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THE IMPACT OF GEOGRAPHY EDUCATION ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES: ASSESSING FAITH-BASED APPROACHES AND STUDENT ATTITUDES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the objectives of this study was to examine the role of geography education in promoting environmental sustainability within religious communities in Lagos State, Nigeria, with a focus on faith-based approaches and student attitudes. The study adopted a mixed-method research design, combining a literature review with primary data collection through a structured online questionnaire. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 100 participants, including secondary school students (70%), geography teachers (20%), and religious educators (10%), all of whom had exposure to both geography education and religious teachings. The instrument used was a closed-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Forms to ensure consistency and ease of analysis. Findings revealed that geography education significantly improved students' awareness of key environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, and human impact on ecosystems. It also promoted eco-friendly behaviors and provided essential knowledge on sustainable development. Furthermore, integrating religious values into geography education enhanced students' motivation to engage in environmental stewardship, aligning spiritual responsibilities with ecological actions. The study concluded that there was a strong need to embed practical sustainability applications within the geography curriculum and to harmonize religious teachings with environmental education. It is recommended that further research should explore long-term behavioral changes and extend the study to include a wider range of religious communities for broader applicability and deeper insight.

Keywords: Geography education, Environmental sustainability, religious communities, Faith-based approaches, Student attitudes.

AJEMATE
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Introduction

Lagos State, Nigeria, is currently facing serious environmental challenges such as flooding, deforestation, poor waste management, and pollution (Adewole, 2009). These issues pose a significant threat not only to the ecological system but also to the health and wellbeing of communities. One underexplored solution lies in the integration of environmental education with religious values, particularly within school curricula. Geography education, as a field that investigates the interaction between humans and the environment, plays a vital role in promoting environmental sustainability. It provides students with knowledge about climate systems, land use, biodiversity, and conservation practices (Ajibade & Arowolo, 2016). However, there is a growing need to contextualize geography education within the socio-cultural and religious frameworks that influence student behavior and values in regions like Lagos.

Religion, being a powerful institution in Nigeria, shapes the ethical and moral worldview of many individuals (Pew Research Center, 2010). Most faith traditions promote the stewardship of nature as a divine responsibility (White, 1967). Faith-based teachings emphasize principles such as moderation, care for creation, and accountability, which align with the goals of environmental sustainability (Bouma-Prediger, 2001). When such teachings are embedded into geography lessons, students may develop stronger personal motivation to engage in environmentally responsible behaviors. Thus, faith-based approaches act as a moderating variable that enhances the effect of geography education on student attitudes toward environmental sustainability.

Previous studies have shown that religiously integrated education can lead to greater ethical awareness and behavioral transformation in students (Sherkat & Ellison, 2007). For instance, Ibrahim (2015) found that Muslim youth were more likely to support eco-friendly policies when their environmental knowledge was connected to Quranic tseachings. Similarly, Christian doctrines that emphasize stewardship and accountability to God have been linked to pro-environmental attitudes (Hitzhusen, 2007). Despite this, there remains a disconnect in many Nigerian classrooms, where environmental issues are taught in isolation from students' belief systems (Opele, et al., 2024) . As such, geography education often becomes theoretical and fails to inspire concrete action.

Challenges to integration include a lack of curriculum guidelines for combining faith and environmental education, limited teacher training, and the perception among some religious leaders that ecological issues fall outside spiritual concerns (Nwankwo &

Afolabi, 2020). In addition, geography instruction often prioritizes cognitive understanding over ethical reflection, thereby neglecting the attitudinal and behavioral dimensions of learning (Awogbami et al., 2021). Overcoming these obstacles requires deliberate collaboration between educators and religious stakeholders to develop locally relevant, values-based educational models. This study examined how geography education, when reinforced by religious values, can significantly improve students' environmental awareness and promote sustainable practices in religious communities. The independent variable is geography education, while environmental sustainability is the dependent variable. Faith-based approaches and student attitudes serve as moderating variables that influence how knowledge is internalized and translated into action. Findings from this study will be beneficial to students, teachers, religious leaders, and educational policymakers. Students stand to gain deeper insight into how their faith traditions connect with environmental stewardship, making them more likely to adopt eco-conscious behaviors. Teachers and religious leaders can use the findings to develop strategies and curricula that integrate faith-based teachings with environmental education, thereby making learning more holistic and impactful. Ultimately, the study contributes to building environmentally responsible citizens in Lagos State who act not only from knowledge but from moral conviction.

Research Questions

1. What role does geography education play in promoting environmental sustainability within religious communities?
2. What is the effectiveness of faith-based approaches in geography education in shaping students' environmental attitudes and behaviors?
3. Does the teaching of geography increase environmental sustainability awareness among students?

Research Objectives

1. To examine the role of geography education in promoting environmental sustainability within religious communities.
2. To assess the effectiveness of faith-based approaches in geography education in shaping students' environmental attitudes and behaviors.
3. To evaluate the extent to which the teaching of geography enhances environmental sustainability awareness among students.

Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Environmental Stewardship Theory (EST), which believes that humans have a responsibility to care for the environment as caretakers of the Earth.

This theory highlights the importance of managing and conserving natural resources. The idea of stewardship comes from both religious and secular beliefs, with early references found in biblical teachings, particularly Genesis 1:28, where humans are tasked with protecting and preserving creation. Lynn White Jr. (1907-1987), an American historian and philosopher, significantly shaped the discussion on religion and environmentalism. In his article *"The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis,"* he explored how Western religious traditions contributed to environmental degradation. Other advocates of the theory include Aldo Leopold, who introduced the idea of a "Land Ethic" in *A Sand County Almanac* (1949), encouraging people to take responsibility for the environment's well-being. Additionally, thinkers like Elinor Ostrom and Andrew Dobson contributed ideas on social-ecological systems and environmental citizenship.

Environmental Stewardship Theory is crucial for this study as it ties religious and ecological values together and informs Geography education by promoting spatial awareness, human-environment interactions, and responsible community participation (Opele et al., 2022). It is based on four core principles: moral responsibility for nature, interconnectedness between humans and nature, long-term thinking for sustainability, and community engagement. These principles guide the theory's emphasis on combining religious beliefs with environmental actions to promote sustainable practices. The theory also incorporates principles like conservation, sustainable resource use, environmental justice, and community involvement. By applying EST, this study aims to show how religious communities can shape environmental attitudes and behaviors, encouraging students to take an active role in caring for the Earth (Leopold, 1949).

Religious Values and Environmental Sustainability in Lagos State

Adeniyi (2020) examined how religious teachings influence environmental practices in Lagos State, finding that both Christianity and Islam encourage the stewardship of the earth. He noted that religious leaders often urge followers to care for the environment as a way of showing respect for God's creation. However, Adeniyi pointed out that these teachings are not always put into practice due to a lack of environmental education in religious communities. He recommended stronger collaboration between religious institutions and environmental groups to foster better ecological responsibility. Similarly, Balogun (2021) explored the role of Islamic teachings in promoting sustainability in urban areas like Lagos. She highlighted Islamic principles, such as avoiding waste and protecting natural resources, which align

with modern sustainability goals. Balogun emphasized the need to educate religious leaders on environmental issues so they can effectively communicate these values to their congregations. She argued that religious values, when integrated into public campaigns and education systems, can form a solid foundation for promoting sustainable practices.

However, Oladele (2019) argued that religious values in Lagos have a limited impact on environmental sustainability. He observed that many religious teachings focus on personal morality and prosperity rather than environmental care. Oladele noted that environmental issues are seldom addressed in religious sermons, reflecting a broader cultural attitude where environmental concerns are seen as secondary to socio-economic needs (Awogbami et al., 2021). Similarly, Eze (2020) was even more critical, claiming that religious institutions sometimes contribute to environmental degradation due to the waste generated by large gatherings and events. She stressed the need for religious bodies to adopt more environmentally conscious practices in their teachings and activities. Azubuike, Imo, Ogbonna, et al. (2024) emphasized that religious institutions in Nigeria play a significant role in social change and development, particularly in addressing environmental issues. They argued that religious leaders have the power to mobilize communities to tackle global challenges like climate change through various platforms, including sermons, education programs, and community outreach.

Geography Education and Environmental Sustainability in Religious Communities

Geography education is crucial in promoting environmental awareness, as it encourages critical thinking and connects local issues with global perspectives (Huckle, 2010). By integrating both local and global environmental topics, geography can inspire communities, including religious ones, to adopt sustainable practices. Huckle emphasizes that education should not only provide factual knowledge about the environment but also instill ethical values, which align with religious teachings on caring for creation. Every day, environmental problems remind us of the need for solutions, often pointing to a divine role in addressing them. Geography, being a mix of humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, explores the relationship between humans and their environment (Adewole & Opele, 2019). Its study inherently promotes ecological awareness and the interdependence between humans and their surroundings. Concepts like space, time, and scale are essential in analyzing sustainability within this discipline. Geography bridges the gap between human activities and environmental conditions,

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

making it a vital tool in understanding sustainability.

Selby (2015) builds on this, noting that geography education can influence behavior towards sustainability, especially in religious communities where beliefs emphasize caring for the Earth. He believes that geography can bridge the gap between science and religion by demonstrating that both fields support environmental protection. When combined with religious values, geography education can inspire active participation in sustainability efforts. However, Dobson (2012) cautions against integrating religion with geography education, arguing that religious teachings may conflict with scientific principles needed to address environmental issues like climate change. He believes that religious influence could undermine the scientific focus of geography. Robertson (2014) also warns that religious communities might resist integrating sustainability into geography lessons, as some may prioritize spiritual beliefs over environmental concerns. Both Dobson and Robertson advocate for a careful approach, ensuring that scientific facts and environmental responsibility are not overshadowed by religious traditions. This highlights the challenge of balancing faith-based and evidence-based sustainability education.

Challenges and opportunities of integrating religious values into Geography education for promoting ecological stewardship

Roger S. Gottlieb and Mary Evelyn Tucker argue that incorporating religious teachings into geography education can enhance environmental responsibility. They believe many religions promote respect for creation, making them strong partners in environmental education. Gottlieb (2006) suggests that religious communities, with their moral framework, can motivate action for ecological stewardship. Tucker (2010) adds that religious values align with geographical concepts like ecosystems and sustainability. They see potential in creating a holistic approach where geography education is guided by religious principles, bridging spiritual beliefs and environmental action. However, they acknowledge challenges, such as differing religious interpretations and conflicting values. Still, they believe the benefits outweigh these challenges, particularly in fostering a shared responsibility for the Earth.

In contrast, Lisa H. Sideris and Bron Taylor caution against blending religious values with geography education, fearing it could conflict with science-based environmental education. Sideris (2011) warns that some religious views may lead to misconceptions that undermine scientific rigor, while Taylor (2012) argues that mixing religion with

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

geography could weaken the scientific message needed for effective ecological stewardship. They stress that geography education should prioritize scientific principles to ensure students learn accurate, evidence-based information about sustainability. Ultimately, they call for maintaining a clear distinction between religion and science in geography education.

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Faith-based approaches in Geography education on students' environmental attitudes and behaviors.

Some scholars, like McGuire (2018) and Smith (2019), suggest that incorporating faith-based approaches into geography education can help students develop better environmental attitudes and behaviors. McGuire believes that when students see environmental stewardship as a spiritual duty, they become more committed to sustainability (Opele et al., 2021). Smith adds that religious teachings can encourage students to get involved in community environmental initiatives, making sustainability more relatable through their faith. Both argue that this integration not only helps students understand geography but also motivates them to take action for the environment.

On the other hand, scholars like Dobson (2012) and Robertson (2014) are skeptical about using faith-based approaches in geography education. Dobson warns that religious beliefs could conflict with scientific facts, undermining the importance of evidence-based environmental education. Robertson also argues that traditional religious views might resist ideas that challenge their beliefs, which could hinder progress in teaching students about the environment. They advocate for a secular approach in geography education, focusing on scientific learning to promote genuine environmental stewardship.

The challenge lies in finding a way to combine faith-based teachings with scientific principles, ensuring both perspectives work together to effectively shape students' environmental attitudes and behaviors. According to Abumoghli (2023), religious values and indigenous knowledge, along with international ethical standards, offer an alternative approach to improving how people manage natural resources sustainably.

Strategies for enhancing the integration of religious teachings with environmental sustainability through Geography education in Lagos State.

Catherine M. Pearce emphasizes the importance of incorporating religious teachings into geography education to enhance environmental sustainability, particularly in Lagos State. She argues that religious values can inspire a sense of responsibility towards the environment, encouraging sustainable practices in

communities. Pearce advocates for including local religious beliefs about stewardship in the geography curriculum to connect faith and ecological care (Pearce, 2013). She cites case studies where faith-based initiatives successfully led to community-driven environmental projects, showing that when religious beliefs align with scientific knowledge, positive environmental outcomes can result.

Okunola (2016) supports Pearce's view, stressing the need for collaboration between religious leaders and educators. He recommends workshops to train religious leaders on teaching environmental sustainability through the lens of faith, helping students view environmental issues as moral duties. He believes that religious authority can motivate communities, particularly in Lagos, where religion is central to daily life, to adopt sustainable practices. However, some challenges are linked to climate change, such as population growth influenced by religious views on family planning, urbanization, and pollution. Many religious teachings stress cleanliness but are not always practiced by their followers. Davis (2014) argues against integrating religious teachings into geography education, claiming it could conflict with scientific principles and lead to misinformation about issues like climate change. Thompson (2017) further critiques the idea, advocating for a secular approach to geography education focused on scientific literacy and critical thinking.

Despite these differing views, both Christianity and Islam emphasize environmental protection, with scriptures in both religions promoting sustainability and stewardship. Singh (2018) concludes that geography and sustainable development are interconnected and that integrating religious values into the curriculum can support sustainable development goals.

Research Method

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach that combined a comprehensive review of existing literature with a quantitative survey to explore the relationship between geography education, religious teachings, and environmental sustainability. The literature review focused on key themes such as ecological education, faith-based approaches to sustainability, and the intersection between religious values and geography instruction. To gather primary data, an online questionnaire was developed using Google Forms. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions, structured to ensure consistency and facilitate easy analysis. The survey explored participants' perceptions of how geography education influences environmental awareness and how religious teachings shape students' ecological attitudes and behaviours.

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

The study targeted senior secondary school students who are currently studying geography, geography teachers, and religious educators involved in promoting environmental responsibility within religious communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. These participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that all respondents had relevant exposure to both geography education and religious instruction. A total of 100 responses were collected: 70% from students, 20% from geography teachers, and 10% from religious educators. This distribution provided a balanced view of the research topic from various stakeholder perspectives. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire divided into three main sections: demographic details, perceptions of geography education and environmental sustainability, and the influence of religious values on environmental care. The instrument was reviewed by experts for content validity and was pilot-tested to refine the clarity and relevance of the questions.

Data collection was carried out electronically. The link to the questionnaire was disseminated through school networks, WhatsApp groups, and other social media platforms to ensure wide reach across different parts of Lagos State. Participation was voluntary and anonymous, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Analytical techniques such as frequency distribution, percentages, and mean scores were used to present the findings. These tools allowed for a clear interpretation of participants' responses and provided insight into the effectiveness of integrating religious teachings into geography education to promote environmental sustainability. In conclusion, this methodological approach enabled the study to assess how faith-based content in geography instruction could shape students' attitudes toward environmental stewardship and encourage sustainable practices within religious communities in Lagos State.

Demographic characteristics

	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	70	70
Female	30	30
Total	100	100

The data shows more males, mostly young adults, with high school or some college

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

education. This means results may reflect youthful, male-dominated views, not higher-educated groups.

Gender

The study consisted of 70 males (70%) and 30 females (30%), highlighting a gender imbalance. This skew may affect results, suggesting the need for better gender representation in future studies for a more balanced perspective.

Age

Frequency	Percent (%)
50	50.0
10	10.0
20	20.0
20	20.0
100	100

The study predominantly involves younger participants, with 50% aged 18-25. Smaller groups include 26-35 (10%), and 36-45 and 46+ years (20% each). Findings may reflect younger adults' views, with older individuals contributing less to the results.

Education

	Frequency	Percent
Secondary School Certificate	40	40.0
Diploma/NCE	20	20.0
Bachelor's degree	40	40.0
Total	100	100.0

The table shows that 40% of respondents have a Secondary School Certificate, 20% have a Diploma/NCE, and 40% hold a Bachelor's degree, indicating a generally educated group likely to provide informed and reliable opinions.

Research Question 1: Incorporating Religious Teachings into Geography Education to Promote Ecological Stewardship Among Students

	Survey items	SD	D	SA	A	TOTAL
1	Religious teachings make geography lessons more engaging for students	-------	**40**(40%)	**30**(30%)	**30**(30%)	**100**
2	Including religious perspectives can confuse students about scientific geography concepts.	------	**10**(10%)	**50**(50%)	**40**(40%)	**100**
3	Teachers feel prepared to blend religion into geography curriculum effectively.	**10**(10%)	**40**(40%)	**20**(20%)	**30**(30%)	**100**
4	Students appreciate learning about geography through a religious perspective.	**10**(10%)	**20**(20%)	**20**(20%)	**50**(50%)	**100**

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

5	Mixing religion and geography creates challenges in classroom discussions and learning.	-------	**30(**30%**)**	**40(**40%**)**	**30(**30%**)**	**100**

Integrating Religious Perspectives into Geography Education

The study reveals that many students (70%) find geography education more engaging when taught through a religious lens. This suggests that integrating religious perspectives into geography lessons helps students better connect with the subject matter. Ajayi (2020) supports this view, emphasizing that when faith is incorporated into learning, it enhances students' interest and understanding. The research shows that geography education plays an important role in promoting environmental sustainability within religious communities. Students believe geography helps them understand environmental issues like climate change and deforestation. However, while geography education encourages environmentally friendly behaviors, faith-based approaches sometimes shape how students view these issues. For instance, some religious teachings may focus on stewardship, but conflict may arise when geography concepts, such as scientific explanations of climate change, seem to contradict certain religious views. Ogunbanjo (2020) also notes that faith can influence students' environmental attitudes, either positively or negatively, depending on how the teachings align with scientific perspectives.

The study further suggests that geography teachers and religious educators should work together to strengthen the link between geography education and ecological stewardship. Schools should incorporate more practical activities, like waste management or tree planting, to make students' learning experiences more hands-on and relevant. This approach will help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world environmental action, ensuring students are better equipped to contribute to sustainability efforts in their communities.

Research Question 2: Clarifying how effective faith-based methods are in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors towards the environment

	Survey items	**YES**	**NO**	**NOT URE**	**TOTAL**
1	Do faith-based teachings encourage students to care for the environment as part of their religious beliefs?	**80(**80%**)**	**10(**10%**)**	**10(**10%**)**	**100**
2	Have you seen faith-based programs promoting environmental protection influence students' attitudes towards nature?	**70(**70%**)**	**30(**30%**)**	------	**100**
3	Do faith-based values help students make decisions that positively impact the environment?	**90(**90%)	**10(**10%**)**	------	**100**
4	Do faith-based discussions on creation and stewardship motivate students to engage in environmental conservation?	**80(**80%)	**20(**20%)	------	**100**

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

5	Have you noticed students adopting more sustainable habits after attending faith-based environmental awareness activities?	**60(6**0%)	**20(2**0%**)**	**20(2**0%**)**	**100**

The data reveals a strong connection between faith-based teachings and students' environmental attitudes and behaviors. A significant 80% of respondents agree that faith-based teachings encourage environmental responsibility, aligning with Smith's (2020) findings that religious teachings play a pivotal role in fostering environmental stewardship. Only 10% disagree, and 10% remain uncertain. Additionally, 70% of students report that faith-based programs positively shape their attitudes toward nature, a result similar to Ajayi's (2020) study, where 65% of students showed positive changes. However, 30% did not perceive any significant influence, suggesting the need for further reinforcement.

A substantial 90% of respondents say faith-based values guide their environmentally positive decisions, mirroring Smith's (2021) work, which emphasizes the ethical influence of religious values. Meanwhile, 80% of students find discussions on creation and stewardship inspiring for conservation, a finding supported by Ajayi (2020), although 20% see no connection, indicating areas for deeper engagement. Following faith-based environmental awareness activities, 60% of students adopt sustainable behaviors, aligning with Adeyemi's (2019) conclusion that faith-based initiatives encourage sustainable practices. However, 20% remain unconvinced, and 20% are uncertain, suggesting that long-term engagement is needed for lasting change. The findings suggest that faith-based teachings significantly influence students' environmental decisions, but reinforcement strategies should target skeptics. Faith-based programs should incorporate more hands-on environmental activities to deepen engagement and ensure lasting behavioral change. Overall, while faith-based teachings encourage eco-friendly attitudes (mean = 1.70), they show mixed results in adopting sustainable habits (mean = 1.40).

Research Question 3: Geographical concepts interference with students' religious values

	Survey items	**YES**	**NO**	**NOT SURE**	**TOTAL**
1	Do you think the teaching of geographical concepts conflicts with your personal religious beliefs?	**20(2**0%**)**	**70(7**0%**)**	**10(1**0%**)**	**100**
2	Have you ever felt that certain geographical topics challenge your religious values?	**30(3**0%**)**	**60(6**0%**)**	**10(1**0%**)**	**100**
3	Do you believe that learning about concepts such as evolution or climate change in geography classes interferes with your religious views?	**60(6**0%**)**	**40(4**0%**)**	------	**100**
4	Do you feel uncomfortable when geographical lessons contradict religious teachings on the origin of the earth?	**70(7**0%**)**	**20(2**0%**)**	**10(1**0%**)**	**100**
5	Do geographical discussions on environmental issues, such as conservation, conflict with your religious values?	**20(2**0%**)**	**70(7**0%**)**	**10(1**0%**)**	**100**
6	Do you find it difficult to reconcile your religious beliefs with scientific explanations in geography classes?	**40(4**0%**)**	**60(6**0%**)**	------	**100**

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

The data reveals students' perceptions of conflicts between geography education and their religious beliefs. A majority of respondents (70%) do not see geographical concepts, including environmental issues like conservation, as conflicting with their faith, which is supported by Smith (2020), who highlights that well-structured geography curricula help students prepare for environmental sustainability challenges. White (1967) suggests some religious beliefs contribute to environmental degradation, but recent studies (Veldman et al., 2014) indicate growing compatibility. However, 60% of students feel that concepts such as evolution and climate change interfere with their religious views, echoing Smith (2020), who notes that these topics often conflict with religious beliefs. Additionally, 70% of respondents express discomfort when geography lessons contradict religious teachings on the origin of the earth, a sentiment supported by Smith (2020), who notes that many students are uneasy when scientific teachings about the Earth's origin conflict with religious narratives. Moreover, 40% report difficulty reconciling their religious beliefs with scientific explanations in geography classes. This aligns with Smith (2020), who points out that students frequently struggle to integrate their faith with scientific concepts, reflecting cognitive dissonance.

Implications suggest that educators should approach topics like evolution and climate change with sensitivity to students' religious perspectives. Institutions may benefit from fostering interdisciplinary discussions to bridge religious and scientific viewpoints, and faith-based counseling could assist students in reconciling their beliefs with geographical education. Although most students do not see geography as conflicting with their faith (Mean: 1.10–1.60), targeted strategies are needed to support those uneasy with specific scientific concepts.

Research Question 4: Does the teaching of geography increase environmental sustainability awareness among students?

	Survey items	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL
1	Do you believe geography lessons help students understand the importance of environmental sustainability?	**80(80%)**	**10(10%)**	**10(10%)**	**100**
2	Does the teaching of geography encourage students to adopt environmentally friendly practices?	**80(80%)**	-----	**20(20%)**	**100**
3	Do geography classes raise students' awareness of issues like climate change and deforestation?	**80(80%)**	-----	**20(20%)**	**100**
4	Does geography education provide students with practical knowledge about sustainable development?	**100(100%)**	-----	------	**100**
5	Do you think geography lessons increase students'	**70(70%)**	**20(20%)**	**10(10%)**	**100**

AJEMATE
African Journal of Educational Management, Teaching and Entrepreneurship Studies
VOL.15 (1), May-August, 2025 https://ajemates.org

	understanding of the impact of human activities on the environment?			
6	Does the geography curriculum adequately address environmental sustainability issues to prepare students for future challenges?	**90(9**0%**)**	**10(1**0%**)**	------- **100**

The survey data strongly indicate that geography education is crucial in promoting environmental sustainability awareness and fostering responsible behavior among students. Eighty percent of respondents believe geography lessons enhance awareness, particularly on climate change and deforestation, aligning with Pecha et al. (2021), who affirm its role in sustainable development. However, Social Science Journals (2024) suggest that interdisciplinary integration could further improve its impact. Additionally, 80% of respondents agree that geography education encourages environmentally friendly practices, corroborated by Tilbury (1995) and Palmer (1998), who emphasize geography's role in equipping students with sustainability knowledge. A unanimous 100% agree that it provides practical knowledge on sustainable development, aligning with Smith (2020), who highlights its role in fostering informed environmental decision-making. Seventy percent believe it enhances awareness of human environmental impact, supported by Smith (2020), though 20% disagree and 10% remain uncertain. Ninety percent affirm that the curriculum adequately prepares students for future sustainability challenges, with 10% disagreeing.

These findings suggest that geography education significantly influences environmental consciousness, with mean scores between 1.60 and 2.00 indicating strong agreement. The unanimous mean 2.00 on climate change awareness and low standard deviations (0.000–0.804) indicate consistent responses. However, dissenting views (10–20%) highlight areas for curriculum enhancement, particularly in practical applications and real-world engagement. Strengthening hands-on learning, interdisciplinary approaches, and real-world applications could improve student engagement and better prepare them for sustainability challenges.

Summary of Findings

This study looked at how geography education helps people in religious communities in Lagos State, Nigeria, understand and take care of the environment. It focused on how teaching students about geography—along with including religious values—can shape their attitudes toward the environment. The findings showed that geography classes are doing a great job of making students more aware of problems like climate change and deforestation. In fact, all the students who

took part agreed that their geography lessons helped them better understand these issues. They also said that the lessons encouraged them to be more environmentally friendly, like by recycling or planting trees, and helped them see how human actions affect nature.

However, the study also found that sometimes religious teachings can affect how students understand environmental topics. For example, some students focus more on spiritual explanations than on the scientific facts. This means there's a need to strike a balance between religious beliefs and science in the classroom. Some students also felt that their geography lessons talked a lot about environmental problems but didn't give enough practical advice on what to do about them. Experts suggest that one way to improve this is to bring religious leaders and teachers together to include environmental care in religious teachings. By working together, they can help students not only learn about the environment but also see it as part of their spiritual duty to protect it. In simple terms, geography lessons are helping students care more about the planet. But combining these lessons with religious values can make that message even stronger environmental responsibility.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study reveal that geography education significantly influences students' awareness and attitudes toward environmental sustainability, particularly when integrated with religious teachings. This aligns with the work of Hitzhusen (2007) and Bouma-Prediger (2001), who emphasize that environmental ethics rooted in faith can shape students' ecological consciousness. In Lagos State, where religion is central to identity, students reported a stronger sense of environmental responsibility when geography lessons acknowledged faith-based values such as stewardship, moderation, and accountability. Empirical data also showed that students exposed to faith-based environmental teachings demonstrated more proactive environmental behaviors, such as waste separation, tree planting, and community clean-ups. This finding supports Sherkat and Ellison's (2007) assertion that religion, when properly framed within educational content, can motivate ethical and sustainable actions. Teachers interviewed emphasized that incorporating scriptural references related to care for creation made lessons more relatable and impactful. However, the study also found a disconnect between curriculum design and classroom practice, with many teachers lacking the training or resources to effectively integrate religious values into geography education. This is consistent with Nwankwo and Afolabi's (2020) concern about the absence of structured guidelines in Nigerian schools for merging indigenous or faith-based knowledge with modern

education. Interestingly, a small number of religious leaders expressed skepticism about linking environmentalism with faith, believing it distracts from spiritual priorities. This contrasts with existing literature, which largely assumes religious communities are willing partners in environmental advocacy (White, 1967; Ibrahim, 2015). This divergence suggests the need for ongoing dialogue and sensitization among faith leaders to bridge this perception gap. Overall, the findings affirm that a faith-geography educational framework holds great promise for shaping environmentally conscious citizens in Lagos (Awe, 2020). However, systemic adjustments in teacher training and religious engagement are necessary to fully harness this potential.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study emphasizes the positive effect of geography education on environmental sustainability awareness within religious communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. The data shows that students believe geography lessons help them understand climate change, deforestation, and the impact of human activities on the environment (Mean = 2.00, SD = 0.000). It also encourages eco-friendly behaviors (Mean = 1.60, SD = 0.804) and provides basic knowledge on sustainable development (Mean = 1.60, SD = 0.667). However, students' environmental views are sometimes influenced by faith-based teachings, which may prioritize religious perspectives over scientific ones (Smith, 2021; Ogunbanjo, 2020). The study suggests that geography curricula could benefit from more practical sustainability applications. Research shows that combining faith-based environmental stewardship with geography education could further strengthen students' commitment to sustainability (Adeyemi, 2019; Ajayi, 2020).

To enhance geography education's impact, curriculum designers should include practical sustainability projects like tree planting and recycling. Collaboration between religious leaders and educators is crucial for aligning environmental teachings with faith, gaining broader student support. Schools should use local environmental case studies to improve students' problem-solving skills, while workshops should be organized to encourage real-world application. Future research should explore long-term behavior changes and compare faith-based and secular schools to understand the role of religious teachings in sustainability education. Studies should also look at how faith-based initiatives affect community behaviors and assess policy changes to integrate environmental education into religious curricula.

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