



PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS AND MORAL EDUCATION (R.M.E.) IN CONTEMPORARY GHANA

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Abstract:

Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) occupies a central place within Ghana's educational and socio-cultural landscape, functioning as a key medium for the transmission of ethical values, religious literacy, and civic responsibility. This study critically examines the prospects and challenges of R.M.E. in contemporary Ghana, situating the subject within broader philosophical, educational, and socio-religious transformations. Drawing on qualitative interpretive analysis informed by African philosophical traditions—particularly Ubuntu—the study argues that R.M.E. plays a significant role in moral formation, social cohesion, and interfaith understanding across both formal and informal contexts. The findings indicate that R.M.E. remains an essential instrument for character formation and the reinforcement of communal values rooted in African moral thought. However, the subject continues to face substantial challenges, including inadequate teacher preparation, limited curriculum development, tensions arising from religious pluralism, the pervasive influence of digital media, and systemic pressures associated with educational reforms such as the Free SHS initiative. While R.M.E. demonstrates strong potential for fostering ethical citizenship and national development, its effectiveness is undermined by inconsistencies in implementation and rapidly evolving socio-cultural dynamics. By integrating theoretical perspectives with empirical insights, the study advocates for a re-imagining of R.M.E. that aligns with contemporary realities while remaining grounded in indigenous ethical frameworks. The research contributes to academic discourse by bridging African philosophy, religious literacy, and educational policy, offering a nuanced understanding of how R.M.E. can be repositioned as a transformative force within Ghana's educational system.

Keywords: African philosophy; communal ethics; Ghana; moral education; religious education; religious pluralism

1. Introduction

Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in Ghana extends far beyond its function as a conventional school subject; it constitutes a foundational pillar of the nation's moral and cultural identity. Rooted deeply in indigenous African value systems and subsequently shaped by colonial and missionary influences, R.M.E. has evolved into a hybrid discipline that integrates religious instruction with ethical education. In a society such as Ghana, where religious pluralism is both a defining feature and a potential source of social

tension, R.M.E. plays a pivotal role in fostering tolerance, moral responsibility, and national cohesion.

The Ghanaian educational system recognizes moral formation as an essential component of holistic development. This recognition is reflected in curriculum frameworks that position R.M.E. as a core subject within basic education. However, contemporary educational realities—characterized by globalization, technological advancement, and policy-driven reforms—have introduced significant challenges to the effective teaching and learning of R.M.E. For instance, the implementation of the Free Senior High School (Free SHS) policy has expanded access to education while simultaneously placing considerable strain on resources, teacher capacity, instructional materials, and curriculum delivery (Acquah *et al.*, 2024; Ameko *et al.*, 2025).

At the same time, Ghana's socio-religious landscape is undergoing a profound transformation. The increasing prominence of Pentecostal movements, the enduring presence of Islamic traditions, and the resilience of African Indigenous Religions contribute to a complex religious environment that shapes students' identities and worldviews (Haynes, 2024; Okyerefo, 2019). Within this dynamic context, R.M.E. is expected to navigate intricate interfaith relationships while promoting shared ethical values.

Philosophically, R.M.E. in Ghana is grounded in African conceptions of personhood and morality. Scholars such as Mbiti (1989), Gyekye (1995), and Menkiti (2004) emphasize the communal nature of human existence, wherein the individual is defined through relationships with others. This relational ontology is further articulated through Ubuntu philosophy, which underscores interconnectedness and the ethical imperative of collective well-being (Ramose, 2002; Metz, 2017). These philosophical foundations provide a normative framework for understanding the role of R.M.E. in shaping moral character and socially responsible behavior.

Despite its significance, R.M.E. faces critical challenges that raise questions about its relevance and effectiveness in contemporary Ghana. Issues such as inadequate pedagogical approaches, insufficient teacher training, and the influence of digital media on students' moral perceptions complicate the delivery of the subject (Boafo *et al.*, 2024; Adasi, 2025). Additionally, tensions between religious inclusivity and doctrinal particularism present ongoing difficulties for educators seeking to promote interfaith harmony.

This study, therefore, seeks to critically interrogate these dynamics by examining both the prospects and challenges of R.M.E. in Ghana. By integrating theoretical insights with practical realities, the study aims to reposition R.M.E. within the context of a rapidly evolving socio-cultural environment, contributing to broader discussions on education, ethics, and social transformation in Africa.

1.2 Explanation of Terminologies

Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in the Ghanaian context refers to an academic discipline designed to impart knowledge of religious traditions alongside ethical

principles that guide human behavior. It encompasses the study of Christianity, Islam, and African Indigenous Religions, with a strong emphasis on moral values such as honesty, respect, responsibility, tolerance, and integrity. Importantly, R.M.E. is not intended to promote any particular religion but rather to foster understanding, ethical awareness, and responsible citizenship.

Religious pluralism denotes the coexistence and interaction of multiple religious traditions within a society. In Ghana, this includes the dynamic relationship among Christianity, Islam, and indigenous belief systems. While religious pluralism provides opportunities for dialogue and mutual enrichment, it also presents challenges related to identity, exclusivity, and tolerance (Konadu *et al.*).

Moral education refers to the process of developing individuals' capacity to distinguish between right and wrong and to act in accordance with ethical principles. Within African contexts, moral education is deeply embedded in communal life and is transmitted through socialization, cultural practices, religious observances, and formal education (Ikuenobe, 2016).

Ubuntu is a central concept in this study. It is an African philosophical framework that emphasizes interconnectedness, shared humanity, and communal responsibility. Often expressed through the phrase "I am because we are," Ubuntu highlights the relational dimension of human existence and provides a moral lens for understanding human interactions (Shutte, 2001; Tutu, 1999).

Contemporary Ghana refers to the current socio-cultural and educational context characterized by globalization, technological advancement, policy reforms, and evolving religious dynamics. These factors significantly influence the experiences and challenges associated with R.M.E.

Finally, *prospects* in this study refer to the opportunities and potential benefits associated with R.M.E., while *challenges* denote the obstacles and limitations that hinder its effectiveness. Together, these concepts provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing the present condition and future direction of R.M.E. in Ghana.

1.3 Motivation and Gap in Literature

This study is motivated by the recognition that, although Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) is widely regarded as essential in Ghana, there is a lack of comprehensive analysis that brings together its philosophical, pedagogical, and socio-cultural dimensions. Existing research tends to focus on isolated areas such as curriculum design, teaching methods, or student outcomes, without fully addressing broader ethical and theoretical concerns. As a result, the complex relationship between R.M.E., religious pluralism, and moral development remains insufficiently explored.

In addition, African philosophical perspectives—particularly those emphasizing communal values and shared humanity—are not adequately integrated into discussions of R.M.E., despite their strong relevance to Ghanaian society. Contemporary influences such as digital media and globalization also present new challenges, shaping religious beliefs and moral behavior in ways that are not fully examined within current literature.

Furthermore, while major educational reforms have improved access to schooling, their specific effects on moral and religious education have not been critically assessed.

This study, therefore, seeks to fill these gaps by offering a holistic and integrative analysis of R.M.E., combining theoretical insight with practical and contextual understanding in contemporary Ghana.

1.4 Focus and Novelty of the Study

The primary focus of this study is to examine the prospects and challenges of R.M.E. in contemporary Ghana through the lens of African philosophy, with particular emphasis on Ubuntu. Unlike previous studies that adopt narrow or fragmented approaches, this research integrates multiple dimensions—philosophical, educational, socio-cultural, and technological—to provide a comprehensive analysis.

The novelty of the study lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which bridges African philosophical thought with educational practice. By employing Ubuntu as a theoretical framework, the research offers fresh insights into how R.M.E. can be re-envisioned as a tool for fostering relational ethics, social cohesion, and moral transformation.

Additionally, the study addresses contemporary issues such as digital media influence, religious pluralism, and policy reforms, making it both timely and contextually relevant. It also foregrounds the lived experiences of individuals within the educational system, thereby grounding theoretical analysis in practical realities.

Ultimately, this study contributes to academic scholarship and policy discourse by presenting a nuanced, context-sensitive understanding of R.M.E. in Ghana. It provides a foundation for future research and underscores the need for a holistic and culturally informed approach to religious and moral education.

2. Statement of the Problem

Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in Ghana is widely regarded as a critical instrument for inculcating ethical values, fostering social cohesion, and promoting responsible citizenship. Despite its acknowledged importance, the subject continues to face significant challenges that undermine its effectiveness in achieving these objectives. Both the broader educational landscape and the specific teaching and learning processes of R.M.E. are increasingly complicated by evolving socio-cultural dynamics, particularly the rapid growth of religious pluralism and the pervasive influence of digital media in Ghana.

A central concern is the apparent misalignment between the intended goals of R.M.E. and its practical outcomes. While the curriculum emphasizes moral development and interreligious understanding, evidence suggests that students are often unable to embody these values in practice, thereby raising questions about the effectiveness of instructional methods and content delivery (Boafo *et al.*, 2024; Tawiah *et al.*, 2025). This

discrepancy indicates that the subject may not be adequately addressing the moral and ethical challenges faced by learners in contemporary society.

Another critical issue is teacher preparedness. Many educators lack sufficient training and the necessary competencies to effectively teach R.M.E. within a religiously diverse and rapidly changing environment. This limitation constrains their ability to facilitate inclusive, critical, and reflective discussions on sensitive religious and moral issues (Acquah, 2025). Consequently, there is a risk that R.M.E. becomes overly doctrinal or superficially delivered, rather than serving as a platform for meaningful ethical engagement.

The increasing influence of digital media further complicates the problem. Students are exposed to a wide range of religious narratives online, many of which conflict with the principles and content of R.M.E. (Adasi, 2025; Cheong, 2021). The absence of digital literacy as a core component of R.M.E. exacerbates this challenge, leaving learners inadequately equipped to critically evaluate online religious content.

In addition, educational reforms such as the Free SHS initiative have introduced structural constraints, including overcrowded classrooms and insufficient resources, which hinder effective teaching and learning (Ameko *et al.*, 2025). These systemic pressures not only affect R.M.E. but also undermine the broader goal of delivering holistic education.

Given these challenges, there is an urgent need for a comprehensive and critical examination of R.M.E. in contemporary Ghana. This study seeks to address this need by exploring both the prospects and challenges of the subject, with the aim of identifying strategies for enhancing its relevance and effectiveness.

3. Objectives of the Study

The overarching objective of this study is to critically analyze the prospects and challenges of Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) within the context of contemporary Ghana, a society undergoing significant socio-cultural and educational transformation.

The specific objectives are to:

- Assess the impact of R.M.E. on moral education and ethical consciousness among Ghanaian students.
- Examine the influence of religious pluralism on the teaching and learning of R.M.E.
- Analyze how teacher competence affects the effectiveness of pedagogical practices in R.M.E.
- Investigate the impact of digital media on religious and moral education in Ghana.
- Evaluate the implications of educational policies, particularly the Free SHS initiative, on the delivery of R.M.E.
- Explore the relevance of African philosophical frameworks, especially Ubuntu, in enhancing the societal value of R.M.E.

4. Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

- How does Religious and Moral Education facilitate or hinder the development of moral values and ethical behavior among students in Ghana?
- What impact does religious pluralism have on the content and delivery of R.M.E.?
- To what extent do teacher competence and instructional methods influence the effectiveness of R.M.E.?
- How does digital media shape students' understanding of religion and morality?
- What implications does the Free SHS policy have for the teaching and learning of R.M.E.?
- How can Ubuntu philosophy be applied to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of R.M.E. in Ghana?

5. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in an interpretive paradigm, aimed at understanding the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals engaged in Religious and Moral Education in Ghana. The qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena such as moral development, religious interaction, and educational practice, as it allows for in-depth analysis of meanings and interpretations.

5.1 Research Design

The study employs a phenomenological approach, focusing on participants' lived experiences and interpretations of R.M.E. in contemporary Ghana. This design enables the researcher to capture the subjective realities of teachers, students, and religious stakeholders over a six-month period, thereby providing rich insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with the subject.

5.2 Data Collection Methods

Data were collected through a combination of semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. These methods facilitated open and flexible engagement, allowing participants to express their perspectives on various aspects of R.M.E., including its relevance, challenges, and impact.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure representation from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christianity, Islam, and African Indigenous Religions. This diversity was essential for capturing the dynamics of religious pluralism in Ghana.

5.3 Data Analysis

The collected qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved identifying, coding, and categorizing patterns and themes within the data. The process enabled the researcher to systematically interpret participants' responses and relate them to the study's objectives and theoretical framework.

5.4 Theoretical Orientation

The study is anchored in Ubuntu philosophy as its primary theoretical framework. Ubuntu emphasizes relationality, shared humanity, and communal responsibility, offering a valuable lens for analyzing moral education and interreligious engagement (Ramose, 2002; Metz, 2017). This framework is complemented by insights from African communalism and moral theory, which highlight the importance of social context in shaping ethical behavior (Ikuenobe, 2016).

5.5 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study and provided informed consent prior to participation. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and participants were given the right to withdraw from the study at any stage. The study adhered to established research ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity, respect, and protection of participants.

6. Literature Review / Theoretical Framework

6.1 Conceptualizing Religious and Moral Education in Ghana

Religious and Moral Education in Ghana has been shaped by both indigenous African traditions and external influences, particularly Christianity and Islam. The subject is designed to promote ethical values and religious understanding, reflecting the nation's commitment to moral and civic education. Scholars argue that R.M.E. plays a vital role in nation-building by fostering responsible citizenship, social participation, and cohesion (Bansah, 2018; Pobee, 2018).

However, the evolving socio-cultural environment presents new challenges. The increasing diversity of religious beliefs necessitates a more inclusive and dialogical approach to teaching—one that moves beyond doctrinal instruction and emphasizes mutual understanding and respect (Konadu *et al.*, 2026).

6.2 African Philosophy and Moral Formation

African philosophical thought provides a robust foundation for understanding moral education. Central to this tradition is the concept of communalism, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of individuals within a community. Scholars such as Mbiti (1989) and Gyekye (1995) argue that morality in African societies is deeply rooted in social relationships and communal values.

Menkiti (2004) further develops this perspective by asserting that individuals attain full personhood through participation in communal life. This underscores the importance of socialization and collective responsibility in moral development.

Ubuntu philosophy builds upon these ideas by emphasizing relational ethics and shared humanity. According to Ramose (2002) and Shutte (2001), Ubuntu is not merely a moral principle but a way of life that prioritizes compassion, empathy, and mutual respect. Metz (2017) extends this framework by articulating a relational moral theory that highlights the intrinsic value of harmonious relationships.

6.3 Ubuntu as a Theoretical Framework for R.M.E.

Ubuntu provides a compelling framework for rethinking R.M.E. in contemporary Ghana. Its emphasis on relationality and communal well-being aligns closely with the objectives of moral education, particularly within a context of religious diversity.

Scholars such as Louw (2010) and Oduor (2021) argue that Ubuntu offers a foundation for engaging religious differences constructively and inclusively. By prioritizing shared humanity over doctrinal distinctions, Ubuntu promotes dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect.

Moreover, the successful application of Ubuntu in fields such as governance and social work demonstrates its relevance and adaptability (Asamoah & Yeboah-Assiamah, 2019; Udah *et al.*, 2025). These insights suggest that Ubuntu can be effectively integrated into educational practice, particularly in the teaching of R.M.E.

6.4 Religious Pluralism and Interfaith Dynamics

Ghana's religious landscape is characterized by a high degree of pluralism, with Christianity, Islam, and African Indigenous Religions coexisting within the same social space. This diversity presents both opportunities and challenges for R.M.E.

On one hand, religious pluralism provides a rich context for dialogue, learning, and mutual understanding. On the other hand, it can lead to tensions and misunderstandings, particularly when religious differences are framed in exclusivist terms (Haynes, 2023). Although interfaith relations in Ghana are generally peaceful, instances of conflict do occur, often driven by doctrinal differences and competition for influence (Konadu *et al.*, 2024).

R.M.E. has a critical role to play in mediating these dynamics by promoting tolerance and understanding. However, achieving this requires a curriculum and pedagogy that are sensitive to the complexities of religious diversity.

6.5 Digital Media and Religious Education

The rise of digital media has significantly transformed how individuals engage with religion. Online platforms provide access to diverse religious content, enabling individuals to explore different beliefs and practices. However, they also facilitate the spread of misinformation and competing narratives.

Scholars such as Campbell (2017) and Hoover (2019) highlight the growing influence of digital media on religious authority and practice. In the Ghanaian context, Adasi (2025) observes that digital communication has become a major force shaping religious discourse.

For R.M.E., this presents both opportunities and challenges. While digital media can enhance learning and promote interfaith understanding, it also necessitates equipping students with the skills to critically evaluate online content.

7. Results / Findings

This section presents the qualitative data generated through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The aim is to preserve the richness, depth, and diversity of participants' experiences while maintaining the authenticity of their voices. The responses are organized into thematic clusters aligned with the research questions.

7.1 Views About R.M.E. and Moral Development

Participants consistently affirmed the significance of R.M.E. in fostering moral consciousness, albeit with varying perceptions of its effectiveness.

"R.M.E. is the only subject where students learn how to behave as human beings, and not just how to pass exams." (Teacher A)

"It helps us understand values like respect, obedience, honesty. Without that, school would not be about books; it would be nothing." (Student 1)

"Moral upbringing is very important in Ghanaian society, and R.M.E. supports what is taught by parents and communities." (Religious Leader 1)

However, deeper reflections revealed tensions between moral knowledge and moral practice:

"Students learn moral principles; they can recite them, but by looking at their behavior, they don't always show what they have learned." (Teacher B)

"We learn not to lie, but students are cheating in tests. So, I do question whether the teaching is truly effective." (Student 2)

"Moral education has to transcend the classroom. Students are confused if society itself does not model these values." (School Administrator)

7.2 Religious Diversity and Classroom Practice

The data reveal a nuanced understanding of how religious diversity shapes classroom engagement.

“Students learn about a variety of religious beliefs and practices, which makes the classroom richer.” (Teacher C)

“I knew little about Islam until R.M.E. classes. Now I understand my Muslim friends better.” (Student 3)

At the same time, participants acknowledged both subtle and overt tensions:

“Sometimes students say that their religion is superior, and that becomes uncomfortable.” (Teacher D)

“Discussions can turn into arguments, especially when the topic is controversial.” (Student 4)

“The curriculum aims at neutrality, but teachers’ personal beliefs sometimes influence how lessons are taught.” (Curriculum Officer)

A religious stakeholder further emphasized:

“True religious education should promote coexistence, not competition. Yet achieving that balance is difficult.”

7.3 Teacher Competency and Pedagogical Difficulties

Participants provided detailed insights into pedagogical practices within R.M.E. classrooms.

“Most teachers’ training is general and not specifically oriented toward religious studies.” (Teacher E)

“When students ask deep theological questions, some teachers avoid them because they lack confidence.” (Student 5)

“Teaching R.M.E. requires sensitivity and openness, but not all teachers are prepared for that.” (Curriculum Officer)

Pedagogical limitations were also highlighted:

"Lessons are often teacher-centered with little room for discussion or critical thinking." (Student 6)

"Interactive methods are needed—debates, storytelling, and real-life examples." (Teacher F)

"Assessment focuses on memorization rather than moral reasoning." (School Administrator)

7.4 Influence of Digital Media

Digital media emerged as a dominant yet complex influence on religious understanding.

"Many religious teachings students encounter online contradict one another." (Teacher G)

"On social media, there are multiple interpretations of the same issue, which becomes confusing." (Student 7)

"Some online preachers spread messages that are extreme or misleading." (Religious Leader 2)

Nevertheless, participants also identified positive dimensions:

"If properly guided, digital platforms can enhance teaching and learning." (Teacher H)

"I learn a lot about religion on YouTube, but I am not always sure which sources are reliable." (Student 8)

7.5 Structural and Policy Constraints

Participants highlighted systemic barriers affecting the delivery of R.M.E.

"Overcrowded classrooms make meaningful discussions difficult." (Teacher I)

"R.M.E. is sometimes treated as less important compared to subjects like Mathematics and Science." (Teacher J)

"There is insufficient time to adequately cover all topics." (Curriculum Officer)

"The Free SHS policy is beneficial, but resources are stretched too thin." (School Administrator)

7.6 Ubuntu and Indigenous Moral Frameworks

Ubuntu-related values were implicitly evident in participants' responses, even when not explicitly named.

"We are taught to care for one another as part of our culture. R.M.E. should emphasize this more." (Teacher K)

"We do not live in isolation; we depend on each other."

"If R.M.E. focuses on unity and shared humanity, it can reduce religious conflict."
(Religious Leader 3).

7.7 Thematic Emergence Across Data

Several cross-cutting themes emerged from the data:

- Strong recognition of the moral importance of R.M.E.,
- A persistent gap between moral knowledge and ethical behavior,
- The dual nature of religious pluralism as both opportunity and tension,
- Significant challenges related to teacher competence,
- The disruptive yet transformative influence of digital media,
- Structural constraints affecting implementation,
- The implicit relevance of Ubuntu ethics.

8. Analysis and Discussion

The findings generate critical insights that reveal the multi-layered complexities surrounding the practice and implications of R.M.E. in Ghana.

8.1 Moral Formation: Instruction versus Transformation

The data suggest that R.M.E. is relatively effective at the level of moral instruction but less effective in achieving moral transformation. While students demonstrate awareness of ethical principles, they often struggle to translate these into consistent behavior. This aligns with Tawiah *et al.* (2025), who argue that moral education in Ghana frequently remains theoretical rather than practical.

From an African philosophical perspective, morality is not merely cognitive but relational and performative (Mbiti, 1989; Menkiti, 2004). The observed gap, therefore, reflects a misalignment between curriculum design and students' lived realities.

8.2 Religious Pluralism: Dialogue or Division?

The findings highlight the ambivalent nature of religious pluralism. While it provides opportunities for interfaith learning, it can also generate tensions rooted in exclusivist beliefs. This reflects broader societal dynamics, where coexistence often intersects with competition (Haynes, 2023).

Transforming pluralism into an active pedagogical resource remains a key challenge. Ubuntu philosophy offers a pathway by emphasizing shared humanity over doctrinal differences (Louw, 2010; Metz, 2017). However, this requires deliberate curriculum design and skilled facilitation.

8.3 Pedagogical Deficits and Teacher Agency

Teacher competence emerges as both a technical and structural concern. The dominance of teacher-centered approaches reflects broader educational cultures that prioritize authority over dialogue.

Acquah (2025) emphasizes that effective R.M.E. teaching requires both religious literacy and multicultural competence. The findings extend this argument by demonstrating that insufficiently prepared teachers may unintentionally reinforce biases or avoid critical engagement. This necessitates a reconceptualization of teacher agency—from content delivery to the facilitation of complex moral and religious discourse.

8.4 Digital Media and Epistemic Authority

The influence of digital media introduces what can be described as a “crisis of epistemic authority.” Traditional sources of religious knowledge—teachers, textbooks, and religious leaders—are increasingly challenged by decentralized online platforms.

As noted by Cheong (2021) and Hoover (2019), digital media democratizes religious discourse while simultaneously destabilizing it. The findings confirm that students often navigate fragmented information without adequate critical tools. This underscores the need to integrate digital literacy into R.M.E., enabling learners to evaluate sources and construct informed ethical perspectives.

8.5 Structural Constraints and Policy Limitations

The Free SHS policy presents a paradox: while it enhances access, it constrains quality. Structural issues such as overcrowding and limited resources disproportionately affect subjects like R.M.E., which rely heavily on interaction and reflection.

This supports Nyadzi *et al.* (2024), who argue that educational reforms must be assessed not only in terms of access but also in terms of pedagogical impact. Without adequate infrastructure, even well-designed curricula cannot achieve their intended outcomes.

8.6 Ubuntu as Praxis, Not Theory

One of the most significant insights is the implicit presence of Ubuntu values in participants’ responses. This suggests that Ubuntu is not merely theoretical but a lived ethical reality.

However, its absence from formal curriculum structures represents a missed opportunity. Integrating Ubuntu into R.M.E. would enhance cultural relevance and provide a practical framework for addressing moral and social challenges (Ramose, 2002; Metz, 2017).

8.7 Towards an Integrated Model of R.M.E.

The findings point to the need for an integrated model of R.M.E. that incorporates:

- Philosophical grounding (Ubuntu and African ethics),
- Pedagogical innovation (dialogical and experiential learning),
- Digital integration (critical media literacy),
- Structural support (policy alignment and resource provision).

Such a model would reposition R.M.E. from a peripheral subject to a central component of holistic education in Ghana.

Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the challenges facing R.M.E. are systemic, interconnected, and deeply embedded within broader socio-cultural and institutional frameworks. Addressing these challenges requires a paradigm shift—from viewing R.M.E. merely as a subject to be taught, to recognizing it as a dynamic process of ethical formation embedded within the wider fabric of society. Only through such transformation can R.M.E. realize its full potential as a vehicle for moral development, social cohesion, and national transformation in contemporary Ghana.

9. Implications of the Study

The implications of this study span education, policy, teacher development, and broader socio-cultural transformation in Ghana. It highlights the need to reconceptualize Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) from a content-driven subject into a praxis-oriented discipline that integrates knowledge with lived ethical experience. The persistent gap between moral instruction and actual behavior reveals the limitations of traditional teaching methods based on rote learning and doctrinal transmission. More dialogical, reflective, and participatory approaches are therefore required to develop learners as active moral agents.

From a curricular perspective, the study emphasizes the importance of incorporating indigenous philosophical traditions, particularly those centered on communal values and shared humanity. Such integration would enhance cultural relevance and provide a stronger ethical foundation rooted in social responsibility and human dignity. This calls for a shift away from dominant external frameworks toward approaches that better reflect learners' lived realities.

At the policy level, the study identifies structural challenges within educational reforms, especially those that have expanded access but strained resources. Overcrowded classrooms, limited instructional time, and inadequate materials undermine the effectiveness of subjects like R.M.E., which depend on interaction and critical engagement. This underscores the need for a balanced focus on both access and quality. Teacher preparation is another key concern. Many educators lack the skills to manage religious diversity and facilitate meaningful discussions on moral issues, making continuous professional development essential. Additionally, the growing influence of digital media requires R.M.E. to include digital literacy, enabling students to critically engage with diverse online content.

Ultimately, R.M.E. holds strong potential to promote social cohesion and interfaith harmony, but only if delivered inclusively and adapted to contemporary realities through collective effort.

10. Conclusion

This study has provided a critical examination of the prospects and challenges of Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in contemporary Ghana, situating the discussion within a complex interplay of educational reform, religious pluralism, and socio-cultural transformation. The findings affirm that R.M.E. remains a vital component of Ghana's educational system, with significant potential to shape moral consciousness, foster ethical behavior, and strengthen national unity.

Drawing on qualitative insights and grounded in African philosophical traditions—particularly Ubuntu—the study demonstrates that R.M.E. aligns closely with indigenous conceptions of personhood and morality. The emphasis on relationality, communal responsibility, and shared humanity provides a robust ethical framework for addressing contemporary moral challenges (Gyekye, 1995; Metz, 2017). In this regard, R.M.E. transcends its status as a mere academic subject and emerges as a transformative instrument for cultivating responsible citizenship.

However, the study also reveals a range of interconnected challenges that undermine the effectiveness of R.M.E. These include inadequate teacher preparation, limited pedagogical innovation, tensions arising from religious pluralism, the pervasive influence of digital media, and structural constraints linked to policies such as Free SHS. Collectively, these factors contribute to a disconnect between the intended objectives of R.M.E. and its practical outcomes.

A key insight from the study is that moral education cannot be confined to the classroom. Ethical development is inherently holistic, involving the interplay of family, community, media, and broader social institutions. For R.M.E. to achieve its full potential, it must be integrated within this wider socio-cultural ecosystem.

Accordingly, the study calls for a comprehensive re-envisioning of R.M.E.—one that is culturally grounded, philosophically informed, and pedagogically dynamic. By incorporating Ubuntu and other African ethical paradigms into contemporary educational practice, R.M.E. can be repositioned as a responsive and relevant discipline capable of addressing the moral complexities of modern Ghanaian society.

In conclusion, while significant challenges persist, the prospects for R.M.E. remain promising. With thoughtful reforms and sustained commitment, the subject can continue to play a pivotal role in shaping Ghana's moral and social fabric.

11. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the relevance and effectiveness of Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in Ghana.

First, curriculum reform is essential. The R.M.E. curriculum should be redesigned to incorporate African philosophical frameworks—particularly Ubuntu—thereby grounding moral education in indigenous values and cultural heritage. This integration would strengthen students' sense of identity and moral responsibility.

Second, there is a need for sustained teacher capacity-building. Regular in-service training programs should be implemented to equip teachers with the skills required to address religious diversity, promote critical thinking, and employ innovative pedagogical methods. Teacher education institutions must also integrate religious pluralism and intercultural competence into their training curricula.

Third, digital literacy should be embedded within R.M.E. instruction. This will enable students to critically evaluate online religious content and navigate the complexities of digital media. Teachers must also be trained to utilize digital tools effectively and ethically in their teaching practices.

Fourth, policymakers must address structural challenges within the educational system. This includes reducing class sizes, improving resource allocation, and ensuring adequate instructional time for R.M.E. Such measures are necessary to create an environment conducive to meaningful teaching and learning.

Fifth, schools should emphasize experiential learning approaches, including community service initiatives and interfaith dialogue programs. These strategies facilitate the translation of moral theory into practical action.

Finally, stronger partnerships between schools, religious institutions, and communities should be fostered. Aligning educational objectives with societal values will enhance the relevance and sustainability of R.M.E. and ensure its broader impact on social development.

12. Future Studies

The evolving nature of Religious and Moral Education (R.M.E.) in Ghana presents several avenues for future research. One key area is the long-term impact of R.M.E. on students' moral development and social behavior. Longitudinal studies would provide valuable insights into how moral education influences individuals over time.

Another important direction involves comparative studies across different cultural and national contexts. Such research would deepen understanding of how religious and moral education can be adapted to diverse socio-cultural environments while maintaining its core objectives.

The role of digital technologies in shaping religious identity and moral values also warrants further investigation. As digital media continues to evolve, its implications for ethical formation and educational practice must be critically examined.

Additionally, future research should engage more deeply with African philosophical traditions—particularly Ubuntu—in practical educational settings. This includes exploring concrete strategies for integrating these philosophies into curriculum design and classroom pedagogy.

Finally, the perspectives of policymakers, curriculum developers, and public officials should be systematically studied. Understanding their roles and challenges will provide a more comprehensive view of the factors shaping R.M.E. in Ghana.

Ethical Pledge

This research was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards in academic scholarship. All participants provided informed consent and were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty. The principles of honesty, transparency, and integrity guided the entire research process, with no instances of data fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation. Intellectual property rights were respected, and all sources were appropriately acknowledged. The study aims to contribute responsibly to knowledge in Religious and Moral Education in Ghana and beyond.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were central to the research process. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives, methods, and potential implications prior to data collection. Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained, and no identifying information was disclosed. The study was conducted with sensitivity to religious and cultural diversity, avoiding harm, bias, or discrimination. Data were securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. The researcher maintained neutrality throughout, ensuring that personal beliefs did not influence data interpretation or analysis.

AI Declaration Statement

This research acknowledges the supportive role of AI tools in enhancing writing, editing, and organizational clarity. However, all intellectual contributions, critical analyses, and scholarly interpretations are the sole work of the author. AI assistance was used responsibly to improve coherence without compromising academic rigor. All outputs were critically reviewed and verified against established academic sources, ensuring adherence to APA 7 standards and maintaining the integrity of the research.

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This research received no specific funding from public, commercial, or non-profit organizations. All aspects of the study were independently conducted using personal and institutional resources. The absence of external funding ensured that the research remained free from conflicts of interest or external influence. The author affirms that the findings and conclusions presented are based solely on objective analysis of the data.

Authors' Contributions

The authors were solely responsible for the conceptualization, design, data collection, analysis, and writing of this study. This includes the development of the research framework, formulation of research questions, and interpretation of findings within the

context of existing literature. The authors also communally conducted all revisions and ensured that the manuscript met the standards of scholarly publication. No external contributors were involved in the production of this work. The authors affirm full accountability for the content and integrity of the research, ensuring that all aspects of the study were conducted in accordance with academic and ethical standards.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request. However, due to ethical considerations, particularly participant confidentiality and anonymity, the data are not publicly accessible.

Declaration of Paper's Originality

The authors declare that the paper is original and that it is not under consideration elsewhere by any publishing institution or journal.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper. There are no financial, personal, or institutional affiliations that could have influenced the research outcomes, interpretations, or conclusions presented in this study.

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