each respective country's culture tends to undergo radical changes at the present days. The progressive loss of significance of national states (as a result of globalization and unification), is creating new challenges for the different cultures (Offorma, 2016). It is instructive to assert that "... it has been proven that teaching and learning process is a robust technique for the flourishing of culture. Consequently, teachers are expected to get acquainted with the educational theories and policies of their people in order to meaningfully cascade them to existential and practical needs. This implies that a fundamental duty of the teacher is to appreciate a country's culture encapsulated in her educational theories and concretize them. This is against the backdrop that in the educational process, history, understood as the chief record of culture, is being studied. In this light, culture informs and nourishes education (Education and Culture, 2021). Moreover, it has been asserted that a purposeful and pragmatic education fosters the strengthening and transmission of culture. The psychological, sociological, religious or cultural needs of the society may only be achievable through education (Education and Culture, 2021).

The inter-dependency of education and culture cannot be overemphasized. Affirming the internal bond between culture and education Khalid (2021), submitted that, the conservation of culture is one of the most essential functions of education. Education simply defined as the conservation of culture ensures continuity in man's social life. According to him, inestimable cultural stuff consisting the store of human experience and episteme is passed to succeeding generations via education. Unarguably, the transmission of this repository of human experience and knowledge would have been practically impossible without education. If this is the case, succeeding generations have to start and restart from the vacuum (Khalid, 2021). One may begin to imagine if the latter was the norm, what would have been the current state of human knowledge and development. Most probably and most certainly the unprecedented advancement in science and technology, for example, would not have been at its lowest ebbs. Human knowledge and the restructuring of society would have been its their lowest ebbs. Khalid's assertion is philosophically significant based on the fact that education transmits historic values and experiences of the past to the present for the survival of both the now and the future. The essence of education is not merely to conserve culture for posterity sake, but also to ensure that through the conservation of the past, the ultimate good of the present and future generations of humanity are fostered. Hence, the supreme good and ultimate pursuit of the rational animal in society in particular and on earth (in the universe) is intrinsically yoked to education; defined as the knowledge and skill about oneself, society and all in nature in relation to human life, survival and flourishing.

A practical example that showcases the dynamic unity of education and culture is the oriental system and philosophy of education. This system of education practically aims at the reenactment or restoration of the past. This earliest system of education harmonies its aims with that of parents; for instance, youths are required to align themselves with normative expectation-they are required to imitate their parents. In this light, the sole aim of education is to promote social (and conventional) experiences thereby conserving the culture of the people (Khalid, 2021). Against this backdrop, if education has just only one object, its object would be to conserve the experiences and knowledge of the past accumulated through practical experience and reposed in culture for the perpetuity of social life.

Another important factor that has influenced the development of education which is closely related to culture (and in fact an important factor or element of culture) is religion. Religion is one of the bulwarks of culture. Humans are essentially religious animals, as such religion permeates and controls every facet of their social activities. As an element of culture, religious values inevitably shapes peoples educational philosophies and ideologies. Consequently, Azuakor (2019), opined that the principal object is to teach its adherents how to be good, responsible and matured human beings equipped with the abilities and competences that would enable them meaningfully contribute to the integral growth and development of self, family and the society at large. He asserted Christianity as an apt example to this effect. The Christian religion pays priority attention to the education of its adherents.

In view of the cultural and religious values and essences (links) of education, education is by nature informative as well as reformative. In line with the polar concept of polemics, to say that education is formative presupposes the fact that education is reformative. So, the reformative function of education relates to its formative function. If education is capable of shaping and cultivating the mind and heart of the human person and being; it equally has the same pedigree to reform a heart and mind that has been wrongly formed. The reformative import of education subsists in the fact that education aids in changing already badly cultured or shaped ways, attitudes, manners or behaviours, and other mental and behavioural traits of people. In other words, it changes ill preconceived mental dispositions and stereotypical ways of thinking. Remember, it is the task of education to transmit what society considers morally (culturally) worthwhile. The reformative impact or essence of education continually remains relevant to man; since man is perpetually a student of education from the moment of birth. Man is born into the bosom of education and he departs in the hands of education. Therefore, as a life-companion of man, it is the task of education to continually form and reform the human heart (conscience and morals) and mind (intellect) for a meaningful living and societal flourishing. So long knowledge grows, the formative and reformative functions of education are continual. Since man lives to learn and learns to live; he is perpetually formed and reformed by his life companion, education (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019).

It behoves at this juncture to submit that, the survival and flourishing of the individual child, as well as that of the society as a whole squarely depends on education. Therefore, living entails learning in practical terms, what it takes not just to merely exist but to flourish. And learning entails living and flourishing in society. The quality of man's education determines the quality of one's living. The degree of appropriateness of one's education determines the degree to which one would attain the supreme goal of human residency in society in particular and on earth in general. Show me a man who is fully educated and has no need for further education; and I will show you a living-dead or a cadaver. This implies that learning endures through a lifetime. To further strengthen the general attempt above to demonstrate the essential dynamic link between education, culture, and religion, what follows is a one-by-one expository and phenomenological or hermeneutical analysis of the contributions of select cultures and religions to the particular and universal development of education.

#### **4.2. Egyptian Education Ideology**

The decision to start this explication with Egypt is deliberate and purposeful. Genuine discourses on the historical development of education must begin with Egypt because of the precursory role it played in the growth and development of knowledge and human civilization. Historically, ancient Egypt was renowned for her pioneering role in the civilization of the world. The great legacies of Egyptian civilization resonate in history. Hence, Egypt is called the cradle of human civilization. According to Knoche (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019), some of the great civilizations that trace their religious influences to Egypt and early Arabian countries include Greece, Persia, Judea, Babylon, Rome and Crete. These primordial civilizations were profoundly influenced by the esoteric powers of Egyptian civilization. Although, these cultures and civilizations rooted in Egyptian civilization today show ingratitude and arrogance; they are too proud to admit the historical fact that Egypt is the cradle of their civilization, perhaps because it was illegitimately stolen.

The concept of the stolen legacy of Egyptian contribution to knowledge and world civilization is a heinous crime, which should be best described as a crime against humanity. The birthplace of philosophy, which is the parent of all human discipline, is Egypt. This truth is so impeccable and irrefutable by any scholar because there is ample and formidable evidence that attest to it. For instance, objective history has it that there is an impeccable evidence that the pioneers of western philosophy like, Thales, Socrates, Plato, and the likes, in one



time or the other had contact with different academies scattered all over Egypt (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019). Even when Egypt was defeated, the western invaders carted away educational materials stocked in the different libraries of these academies. Ancient Egypt is famous for her mystery school system.

#### 4.3. The Egyptian Mystery School System

Right from time (even far before Plato established his academy) the ancient Egypt established a formal educational system known as the Mystery School. According to Knoche (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019). The Mystery School may be aptly described as the university of the soul. It consists of the refection on the enigmas of the inner nature and the external environment. Though the understanding of these mysteries, the individual learner identifies or discovers his intimate relationship with divinity, and thus, struggles to unit his self with his inner god through self-modification and devotion.

Understanding the inner nature of man and understanding the deep nature and esoteric powers covertly immanent in nature was the ultimate teleology of Egyptian mystery school system. And the immediate goal of this is to establish a harmonious convergence with nature and the powers that be in nature. The supreme goal of the mystery school system is to establish through discipline and devotion a triangular relationship- man-nature-gods relationship. The mystery school education was to enable the initiates to establish an intimate relationship with nature and the divine forces pervading and subsisting deep nature.

Candidates who are admitted into this Egyptian Mystery school system are required to necessarily pass through five degrees in the initiatory cycle. Upon admittance, these candidates are called neophytes, upon completion of the fifth degree in the initiation cycle, they are designated as 'Sons of Light'. According to Knoche (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019), the five (5) degrees or grades in the cycle of initiation are:

- 1. The preliminary purification:** This is the initial purification and it is mandatory for all prospective initiate.
- 2. Tradition of sacred elements or things:** This constitutes the core of the initiation.
- 3. The epoptic revelation:** At this point it is most likely that the student undergoing the initiation ritual would experience direct intuition of truth.
- 4. The binding of the head and the crowning:** The significance of the crown here is that it is a symbol of mystical authority which empowers the crowned to transmit the sacred received to others.
- 5. Friendship and interior communion:** In the Egyptian Mysteries School system, friendship and communion is regarded as the most fervent or solemn of all mysteries; because its significance is expressed in the believe that it is the total assimilation of the enlightened mind with the divine self.

They are called neophytes at the first, second, third, fourth and fifth degrees because as at this time they are novices who are undisciplined and palpably ignorant of themselves and of deep nature. As a result, the neophytes exist in the darkness of ignorance. Subsequently, by the time they progressively complete the fifth and final grade of their initiation exercises, having been purified and refined by the conflagration and furnace of knowledge, and ignorance totally eradicated, they would become sons of light. Upon completion of this first cadre and having been fully initiated, they are admitted into the second cadre which comprises of the sixth and seventh degrees. The first cadre is known as 'Lesser Mysteries', while the second 'Greater Mysteries'. The first cadre or grade initiates the elect into the lesser mysteries of nature; whereas the second cadre or grade takes their journey into the abode of knowledge deeper by introducing them into the deep mysteries inherent in deep nature. According to Knoche, through various levels of purification and discipline, coupled with training in intellectual and spiritual perception, the Lesser Mysteries (consisting of three degrees) prepares the neophytes initiation into the Greater Mysteries. The fourth degree consists of the transitory stage between the Lesser and Greater Mysteries. At this stage, individual prospective initiates are screwed to ascertain whether they have attained sufficient self-discovery. At this stage, the initiate is further subjected into a more stringent discipline and purification. An important development at this stage is that, a more intimate student-teacher relationship is fostered. This screwing qualifies the prospective initiate as a pledged discipline with firm will and disposition to transcend to the realm of Greater Mysteries. Any student who passed this test is subsequently admitted into the Greater Mysteries consisting of the fifth, sixth and seventh degrees (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2017).

The Lesser Mystery is the preliminary and purgative stage, whereby the initiates who though having come ignorant, innumerate and contaminated by inordinate impulses of the flesh are purified through discipline and devotion. The candidates are systematically drilled and screwed with well-defined intellectual and spiritual

discipline, training and exercises. This tough training is purposefully meant to equip the candidates with the intellectual and spiritual stamina to usher them to the realm of the Greater Mysteries. According to Uomah and Isanbor (2019), Knoche explains that, the Greater Mysteries marks the commencement of the learning of personal experiences not learnt in the lower real. In this advanced stage of esoteric education no quarter is given, rather the initiate must face himself and master himself or die. He must profoundly study his divinely inspired aspect and his grossly material self that both constitute his complex nature and gain sustainable control over them. The initiate at this stage is expected to have developed sauciest spiritual strength to control the vicissitudes of reality; and, he must have become nature in her lower and higher regions.

It is fundamentally relevant to note that the ultimate goal and objective of the Egyptian Mystery School System is for the individual learner to achieve self-consciousness. The nature of the Egyptian Mystery School System is called 'Theosophia'-Gods' Wisdom. The wisdom that is taught in the mystery schools is the wisdom of the gods, an intelligible wisdom that liberates the soul from the shackles of ignorance and the inordinate impulses of the flesh (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2017). This transcendental wisdom is wrought for self-realization and self-discovering. Little wonder at the linter of every Egyptian temple is conspicuously inscribed: 'Man Know Thou Self'. Through the Egyptian school system the initiate progressively learns to be in harmony with oneself, one's neighbors, the environment and the gods. One of the core values that inspired this call to self-awareness is the conviction that the first step to individuals' having control over themselves is the awareness of their strengths and weaknesses; capabilities and incapacities; and virtues and vices. It is of common belief in African philosophical parlance that Socrates in one of his visits to Egypt may have copied his renewed maxim, 'man know thou self' from what is written at the liter of Egyptian temples. The learner is taught to be conscious of his weaknesses and strengths to enable him live happily. This is very remarkable and aligns with human nature. Knowing thou self, implies know your strengths and limitations, your talents and your deficiencies, then work against your weaknesses less they ruin you. They were formed to fashion out their careers after their talents and natural inclinations. One can say, this is the hallmark of the Egyptian educational ideology because self-awareness is the key to happiness.

Self-awareness and a mystic connect with the environment is the ultimate goal of the Egyptian Mystery school system. Hence, the elevation of the learner in time to the realm of esoteric experiences is the height of Egyptian school. At such point, the learner would be called son of light. Light here means enlightenment, liberation and wisdom. These of course, were seen as the basic characteristics of education. Before one can attain this noble state, one would have been screwed and disciplined morally, intellectually and physically. Concerning the content and methods of teaching prescribed by the curriculum of the Mystery School System, Knoche (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019) indicates that astrology is a key component the Egyptian school of mysteries. The essence of astrology is to make the student of the Mystery School System come to term with the deep nature of their physical environment and the esoteric powers and forces resident in nature. They are taught to explore nature and establish symbiotic relationship with deep nature. The potent power of this explorative and synergetic relationship with nature paid off. For instance, even at that neo-primitive period of human development, Egyptians were famous for their unequalled sophisticated technology in Medicine, Engineering, Architecture, Agriculture, and in building other infrastructural amenities. Their incredible and marvelous technology was developed in line with the principle of eco-centrism. Unlike western technology that is today exploitative and disruptive of nature, Egyptian scientifico-technocrats (in line with their cultural ethos) respected the rhythms of nature and harmoniously aligned with the powers and forces of deep nature. Strategically, synergistically and positively harnessing these potent powers, they built technologies that have earned them an eternal legacy. Even as you read this text, UNESCO is still discovering more ancient Egyptian legacies and proclaiming them as World Heritages. This shows the intrinsic connection and the interdependency of education, culture and religion.

The Egyptian school system teaches values and healthy interpersonal relationships. The ancient Egyptian believes that values are the supreme good no society can afford to neglect. Hence, it made moral values the supreme norm of human conducts; and education becomes instrumental in the development, cultivation and internalization of moral virtues and values. The sons of light ought to be people of outstanding character and integrity. They have to be outstanding in morality to maintain harmony and equilibrium with mother earth, nature and the gods-the triangular relationship. The ancient Egyptian educational system was partly formal and partly informal-the priests were chiefly concerned with teaching traditional, cosmological, morals etc. values

for the integral formation of the human person of the learner. The children of the elite predominantly received the formal education; while the informal was, open to all through daily experience. It is incisive to state that most of what forms the curriculum at this formal stage consists of philosophical enquiry. As noted above, in his book, 'The Stolen Legacy' Walter Rooney (Uzomah, 2021). made painstaking effort to establish how what is today known as western philosophy and civilization was stolen from Egypt the birth place of humanity and the cradle of world civilization. It averred that the likes of Socrates, Plato and other sages of the west stole their philosophical knowledge from the various schools and temples scattered in Alexandria and other parts of the ancient Egypt. For instance, Plato's conception of the summit of knowledge and the transforming impact of knowledge on man; as a light; may have been influenced by his master Socrates, and Socrates in turn may have borrowed it from Egypt where it was believed and taught that knowledge is light and the educated sons of light. Little wonder then the fully initiated individuals into the Egyptian Mystery School System were called sons of light.

It should be observed that the Egyptians have a systematized system of learning. However, some critics are of the view that one of the basic flaws of the Egyptian Educational System; is that, it was not open to all; women were not inclusive. As a result of this, this kind of school system is said to be gender discriminatory. Closely related to this is the fact that the Egyptian formal school system was open to only people of the upper class; only children of the nobles benefited from it, as such, it bred inequality. Moreover, the Egyptian school system obviously was too mysterious. The Egyptian Mystery School System, because of its secretive nature can be seen as a cultic system. Most of its teachings, modes of teaching and places of teaching were shrouded in secrecy. Knowledge about the mysteries of nature, powers resident in and subsisting nature, medicine and other privilege information divulged to initiates of the mystery school are never revealed to non-initiates. Learners were to maintain this disposition. In fact, initiates are by oath under the pain of death to eternally conceal the knowledge of the mysteries of the inner nature of humans and the knowledge of the secret of deep nature from non-initiates (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019). This of course, foreclosed the possibilities of preserving some specialized skills and talents, and even privileged knowledge and ingenuity for posterity sake. Eventually, as individuals who have access to these privilege and classified knowledge and skills die, they perish forever with them. This has been named a general weakness of the Egyptian Mystery School System. By extension, this infamous confidentiality was widely practiced and associated to the ancient African system of education. Families, clans and lineages jealously guarded their crafts and technologies from outsiders to forestall transference of their technologies. This, of course, has been designated as the bane of African underdevelopment (Uzomah, 2021). Most of the bodies of knowledge, technologies, arts and crafts that subsequent generations would have consolidated that of previous generations.

#### 4.4. The Ancient Jewish Education Ideology

Like Africans and Indians, the Jewish people are considered to be notoriously religious, to such extent that they hold fanatically and tenaciously to their religious beliefs. The Jewish culture is rooted in their religion traced to Abraham (God Bless Abraham). The Jewish religion is the parent stock of other Abrahamic religions (which includes Christianity and Islam). It is germane to observe at this point that the Jewish educational system was God and society centered, as such, it was rooted in the Jewish religion and culture. The ultimate purpose of the ancient Jewish educational system was utilitarian, and it was sociologically based on teaching morals for religious reasons. In this system, education of the children was majorly the prerogative of parents. Parents were expected to teach their children and wards basic precepts of religion, arts and craft works, morals, and many more.

Moral instructions were based on the command of the *Torah*. According to Uzomah (2018), "Indeed for the Jew the *Torah* is the path to the divine, an indubitable way that guarantees peace and harmony in human community. Therefore, the Ten Commandments were given to Moses to order the life of the Israelites. The *Torah* acted as the fountainhead of all laws made by the Rabbi".. The basic precepts of the Jewish morality that defined the moral formation of the Jewish child is, "Thou shall love Yahweh above all things..., and ...Honour your father and mother". Since law is the blueprint or springboard of the Jewish education, the scribes were trained to translate the law and give a well-informed documentary on the law of Mosses (Jewish law and tradition). The temple was the official place embarked for teaching and learning. In most instances, it goes with instructions.



The Jewish school system commenced teaching the child from age six and corporal punishment was an integral part of the school system, as it was considered, a veritable instiller of discipline. Children must be trained on how to respect the temple and holy icons, respect their parents in all things. Above all, they were trained to hold the Holy and sacred name of Yahweh in great awe. Women were trained on how to be totally submissive to their husbands. Morality was expedient for everyone, because of the essential need to erect a stable moral order to maintain harmony with the Divine. A bridge of moral conduct was considered an abomination against God and a disruption of the moral order (Uzomah, 2015). Therefore, it was treated with the same urgency.

Unlike the ancient Egyptian education, Jewish education was open to both sexes. However, some limitations are associated to the Jewish educational system. In this educational system, because of the rigidity of the system, there was no room for the introduction of novel ideas and personal inputs. There was too much emphasis on oral instructions and memorization. This inadvertently led to forgetfulness and impoverishment. In this system of education also, there was undue stress on religion. Moreover, modern critics have vehemently questioned the rationale behind the institutionalization of punishment as integral to teaching and learning by the ancient Jewish system. Morality and religion took the focal point of Jewish education to the detriment of other variables that define the concept of integral education.

#### **4.5. Ancient Greek Education Ideology**

Education equips learners with the skills, attitudes, habits, dispositions, etc. that enable the individual learner to survive in his social and physical environments. This pragmatic and functional definition of education best suits Greek education. Circumstances, contingencies, challenges and prevailing currents inevitably shaped the people's education. The time in history in the life of the Greek people, was an era characterized by war of dominance and conquest. A time the evolutionary principle of survival of the fittest was at its peak. It was a time when the advantaged and fittest human species fought to subjugate, conquer and colonize the less advantaged human species.

Consequently, since education predisposes and fortifies one to survive in his environment, the ultimate purpose of ancient Greece education was for warfare, to train warriors to prosecute the war of dominance and conquest that was prevailing at that material time. "The aim of the Sparta (Greece education was precisely conservative. Specifically, in the educational system of the Spartans, social survival is squarely based on the military skills, competence and exploits of the Spartans. As a result of this, the central thrust of the Spartan educational system was synonymous to wars virtues like patriotism, obedience and respect for superiors, courage, boldness and a host of other military virtues (Education and Culture, 2021). In a word, the conservation as well as the nurturing of human culture has always been the crucial aim of the Greek education. Consequently, learners were instructed on how to be brave, resourceful, and valiant in wars and how to use ammunitions. The basic philosophy of this school was to idolize heroism as expedient and noble. It was to liberate their society from military aristocracy, to forestall internal decent and crisis and to repel external aggressions.

Another important perspective of the Greek education was its aesthetics and values. Learners were taught to appreciate beauty, values of courage, hardworking, art and craft- work, values of good human qualities. These are appreciation of justice, physical skills (gladiators), endurance, perseverance and boldness (Uzomah, 2021). Very essential to ancient Greek education was learning about the physical environment and how they affect, interfere and shape the fate of man. This study gave rise to the creation of great literary masterpieces by great literary icons like Sophocles, Hesiod, Homer, Aristotle, and others (Uzomah, 2021). Literature and philosophy was the major subject in the ancient Greek school curriculum.

It should be mentioned without equivocation that it is to the merit of Greek education that the philosophy (western), we now study was birthed. The principles of education that have been adopted and are continually adopted globally were pioneered by Greek philosophers. Renowned philosophers like Plato established academies where philosophy and other humanities and natural sciences were taught. Therefore, philosophers before Plato like the sophists went around from place to place-teaching people philosophy and charging them for their services. In the final analysis, philosophy played a fundamental defining role in the development of Greek education, and in the course of time, in the development of western education. Of course, the whole globe now is benefiting from Greek philosophies of education. Therefore, ancient Greek educational system was the cradle of western civilization. Hence, being the cradle of western civilization, it became second to the



Egyptian mystery school system which was indisputably the cradle of world civilization.

#### 4.6. African Education Ideology

Like other races, Africans are not left out in the development of education (especially informal education). The African traditional concept of education was erected on the concept of the African mind. The African mind is an ideology that believes in the cyclic nature of the world. This consists of three worlds- the world of the unborn, the world of the living and the world of the living dead. The hallmark of the African education is for moral development and a harmonious communitarian living. An upright living is necessary to maintain harmony between these three worlds. Since African morality and worldview is theo-centric, the child is to believe in the continuum of life, the unity of the worlds: world of the living, world of the living dead, and the world of the unborn. One is to be conscious against committing abominations, for this upsets the moral order and immanently spells doom for both the offender and the mother earth.

In ancient Africa, there was no formal mode of teaching, rather time honoured cultural values, attitudes, expected pattern of behaviour, gender lore, morals and norms were veritably communicated through folktales, parables, riddles, proverbs etc., in family gatherings and at moon light plays. Girls were instructed by their mothers on how to be well behaved, be of high moral probity and rectitude. They are to be meek, gentle, chaste, obedient, submissive and genial. They were taught that purity (preservation of one's virginity before marriage is a supreme norm of purity), is the *womanness* of the woman (Uzomah & Isanbor 2019). The education of women was to make them virtuous to form them into perfect homemakers. Hence, they are trained to be submissive in all things and to be morally upright. In other words, through education, women were socialized to be good home keepers. The men were educated to be strong, hardworking and honest. Generally, integrity was the supreme value which education instills or bequeaths to the learner.

As a paradigm to further underscore African philosophy of education, it is relevant to adopt an article written by Wellington Samkange and Cecilia Samkange, using the Zimbabwean concept, *unhu/ubuntu* in an attempt to espouse Africa's philosophy of education. Although, the article in question does not reflect the totality of African's educational ideologies, however, it is a plausible representation of the basic or central tenets of African philosophy of education. According to the article under review, the concept simply means the 'humanness subsisting in the human person. According to the two major Zimbabwean languages (Shona and Ndebele) the term means a person. Connotatively, the concept person implies actions, behaviours moral attributes, worthwhile values and attitudes. This philosophy which originated from a work written in 1980 by Samkange and Samkange, aimed at promoting indigenous perceptions and worldviews. For Samkange and Samkange, this philosophy inspires, permeates and exudes great mental and moral attributes. Moreover, it promotes communalism whose basic features include brotherliness, togetherness, caring for one another, good relationship, among other gregarious attributes. Other factors of communism encapsulated and emphasized by *unhuism/ubuntuism* is the ontological worth of human life (that subsists the sacrosanct dignity and integrity of the human person), values of respect and regard for others. (Samkange, Wellington & Samkange, 2021).

This ideology of *unhuism* as espoused above epitomizes what a traditional African community or society represents. Africa is renowned for her style of living referred to as communitarian, where the principle of solidarity and subsidiarity is the underlying philosophy bidding the social contract between its people. This unique system is a direct contrary of the individualistic culture of the lifestyle of the western world, in which they inordinately propagate and impose on other cultures of the world through their educational philosophies and political imperialism. Samkange *et al.* (2021), opined that the ideology of *Unhuism/Mbuntuism* is employed to describe what he term "educatedness" in the aforementioned Zimbabwean languages. He maintained that within the periscope of this ideology, the African pedagogy inculcates on the individual the discernment of knowing what is to and what not to be said elders or peers in the public. In this sense, any individual lacking in this discernment and prudence is considered uneducated in the reckoning of this ideology. This implies that attending a formal education system does not automatically make one educated, but schooled; one is only consider educated when in addition to been schooled one imbibes and exhibits those human virtues outlined above. This invariably affirms our observation above that the ultimate goal of African education system is the development of sound moral character. It is normative because it prescribes codes and rules of conduct, inducing morally acceptable way of behaviour and attitudes, and refraining conducts and attitudes that are inimical and repugnant to the African communal style of living. In doing this, the African education

fundamentally gives the people a frame of moral orientation. Samkange et al. (2021) affirmed this thus:

The unhu/Ubuntu ideology is a collectivist approach. This ideology apparently contradicts the Eurocentric approach to life and education which is invariably individualistic in nature. Based on this disparity between the systems, the educated in the African (Zimbabwean) milieu may be entangled in a dilemma. For instance, the individual educated in the Eurocentric educational system may exhibit attributes contrary to the normative expectation of the African society.

Africans are from ab origin socialized to live as a family and in every respect to be each other's keepers. A man's business is another's, a man's problem, joys, happiness and wants are the businesses of his relatives. Hence, burdens are shared the same way joys are shared. Consequently, a genuine African educational curriculum must propagate and promote this communalism and communism. The principal aim that motivated traditional African conception, practice and essence of education is the quest to make men and women of integrity. Hence, the culturing, forming and conditioning of the mind, or rather, the character was the central object and purpose of education. 'Good name is better than riches' was the watch word for the moral formation which was the principal target of education. Consequently, the supreme teleology of African traditional education was to establish a morally stable order, and harmonious intercourse of the world to foster and promote the continuum of life.

It is pertinent to assert that African traditional educational ideologies are not limited to just moral formation. In addition, it concerned itself with exposing and integrating learners into the African world and perception of reality. It didactically developed the intellectual capacities of learners to understand their environments and the big questions that ensued in their daily experiences of the world around them. In so doing, the individual is equipped with practical wisdom and ability to rationally search for truth independently. Although, the traditional African informal education lacked documentation, however, practical wisdom of the sages was communicated through parable and in folktales. Parable contains sophisticated layers of inviolable wisdom. The wise sayings are ancient yet new and always relevant even in our own time. Hence, wise sayings and parables become veritable tools by which practical and everlasting principles and truth are impacted on the learners thereby developing their intellect. Moreover, through informal education, the African folks taught their children arts and craft according to their natural abilities and dispositions. This was targeted towards enabling individuals to be financially secured and to survive in society. Because of the richness of the African culture, an average African is industrious and shows a high level of shrewdness in artisanship.

The ancient African education system and indeed the African society fell apart when this old and inestimable ancient system was devilishly replaced by the colonial masters. Today, the modern education system represents an antithesis of the ancient system. This is the cause of the malady and malaise pervading and degrading African society. The white morality and culture propagated by the current education system is inconsistent to the African personality, cosmology and cosmogony. Little wonder then underdevelopment, vices, crime and other inhuman qualities violently and widely characterize modern life.

#### **4.7. Christian Education Ideology**

It is important to note that in discussing the Christian education ideology, our focus shall be on the catholic church. The reason for this is the fact that the catholic church is the mother of Christianity in terms of age and universality. Right from the inception of the Christian religion (Catholic Church), she has been in the forefront of propagating education by articulating eternally sound educational principles as underlying philosophy of her educational system. The Christian concept of education, is integral education-education transforms the whole being of man, moral, spiritual, intellectual, human and physical formation. For those who are trained to become pastors of souls, pastoral formation is added. In other words, education must transform the intellect, the soul, the mind, and the body of man in line with the sacred injunctions of the Sacred Scriptures. The underlying philosophy of the Christian education is to aid the human person to live godly life and to achieve discipline and perfection in line with the scriptural injunction, "Be ye holy as your heavenly father is holy". In Eluu's view the principal goal of Christian religious knowledge is to morally form individual and inculcate in them the disposition and yearning to do good at all times (Eluu, 2016).

Apart from this eschatological goal of Christian education, its temporal teleology is to help the individual learner to properly harness and use his/her abilities to be useful to oneself and the society at large. In view of this, the Christian education curriculum adopts or combines instructions in doctrines of the faith with western education (Uzomah & Isanbor, 2019). Consequently, in line with the universal mission of Christianity, the teleology of Christian education in Nigeria as revealed by Obilom is to morally and intellectually educate children; thereby stimulating in them the desire to be good Nigerian citizens (Obilom, 1989). To achieve these noble and wholesome objectives, the church established formal schools where subjects like languages, Science, Social Sciences, Liberal Art Painting and Dyeing, Cutting and Building of Metals, Christian Religious Studies, and other related subjects are included in the curriculum. Needless to mention that the spiritual aim of all of these are to guide learners on how to internalize virtues, live righteously in order to be prepared for a happy and glorious reunion with God in the afterlife. The temporal end is to equip the learner with mechanical and intellectual skills necessary for earning livelihood for themselves and society. Consequently, in the considered opinion of the church, education must transform the whole being of the human person integrally. The spiritual and the physical selves must be schooled harmoniously because the human person is a composite being; who apart from having a temporal essence also have spiritual essence.

#### **4.8. Arab Islamic Education Ideology**

Right from Islam's inception, Islam has always given premium to education. The basic thrust of the Islamic education is to teach the learner the tenet of living righteously here on earth in total submission to the will of Allah, with the ultimate aim of gaining eternal life with Allah in the next world. Learning discipline and instructions is fundamental to the Islamic education. This is leveraged on the belief that a child has the capacity or propensity to grow to become either angelic or satanic. Hence, to forestall the latter, discipline and instructions become essential and categorically imperative. With the Islamic educational principles or ideology, it is believed that a child is guided against satanic impulses and tendencies. The use of cane is permitted especially at the early stage. It is pertinent to begin this discourse on the contributions of Islamic culture and religion with a citation from Barea (2011):

The Arabs contributed immensely to the conservation of the knowledge of the ancient Greece and they were instrumental to the eventual transmission of this knowledge to the West through their numerous numbers of translations of works of mathematics, philosophy and medicine. The ancient cultures of India, Greece and Eastern Christianity nurtured the scientific knowledge of Islam that was initially underdeveloped. Later on, the entire Islamic heritage was reversed by the West.

From the beginning of Islam, it placed priority on education and as such Islam from inception is famous for its rich intellectual tradition. The over eight hundred (800) times education is mentioned in the Koran speaks eloquently of how fundamental education is to Islam. Moreover, the imperative of education is again and again emphases by several instructions in the Koran; one of such golden lines highlighting the expediency of education includes: "God will exalt those of you who believe and those who have knowledge to high degrees" (Islamic Education, 2021).

In view of the disadvantage of the non-existent of a hierarchy of faith in Islam, adherents were saddled with the duty of communicating the sayings and deeds (the so-called traditions) of the prophet. Notwithstanding the uniqueness of cultures, there was a common trend in terms of a central trend through which Islamic education was carried out. The most ancient common Islamic method was the direct oral lesson from the teacher. Subsequently, when instructions have been committed into writing, learners were required to engage in reading and writing (Barea, 2011). The Islamic educational system was divided into three stages or levels which include, Koranic School, The Secondary Level, and, The Advanced Level.

The Koranic school also known as the primary education is design for little children and teenagers. This system of education was meant for children from the age of six. The overriding philosophy that motivates the early education of children according to Abdul Tibawi was the belief that children's minds were like clean slates; hence, whatever is written on these clean slates (good or bad, right or wrong) might be difficult to erase

or replace such with new writings (Barea, 2011). So, the essence of early childhood education is to catch the child young by impacting values and virtues that may enable the child to become a good adult.

At this stage, children learn simple reading or slate, short statements from the Koran and a whole lot of memorization is involved. The curriculum of the elementary education was focused on studies on Koran and religious obligations which include prayers, ablutions, fasting, and rituals. Moreover, memorization of the Koran was the main attainment of this stage of education. Eventually, when learners are certified to have memorized a greater portion of the Holy Book, learners are then allowed to proceed to higher levels of education characterized by rigor and intense studies.

At the secondary level, literature, Arabic grammar, Arabic laws and revelations to Prophet Mohammad are taught. At this advanced stage of Islamic education, personal effort on the part of the individual learner to be a professional is solicited. A learner obtains admission under a particular teacher through whom he studies some classical Islamic writings and books. After a specific period of rigorous studies, the teacher examines the student, if satisfied; he issues a certificate which warrants the student to function as an Imam or prayer leader, Qadi or a judge. (Barea, 2011). Notwithstanding the absence of any regulation governing education of this level, there was this general guardianship of the Koran, because whatever that must be taught must be in line with the doctrines of faith of the Islamic religion.

The two cardinal object of Islamic education is moral and intellectual formation. Learners were taught on how to be decent in character and in appearance. They were trained on how to imbibe the discipline of praying unceasingly, and to practice charity and almsgiving. Chastity and modesty in character and appearance was the hallmark of Islamic moral education. The Islamic religion and culture contributed immensely to the development of education. However, the most positive loophole of traditional Islamic education is the fact that it is quit fanatical and too conservative in nature.

## **5. CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

The main contributions of this study to scientific community and future research include:

- i. Demonstrated that education is a key facet in an individual and works hand in hand with religion and culture.
- ii. It has given knowledge of the application of the three aspects in ancient Egypt, Jewish tradition, Greek and African.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

Sequel to the findings of this study, the researcher recommends as follows:

- i. Teachers and other critical stakeholders to education must be properly schooled on the essential and inextricable relationship between education and culture.
- ii. Critical stakeholders whose noble duty it is to plan and draw up educational curriculum should endeavour that cultural legacies and core religious values of the people constitute part of the contents of educational curriculum.
- iii. Curriculum studies should necessary include religious and cultural studies in order for such studies to be useful and worthwhile.
- iv. the history and development of education cannot be accurately (and properly so) conceptualized or established if the contributions of major world cultures and mainstream religions are not considered. Therefore, there is the need for further studies in this regard.
- v. Contemporary curriculum studies must pay raps attention on pragmatic ways of integrating culture into educational curriculum in order to make modern education existentially relevant to the social essences of man.
- vi. Philosophers and educationsits scholars are enjoined to carry out further studies on the cultural and religious essences of education.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

This study consists of an expository and hermeneutical/phenomenological analysis of the contributions of culture and religion to the development of particular and universal education. It critically ruminated on the religious/cultural perspectives of education. These approaches have in time infiltrated into the educational



ideologies of scholars and have in turn leveraged the educational systems of nations. Religion and culture hold inexorably influences, shapes people and the formation of their worldview; and culture plays a fundamental role in the education of people. Therefore, religion/culture has played a defining role in the course of human history, in the development and shaping of educational ideologies. As it were, the philosophies of education or theoretical frameworks that has produced thus far epitomize the prevailing culture in the climes where they were formulated. Consequently, education properly understood and conceptualized becomes the instantiation, exultation, transmission and perpetuation of the cumulated experiences and knowledge of people domiciled in culture (and religion) for the survival, flourishing (growth and development) and perpetuation of social life and society. Based on this tokenism, education is aptly the cornerstone of a blossoming society. Therefore, on the strength of the findings of this critical analysis, it is apropos to conclude that the history and development of education cannot be accurately and properly so, conceptualized or established if the contributions of major world cultures and mainstream religions are not considered.

## 8. FUNDING

This research paper received no internal or external funding.

## REFERENCE

1. Azuakor, P. O. (2019). Religious education and societal development: the Nigerian context. *World Journal of Education*, 9(4). 146. <https://doi.org/10.5430/wje.v9n4>.
2. Barea, F. S. (2011). Education and the muslim culture in the medieval arab Madrid. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences*. 15, 2869–2874.
3. Culture and Education. (2017). The Relationship Between Culture and Education, Retrieved from: [ipl.org\\_193819587169.pdf](http://ipl.org_193819587169.pdf)
4. Education and Culture. (2021). Study Lecture Notes. Retrieved 5 December, from <https://studylecturenates.com/>
5. Eluu, P. P. (2016). The role of religion in value education in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education*, 4(9). 72-76 (Special Issue).
6. Islamic Education. (2021). History of islamic education, aims and objectives of islamic education. Retrieved from: <http://education.stateuniversity.comEducationEncyclopedia>.
7. Nwaofor, cited in Uzomah, M. M. (2021). *Notes on Medieval Philosophy: Exploring the Dynamic Continuum of Philosophy and the Confluence of Faith and Reason*. Kaduna: All-Well Punishing and Printing Company.78.
8. Obilom, J. E. C. (1989). *Issues and trends on 6:3:3:4 religious education in Nigeria*. Jos: Government Press,15.
9. Offorma, G. C. (2016). Integrating components of culture in curriculum Planning. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 8(1) 1–8.
10. Samkange, W. & Samkange, C. (2021). Education and culture. 458. retrieved from [www.gjournals.org](http://www.gjournals.org)
11. Uzomah M. M. (2015). *Natural law as the basis of the human law: a philosophical appraisal*. Unpublished MA Thesis, Department of Philosophy, Ekiti State University Ado-Ekiti. 8.
12. Uzomah, M. M. (2018). *The concept of law: an ontological conceptualization of law*. Kafanchan: The Young Press,14.
13. Uzomah, M. M. (2021). *Notes on medieval philosophy: exploring the dynamic continuum of philosophy and the confluence of faith and reason*. Kaduna: All-Well Punishing and Printing Company, 8-78.
14. Uzomah, M. M., & Isanbor P. O., (2019). *Philosophies and theories of education*. Kaduna: Eizy Print and Publishing, vii-152.
15. Uzomah, M. M., & Isanbor, P. O. (2017). *Fundamental principles of philosophy and education*, Ekpoma: E-mesh Priting Press,76.

