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Influence of Faith-Based Schools on Pupils' Religion Tolerance

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A B S T R A C T

Influencing faith-based schools on pupils' religious tolerance is a crucial issue that needs urgent attention because empirical studies have shown that faith-based can go a long way in influencing pupils' religious tolerance. This study focused on the influence of faith-based schools on pupils' religious tolerance in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, simple random sampling technique was adopted to select 2 private schools and 1 public school to participate in the study. The instrument used was a rating scale titled Questionnaire on Faith-based School on Religion Tolerance (QFBSTR). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts, percentage, and mean for demographic data and research questions while inferential statistics of ttests were used to test. The hypotheses. The findings revealed that religious intolerance is high there is no significant influence of faith-based education on religious tolerance of primary school pupils' In Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State. There is no significant difference in the level of religion tolerance of primary school pupils' in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. Based on gender gender. It was recommended that the ministers and other concerned agencies should set seminars, and conferences on the advantages and disadvantages of the influence of faithbased schools on pupils' religious tolerance.

A R T I C L E   I N F O

1. INTRODUCTION

A faith-based school is a school that teaches a general curriculum but which has a particular religious character or formal links with a religious or faith-based organization. The term is most commonly applied to state-funded faith schools, although many independent schools also have religious characteristics. Schools with a formal faith designation may give priority to applicants who are of the faith, and specific exemptions from section 85 of the Equality Act 2010 enable them to do that. Jackson (2003), state-funded faith schools must admit other applicants if they cannot fill all of their places and must ensure that their admission arrangements comply with the school admissions code. State-funded faith schools are usually voluntary aided (VA) or voluntary controlled (VC) schools. This means that they get some of their funding from a religious organization, which also usually owns the school building and the land. A certain number of the school's governors must be foundation governors (governors appointed by the school's faith authority to represent its religious ethos). Faith-based schools are run similarly to other maintained schools, although often, the governing body rather than the local authority is responsible for matters such as deciding the admission policy and appointing staff. The program in school-based schools requires looking for teachers and support staff who practice the school's religion when recruiting.

Jackson (2003) also explains Faith schools are based on the values of a particular religion and many incorporate religious and spiritual elements into the school day. They are either partly or fully governed by a religious organization such as a church or mosque. Recently faith schools have become progressively more controversial, partly because Britain has become a multi-faith society. As Christian schools are state-funded it seems only fair that Muslim and other religious schools are also funded although the problem that arises for some is that separating children into ethnic and religious groups for schooling may cause prejudice and divisions in society. Aluko (2017) says Religions are not well understood, the thing is to have a child in a learning environment where they are comfortable and feel they belong instead of one where they struggle to belong. A report of the Education and Skills Select Committee, based on evidence from numerous experts, stated that in practice parents have found that the reality of school diversity and choice can act to limit rather than expand their options for their children's education. In 2005, the Select Committee found that, in oversubscribed schools, the satisfaction of one person's choice necessarily denies that of another.

Unitarian Universalist Association describes religious tolerance includes the notion that the practice of different religions should be permitted and that different religious beliefs should be accepted and understood to be valid. Throughout Western history, religious tolerance has been a question both in the civic realm as societies have worked out whether to allow diversity of belief and practice and within faith traditions themselves, as religions have had to work out just how much diversity of belief would be tolerated within their tradition. This handout primarily addresses the civic realm, examining moments in history when governments and rulers wrestled with the questions of religious tolerance or liberty, at times creating an environment where Unitarianism and Universalism were able to take root.

Religious intolerance as when a group of society, religion, or non-religious groups specifically refuses to tolerate practices, persons, or beliefs on religious grounds. This is an unwillingness to accept different religious beliefs. Refusing to acknowledge and support the right of the individual to have their own beliefs and related legitimate practices. Also, the willingness to have one's own beliefs and related practices critically evaluated. Religious intolerance has caused devastating results across the world. Religious intolerance is a result of the mistrust that occurs between people belonging to different religions, it is this mistrust

that then leads to clashes and in some instances killing of people including the innocent. Religious intolerance is an attitude spawned by fanaticism.

In Nigeria, there are three main religions recognized by the people; Christianity, Islam, and the Indigenous religion. These religions have differences that have brought about unrest as the tolerance level has got to a point of polarity. The various unrests have led to national insecurity in the country. The paper examined the various religious differences that permeate the lives of Nigerians. However, no matter the differences, it does not negate the fact that many other apparent similarities bring these religions together. These similarities, when put into consideration can bring about much-needed tolerance and understanding. It also looked at the ways the religious writings have supported tolerance of other religions for the peace and security of the nation. The paper found out that tolerance among religious faiths is a major factor in achieving national security in the country. It concluded that no religion should see itself as being superior to another; there is only one Goal, but there are various paths to such a goal. The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. The primary source includes the Bible and the Qur'an while the secondary source includes books, journal articles, and the Internet. The data collected were analyzed using a sociological approach.

Aubakirova *et al.* (2016) state pupil tolerance is a necessary element of intercultural communication; is the ability to understand the important things not only in own but in a different culture, to see value starts in the other, alien faith, to isolate the grounds that do not contradict the spiritual and moral value. Terminologically, tolerance is letting other people do according to their interests (Rubini *et al.*, 2023). Tolerance of individuals requires that each person's viewpoint receives a courteous hearing, not all views have equal worth, merit, or truth (Von Bergen & Collier, 2013). Tolerance is based on diversity. The difference is absolute, everyone cannot change it. Besides, the essence of tolerance is the quality of the culture of every society and every citizen regardless of gender, age, profession, or ethnicity (Aubakirova *et al.,* 2016). There are two sides to impact diversity, which are negative and positive. The negative impact is that conflicts occur from the inability to accept the differences or even from self-obtrude. On the other side, the positive impact shows that there is a more unique and more varied culture and identity in the country.

Anggraeni and Maryanti (2017) describes Nigeria as a country with multi-religion practices, and thereby the constitution used by the county allows every citizen to be involved and practice their preferred religion irrespective of their nature and municipal. Therefore, Reinforcement of the pupils in a primary school to forecast the emulation of the practices of religion by the coordinator of the school, such that the parents of the world (Pupils') might not support the decision taken by the school authority. Discussing the contemporary issue is one of the methods of solving the problem battling society. Nigeria, like many other countries, is a secular country going by its Constitution. A quick look at the 1999 Amended Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria shows that Section 38 (1) and also Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, state that: "Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice, and observance. Furthermore, Section 10 of the same Constitution states: "The Government of the Federation or a State shall not adopt any religion as the State religion." It therefore bears restating that the Constitution guarantees freedom of worship and no one should be victimized for their beliefs. The multiple religions in the country give every citizen the right opportunity to choose which faith is convenient. Therefore, freedom of faith must be defended at all costs, even when those in authority are not comfortable with it.

According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur addresses gender-based violence and discrimination in the name of religion or belief. The Special Rapporteur provides emblematic cases of both phenomena and their impact on gender equality and freedom of religion or belief worldwide. He explores freedom of religion or belief and non-discrimination as two mutually reinforcing rights and clarifies the existing international legal framework that governs their intersection. Concludes by emphasizing the responsibility of States to create enabling environments to advance the non-discrimination and freedom of religion or belief rights of women, and girls.

Across the globe, educational researchers as well as teachers and even the parents in primary schools in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, have expressed increasing problems that are prevailing in primary schools which is happening due to religious intolerance in school-faith base schools. Now schools' funders are helping us to widen our religion when we have schools that are based on their religion either Muslim or christen not like before when we have mixed schools when both Muslim and christen attend the same school and tolerate each other religion. Many researchers have investigated pupils' religious tolerance like in a northern part of Nigeria and discovered there is a high increase in religious intolerance when they are killing each other because of the religious crisis. Mere statements which are contrary to one's belief do not constitute intolerance. Religion intolerance occurs when a group for example a society, a religious group, or a non-religious group specifically refuses to tolerate one's practices, persons, or beliefs on religious grounds. Religious discrimination and persecution can also have harmful effects on a person's well-being. Not only might some individuals experience anxiety, depression, or stress. Some may be victimized by acts of physical violence, which can lead to posttraumatic stress as well as personal harm. The issues have served as a hindrance to the development of pupils' academic performance in Ilorin West local government, Kwara State. So, the researcher was not aware of any research being conducted on the influence of faith-based schools on pupils' religious tolerance in Ilorin West Local Government of Kwara State.

The following research questions were answered in this study: What is the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, Nigeria?

The following null hypotheses were formulated in this study and tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

(i) Ho1: There is no significant influence of faith-based education on religious tolerance of primary school pupils' In Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State, Nigeria.

(ii) Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. Based on gender

2. METHODS

A descriptive survey research design was adopted in this study. The population of the study comprised all private and public schools in Ilorin West Local Government of Kwara State. There were 61 public schools and 266 private schools making a total of 327 schools public and private schools. Twenty schools were sampled (twenty pupils' in each school). The research instrument titled; Questionnaire on Faith-Based School on Pupils' Religion Tolerance (QFBSPRT) was used for data collection. The questionnaire had one section which is the central focus of the study containing 14 items that sought to ascertain the Faith-Based School on Pupils' Religion Tolerance in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

The instrument was subject to reliability using the spilled half method, the test was divided into two, odd and even, and the reliability index was calculated using Pearson Product

Moment Correlation (PPMC) which yielded 0.71. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and percentages for demographic data and research questions while inferential statistics of the Test were used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Decision rule: 2.5 and above is High, 2.0-2.49 is Average, and 1.9 Below is Low.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Question: What is the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State?

Table 1 shows the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The weighted mean is 3.11 which is between 2.45 and 3.51 (high) and which is a numeric indicator that the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State is high.

Table 1. Level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State

S/N	RELIGION TOLERANCE	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Do you believe that people should have the freedom to practice any religion they choose?	3.83	0.419	
2	Do you think it is important to respect and tolerate people of different religious beliefs?	3.38	0.691	
3	Do you believe that all religions should be treated equally?	3.53	0.770	
4	Are you comfortable interacting with people from different religious backgrounds?	3.32	0.748	
5	Do you believe that individuals of different religious backgrounds should have equal rights and opportunities within society?	3.43	0.851	
6	How would you feel if a place of worship for a religion different from your own was built in your neighborhood?	2.93	1.006	
7	Are you open to learning about and understanding the beliefs and practices of religions that are unfamiliar to you?	2.88	1.010	
8	Do you believe that religious differences can coexist peacefully in society?	3.22	0.761	
9	Are you willing to challenge your own beliefs and assumptions about religion when engaging with individuals of different faiths?	2.93	1.010	
10	Religious diversity contributes to the overall cultural fabric and richness of a society.	3.40	0.807	
11	Are you accepting of religious rituals and practices that might be different from your own, even if they occur in public spaces?	2.52	1.000	
12	Can you appreciate the positive values and teachings that may exist within religions different from your own	2.82	854	
13	How comfortable are you discussing sensitive religious topics or engaging in respectful debates about religious beliefs	2.62	1.010	
14	Are you willing to stand up against religious prejudice or discrimination, even if it doesn't directly affect you or your religious group	2.77	1.031	
	Weighted Mean	**3.11**		

Decision rule: 0.00-1.44 (Low), 1.44-2.44 (Average), 2.45-3.50 (High), 3.51-400(Very High)

3.2. Ho1: There is no significant influence of faith-based education on religious tolerance of primary school pupils' In the Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State

Table 2 shows the regression Analysis of the significant influence of faith-based education on religious tolerance of primary school pupils' In Ilorin West local government area, Kwara State. The result indicated that there is no relationship between Religious tolerance and Faith-based education (R = 0.013) while the R-Square is 0.000 which means that the independent variable (Faith-based education) did not explain any (0%) variation of the dependent variable (Religious tolerance). This does not indicate a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is a reflection that Faith-based education does not significantly influenced pupil's Religion tolerance (F (1.59) = 0.009, P > 0.05). The hypothesis is then therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significance value (0.421) is more than 0.05.

Table 2. Summary of Regression Analysis on the significant influence of faith-based education on Religion Tolerance of Primary School pupils' In Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
Religion tolerance	43.583	6.00	60	0.013	0.000	-0.017	0.009	0.924
Faith-based education	1.317	0.47						

Dependent Variable: Religion tolerance

3.3. Ho2: There is no significant difference in the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State based on gender

Table 3 shows the significant difference in the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State based on gender. The finding revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State based on gender (t = 1.020; df = 58; P > 0.05). The hypothesis was therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.312) is more than 0.05. This implies that male pupils' religious tolerance (Mean= 44.81) is not significantly different from female pupil's religious tolerance (Mean= 42.55).

Table 3. Summary of t-test analysis showing the difference in the level of religious tolerance of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State based on gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male	38	44.1842	7.06669	1.020	58	0.312	Not Significant
Female	22	42.5455	3.37677				

P>0.05

3.4. Discussion of findings

The influence of faith-based schools on pupils' religious tolerance is high. Findings show that Ajzen and Fishbein's model is true, especially in intimate interactions. Students' motivation to get engaged and marry with person with a different faith is influenced by their knowledge of it as well as their attitudes to that behavior (Mamirjonovna, 2024). Data were collected from both male and female pupils of all the public sector. Logical regression was used according to model fitting information, the significant chi-square statistic (p<0.05) indicates that the final model gives a significant improvement over the baseline model. This

proves that the model gives better predictions than the one guessed based on marginal probabilities for the outcome categories.

Another study is according to Suraju (2014) on peace and religious tolerance education in Nigeria. Peaceful co-existence among people of different ethno-religious backgrounds in any society is the foundation for communal progress, development, and advancement. Nigeria, as a multi-ethnic and multi-faith state, has become enmeshed in a tangle of religious crises. These waves of religious crises constitute great obstacles to flourishing local business and foreign investment, socio-economic development, political stability, conducive learning environment, and communal trust. These according to Dowd (2016) are corollary effects of intolerance of the religious groups in Nigeria as each claims superiority over the others, a ludicrous attitude described by Obayan as "a holier than thou". In pursuit of a peaceful and conducive atmosphere for healthy socio-economic development in all facets of life, this paper examines how peace and harmony can be achieved through religious tolerance education from the Qur'an and Sunnah, which are the main sources of Islamic law (Kayode & Jibril, 2023). It was discovered that lack of adequate knowledge and proper understanding of other people's religions is the main cause of most religious crises. The paper concluded by recommending that religious tolerance education should be incorporated into the curricula of all levels of Nigeria's education system.

4. CONCLUSION

The study shed light on the influence of faith-based schools on pupils' religious tolerance in Ilorin West Local Government Area Kwara State. The findings of the study revealed that the Level of religious intolerance in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State was high. More, there is no significant influence of faith-based education on religious tolerance of primary school pupils' In Ilorin West Local Government Area, of Kwara State. The following recommendations were made, based on the findings of this study;

(i)   Government and stakeholders should organize seminars on religious tolerance
(ii) Education stakeholders especially curriculum planners should incorporate religious tolerance into the primary school curriculum
(iii) Every pupil should be allowed to attend any school of his/her choice

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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