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Assessment of Religious and Social Issues in Nigeria teacher Education

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ABSTRACT

Recent events around the globe are making training/education in other people culture imperative. Violent attacks on educational institutions are becoming not only more frequent, but also sophisticated and dastardly. In Nigeria, for example, the person of the teacher has become vulnerable in the face of religious radicalism, cultism, harassments and other inherent societal forces. These undermine academic standards, morality and discipline. Adopting a descriptive survey design, this paper probed into emerging religious and social issues in Nigeria teacher education. A total of 720 people, comprising of 120 Lecturers and 600 students were randomly sampled, using a researcher developed questionnaire. The study was guided by five research questions and three hypotheses. The study found among others that there were some pressing religious and social issues; no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues in Nigeria education; that there was no significant difference in their opinion about the effect of religious and social issues on teacher education. Based on these findings, it was concluded that religious and social issues can influence the process and products of Nigerian teacher education significantly and therefore must be given immediate attention. Along this line, it was recommended that teacher training institutions should include these issues in their curriculum; in-service training be organized for serving teachers; and that the ministry of education should collaborate with the National Orientation Agency and other relevant government agencies and parastatals to carry out advocacy and mass-literacy campaigns on the issues. The aims of the paper are to establish the factors that occasion changing contexts in the classroom; the researchers also demand a paradigm shift of emphasis in teacher education.

Key Words: Teacher Education; In-Service Training; Religious Issues; Social Issues and Curriculum Review.

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INTRODUCTION

There is a seemingly growing need for education in the custom, culture and tradition of other peoples. This requisite has been regarded as one of the domino effects of globalization. The world is becoming increasingly rich with an amazing mixture of multiplicity in people, the environment, religion, culture, language and norms (Terry & Irving, 2010). The plurality echoes in all spheres of life with resultant tension. Today, in Nigeria, it is not unusual to find classrooms composed of students from four or more different cultural backgrounds. The variation is overtly apparent in the languages, perceptions, religious affiliations and socio-political leanings of both teachers and students. Lagos, the commercial hub, is a thriving miniature of Nigeria. The same is true of most mega cities of the world. For example, Terry & Irving (2010) analyzed cultural and linguistic matters in in the United States of America (USA) educational system. They corroborated their findings with convincing statistical facts that;

One in every four people in the United States is from a racial or ethnic background other than white. Obviously, these trends are reflected in school populations. Census data from 2000 indicate that the

school-aged population is comprised of approximately 1% Indian/Alaskan Native students, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander students, 16% black (non-Hispanic) students, 15% Hispanic students, and 63% white (non-Hispanic) students.

In the case of Lagos, the daily influx of people is bound to heighten due to the towering mobility rate in the country. This is accentuated by an un-ending rural-urban drift, the search for employment, and insecurity. Cases of religious radicalism in the North East and restlessness in the South East make Lagos attractive for its relative security and job prospect. Therefore, schools in Lagos mirror the society and reflect the plurality at all levels (Anuforo, 2008). A great deal of interaction takes place not only between pupils and teachers but also between social ideals and religions. This makes conflict inescapable; though the school is expected to purify and idealize existing social and cultural institutions (Dewey in Anuforo, 2013). Furthermore, schools have been identified as a place where shared meanings, customs, values, attitudes and ideals are transmitted, usually through the curriculum, overt and unstated (de Marrais and LeCompte in Abe, 2011). Culture too is learned throughout life as one partakes in family and social system (Gollnick & Chin, 2006). The diffusion of culture becomes problematic where pupils of divergent cultural settings encounter one another in a class. This definitely brings the teachers' competence to task. Therefore, teachers must not only be aware of this diversity in their classrooms but also recognize the need to be sensitive. The onus on educators is to display an understanding sensitivity in an apparent diverse society.

However, recent events have shown the lack of this sensitivity with an attendant blame on teacher diplomacy. As the need for professionalism receiving more attention among scholars, fresh events in Nigeria and some other parts of the world have given credence to the need for religious and social sensitivity in the classroom. Three examples would suffice. In 2007, Nigerians woke up to hear how a class teacher, Mrs Christianah Oluwasesin, was attacked and brutally murdered by her own pupils at the Government Day Secondary School, Gandu, Gombe State (Awofadeju, 2007; Ojo, 2012). In Ogun State, the forceful conduct of virginity tests on female students by a school principal irked the public. The act was viewed as a flagrant invasion of the privacy of the students. Not a few also considered it as an atrocity outside the scope of her responsibility as a teacher and administrator (Kayode-Adedeji, 2012). The case of Osun State was perhaps the most dramatic as students wore all sorts of religious dresses- hijab, church vestments, etc. - to school. Non-Muslims in the state vehemently kicked against the judgment of a High Court allowing Muslim female students to wear hijab to schools (Olarinoye, 2016). The peace of the classroom has been disturbed on this and on many occasions due to poor sensitivity to contentious moral and ethical issues.

One of the emerging global trends is that moral and ethical issues, including value education, are slowly becoming part of the teacher education programs (Benninga, 2003). It has been similarly noted by Babalola (2011) that the appearance of spiritual capital and resurgence of value education is one of the solutions to the myriad of challenges of the era. Therefore, the authors attempted to establish the fact of emerging religio-social issues. Also, attention is being called to the changing contexts in the classroom. Both factors demand a paradigm shift of emphasis in teacher education in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of the place of religion in the society falls under sociology and anthropology; where theories abound not only on the origin and function of religion but also on the interaction between religion and the society. Two of the most related to this paper are the functional theory of religion and symbolic anthropology. The functional (or reductionist) theories concentrate on the social or psychological purposes that religion plays for a group or a person. It views religion as "performing certain functions for society" (Christiano; Swatos & Kivisto, 2008). This is outstanding in the works of Karl Marx's *Role of Religion in Capitalist and Pre-Capitalist Societies*; Sigmund Freud's *Psychological Origin of Religious Beliefs*; and Émile Durkheim's *Social Function of Religions*. According to Lidz (2010), the functional theory of religion focuses on associations between religion and other social institutions, in both 'synchronic and diachronic perspectives'. The second theory is that propounded by the acclaimed father of symbolic anthropology, Clifford Geertz (1926–2006). The significance of this theory to this paper lies in its emphasis on the influence of both the social and cultural systems on the attitude of the individual (Nielsen, 1998). Geertz's definition of religion emphasized the mutual reinforcement between world view and behaviours or attitudes. It is against this framework that this paper assessed the reflections of religio-cultural pressing issues in the Nigerian educational system.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Teaching, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) should be considered as a profession and public service which entails 'expert knowledge and specialized skills, acquired and maintained through rigorous and continuing study' (in Owhotu, 2015). This profession makes many demands on its practitioners both in training and in the discharge of the duties. The teacher is the main determinant of quality in education. Hence, the shared consensus that the quality of any educational system is determined by the expertise, commitment, and innovation of teachers (Ijaiya&Alabi, 2013). Indeed, the Federal Ministry of Education in the National Policy on Education (2004) clearly stated that no educational system can rise above the quality of its teachers. Therefore, expectations from the teacher are many and the challenges he/she faces daily are manifold.

One of the perennial tests facing education system globally is the nagging issue of teacher quality and competence. In Nigeria, for instance, teacher education scheme has been found grossly inadequate. For example, Amadi (2011) pointed out its failure to nurture in practitioners requisite knowledge and skills for effective practice. Also, Umar (2002) asserted that the training of teachers has not fully prepared them for the stark realities of the classroom and the challenges of the millennium. Particularly, the issue of recent religious radicalism was noted even before the three incidents cited above took place (Umar, 2002). Concerted efforts have been made globally, regionally and locally to tackle the issue. Few examples would suffice. The Baguada Seminar on "Quantities and Qualities in Nigerian Education" (NERC, 1980) reported that;

Teachers are the main determinant of quality in education. If they are apathetic, uncommitted, uninspired, lazy, unmotivated, immoral, anti-social, the whole nation is doomed. If they are ignorant in their disciplines and impart wrong information, they are not only useless but dangerous. The kind of teacher trained and posted to the schools may well determine what the next generation will be.

Also, the 1993 Summit of Nine High Population Developing Countries held in India perceived the relevance of qualitative teacher production to the mission for improved basic Education for All (EFA). On its part, the Federal Government has taken many steps towards ensuring standards in teacher production. Such included the setting up of controlling agencies like the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE); the National University Commission (NUC); and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) (Amadi, 2011). These have been working in tandem with international conventions like the International Labour Organisation (ILO) policy on the selection of entrants into teachers' colleges and teacher preparation programme. On how to ensure quality, the ILO emphasizes the selection of those who possess the necessary moral, intellectual and physical qualities and who have the required professional knowledge and skills (Owhotu, 2015). Mindful of this, the philosophy for teacher production in Nigeria as enshrined in the FME (2004) is anchored on these five basic objectives:

1. to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers for all levels of our educational system;
2. to encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers;
3. to help teachers to fit into the social life of the community and the society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives;
4. to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in life but in the wider world; and
5. to enhance teachers' commitment to the teaching profession.

In the opinion of Lassa (1998), the above objectives are translated into three major thrusts to be achieved in the making of an effective teacher. These are the possession of a body of knowledge and understanding; professional skills and techniques; and certain positive personal qualities. Nevertheless, the challenge of getting candidates of the right calibre and intelligence into the profession persists (Ijaiya&Alabi, 2013).

In some countries applicants are scrutinized through oral interviews to ascertain their qualities and characteristics. The absence of such strategy is a great challenge in Nigeria. Nwana (1993) observed that such preliminary assessments are difficult if not impossible partly due to the politics of federal character policy and use of quota system by the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB). This gives no room for any thorough evaluation of the suitability or otherwise of intending teachers. So, what most Institutions carry out is mere screening of the papers of those already offered provisional admission. These inadvertently encourage admission of "dregs" who are "deficient both intellectually and attitudinally even before training" (Amadi, 2011). The implication of education becoming an all comers affair is many.

In the bid to assuring quality and relevance in the new millennium, many reform-oriented summits have been held. Some of the related transformative frameworks listed by Owhotu (2015) included EFA-Teacher Training Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TTISSA); Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA); ILO/UNESCO Joint Committee of Experts (CEART); and the African Union's Second Decade of

Education, 2006-2015. One of the critical aspects of the frameworks was on enhancing the quality and coherence of teacher professional development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive research survey method. The population of the study covered all Christian Religious Studies Education undergraduates of the Faculty of Education, University of Lagos and their lecturers. A total of 720 respondents made up of 120 lecturers and 600 students were randomly selected from three (3) tertiary institutions in Lagos State through stratified random sampling technique. These are the University of Lagos, Akoka; Yaba College of Technology, Yaba; and the Federal College of Education (Technical), Akoka. The respondents were drawn from four disciplines/specializations; namely: Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, Pure Sciences and Applied Sciences. A self-structured questionnaire titled "Assessment of Religio-Social Issues in Education Questionnaire" (ARSIEQ) was used to elicit information from the respondents. The questionnaire was made up of two parts (Sections A and B). Section A sought the demographic information such department, age, gender and educational level. Section B contained items that sought to examine the perception of the respondents on pressing religio-social issues in Nigeria and implications for teacher education in the 21st Century. A four point likert scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Strongly Disagreed (SD) and Disagree (D) weighted as 4, 3, 2 and 1 was used for data collection. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the questionnaire was given to experts in Measurement and Evaluation, Religious Education and Social Studies. Their corrections were used in the final draft of the questionnaire. To determine the reliability of the instrument, 30 students not included in the main study was used. Their responses were subjected to Cronbach Alpha Statistics and a reliability coefficient of 0.75 was obtained which justify the use of the instrument for the main data collection. The analysis of data was carried out using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation).

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this work is an assessment of pressing religio-social concerns in Nigeria with the aim of determining the implications for teacher education in the 21st century. Specifically, the purpose is to find out the followings.

1. Identify the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education system.
2. Determine the factors responsible participation in religious and social vices in Nigerian tertiary institutions.
3. Identify the extent of the effects of cultural, religious and social issues on participation and interest in Western education?
4. Identify steps out of the quagmire towards improving teacher education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What are the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education?
2. What are the factors responsible participation in religious and social vices in Nigerian tertiary institutions?
3. To what extent do cultural, religious and social issues affect participation and interest in Western education?
4. What steps are to be taken to get out of the quagmire towards improving teacher education?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with respect to their gender.
2. There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with regard to their specializations
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with regard to their religious affiliations.

RESULTS

This session provides information on gender distribution, discipline/specialization and religious background of study participants which were carried out with the use of frequency counts and simple percentage. More so, the study participants were drawn from three tertiary institutions in Lagos State. The detailed information regarding the sampling of respondents is provided as follows:

Research Question 1: What are the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education?

To determine the participants' response on the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education, the frequency counts and percentage were computed to reveal the responses received on the following rating scale:

- 3- Comprehensive Understanding (including meaning, detailed nature and controversies).
- 2- Superficial or Partial Understanding (Meaning and bits of Facts).
- 1- No knowledge of.

Table 1: Percentage response on the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education

S/N	ISSUES	RATING		
		3	2	1
	Social Issues			
1.	Terrorism	279 (47.0%)	--	315 (53.0%)
2.	Harmful Traditional Practices	--	594 (100.0%)	--
3.	Ethnicity	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--
4.	Tribalism	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--
5.	Child Labour	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--
6.	Single Parenting	--	594 (100.0%)	--
7.	Corruption	30 (5.1%)	279 (47.0%)	285 (48.0%)
8.	Inadequate Infrastructure	--	594 (100.0%)	--
9.	Gender based violence	--	594 (100.0%)	--
10.	Drug Abuse	--	594 (100.0%)	--
11.	Unemployment	285 (48.0%)	309 (52.0%)	--
12.	Prostitution	30 (5.1%)	--	564 (94.9%)
13.	Cultism	--	564 (94.9%)	30 (5.1%)
14.	Literacy Level	--	594 (100.0%)	--
15.	Poverty	--	594 (100.0%)	--
16.	Abortion	--	594 (100.0%)	--
17.	Single Sex Marriage	--	594 (100.0%)	--
	Religious Issues			
1.	Religious Fanaticism	30 (5.1%)	564 (94.9%)	--
2.	Religious Intolerance	309 (52.0%)	285 (48.0%)	--
3.	Religious Difference	309 (52.0%)	285 (48.0%)	--
4.	Religious Discrimination	30 (5.1%)	564 (94.9%)	--
5.	Aggressive Evangelism	309 (52.0%)	285 (48.0%)	--
6.	Diverse Doctrine	30 (5.1%)	564 (94.9%)	--
7.	Confraternity	--	--	594(100.0%)
8.	Religious Sensitivity	--	594(100.0%)	--

Source: Fieldwork, 2016

From Table 1, the analyses carried out on the responses received based on the rating of the understanding of each of social and religious issues revealed that ethnicity, tribalism, child labour, unemployment, religious intolerance, religious differences and evangelism constitute the most pressing religious and social issues due to the fact that larger percentage of the respondents have comprehensive understanding (which include meaning, detailed nature and controversies) of them.

Research Question 2: What are the factors responsible participation in religious and social vices?

To determine the study participants’ response on the factors responsible participation in religious and social vices, the frequency counts and percentage were computed to reveal the responses received on the scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed.

Table 2: Percentage response on the factors responsible for participation in religious and social vices.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Poverty can easily lead to participation in social vices in school.	594 (100.0%)	--	--	--
2.	Poverty encourages participation in violent religious activities in school.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
3.	Social status perception is responsible for participation in social vices in schools.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
4.	The decision of a student to participate in violent religious action is informed by his/her economic status.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
5.	The social status of a person does not determine his/her participation in vices in school.	--	--	320 (53.9%)	274 (46.1%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From Table 2, the analyses carried out on the responses received show that poverty and social status perception are factors responsible for participation in religious and social vices; and that economic and social status of a person informed his/her participation in violent religious action and vices in the school.

Research Question 3: To what extent do cultural, religious and social issues affect participation and interest in Western education?

To determine the participants' response on extent to which cultural, religious and social issues affect participation and interest in western education, the frequency counts and percentage were computed to reveal the responses received on the scale of Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Disagreed and Strongly Disagreed.

Table 3: Percentage response on extent to which cultural, religious and social issues affect participation and interest in western education

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Some cultural practices affect participation in Western education.	594 (100.0%)	--	--	--
2.	Harmful traditional practices reduce interest in western education.	594 (100.0%)	--	--	--
3.	Cultural and traditional issues can be classified as social issues affecting education in Nigeria.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
4.	Religious fanaticism is a major problem in Nigerian schools	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
5.	Religious fanaticism does not affect Nigerian school activities negatively.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From Table 3, the analyses carried out on the responses received show that religious fanaticism, harmful traditional and cultural practices contribute negatively to participation in Western education.

Research Question 4: What steps are to be taken to get out of the quagmire towards improving teacher education?

Table 4: Percentage response on steps out of the quagmire towards improving teacher education.

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD
1.	Religio-Social issues should be included in the curriculum teacher training institutions	400 (67.0%)	194 (33.0%)	--	--
2.	In-service training be organized for serving teachers to update them on these issues.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
3.	The Ministry of Education should collaborate with the National Orientation Agency, NGOs, etc.	210 (35.0%)	300 (51.0%)	84 (14.0%)	--
4.	Advocacy and mass-literacy campaigns can help curb social issues.	315 (53.0%)	279 (47.0%)	--	--
5.	Inter-Religious Dialogue Education should be integrated into the general courses in tertiary institutions	120 (20.0%)	350 (59.0%)	124 (21.0%)	--

Source: Fieldwork, 2016.

From Table 4, the analyses carried out on the responses received show that curriculum review, orientation, in-service training, and inter-religious Dialogue education are some of the ways out of the quagmire of the socio-religious crises in Nigerian tertiary institutions.

Test of Hypotheses

In this section of the data analysis, the three hypotheses stated for the study were tested with the use of mean, standard deviation, analysis of variance and T-test. However, the statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to produce the tables that presented the result of the test of each of the three hypotheses stated for the study.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with respect to their gender. For the test of this hypothesis, T-test analysis was computed and the results of the analysis of the data were presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics of respondents' perception about religious and social issues with respect to their gender

Issues	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Issues	Male	149	3.52	0.501
	Female	445	3.53	0.499
Religious Issues	Male	149	2.68	0.466
	Female	445	2.47	0.499

Table 5 shows that with regards to social issues, the mean value of the opinions of 149 male respondents=3.52 with standard deviation value of 0.501; while the mean value of the opinion of their 445 female counterparts=3.53 with standard deviation value of 0.499. Also, religious issues, the mean value of the opinions of male respondents=2.68 with standard deviation value of 0.466; while the mean value of the opinion of their female counterparts=2.47 with standard deviation value of 0.499.

Table 6: T-test analysis of respondents’ perception about religious and social issues with respect to their gender.

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Social Issues	Equal variances assumed	.396	.529	-.382	592	.703	-.018	.047	-.111	.075
	Equal variances not assumed			-.381	253.309	.704	-.018	.047	-.111	.075
Religious Issues	Equal variances assumed	57.964	.000	4.718	592	.000	.219	.046	.128	.311
	Equal variances not assumed			4.882	270.220	.000	.219	.045	.131	.308

Table 6 shows the T-test analysis of respondents’ perception about religious and social issues with respect to their gender. Moreover, with respect to opinions on social issues, the T-test value of mean difference=-0.382 with degree of freedom=592. In addition, with respect to opinions on religious issues, the T-test value of mean difference=4.718 with degree of freedom=592. However, with regards to religious issues, the significance level of the T-test analysis=0.000; which was statistically significant at 0.05 level. This result shows that significant difference exists in respondents’ opinions on religious issues with regards to their gender. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with respect to their gender.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with regard to their specializations. For the test of this hypothesis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was carried out and the results of the analysis of the data were presented in Tables 6 and 7.

Table 7: Descriptive statistics of respondents’ perception about religious and social issues with respect to their specializations

Specializations	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Issues	Arts and Humanities	280	3.78	0.416
	Social Sciences	174	3.43	0.497
	Pure Sciences	110	3.01	0.095
	Applied Sciences	30	3.70	0.466
Religious Issues	Arts and Humanities	280	2.33	0.469
	Social Sciences	174	2.57	0.497
	Pure Sciences	110	3.00	0.000
	Applied Sciences	30	2.30	0.466

Table 7 shows that on social issues, the mean values of the opinions of respondents with respect to their specializations are as follows: Arts and Humanities=3.78; Social Sciences=3.43; Pure Sciences=3.01; and Applied Sciences= 3.70. Also, on religious issues, the mean values of the opinions of respondents with respect to their specializations are as follows: Arts and Humanities=2.33; Social Sciences=2.57; Pure Sciences=3.00; and Applied Sciences= 2.30.

Table 8: Analysis of variance of respondents' perception about religious and social issues with respect to their specializations.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Issues	Between Groups	49.720	3	16.573	99.539	.000
	Within Groups	98.235	590	.166		
	Total	147.955	593			
Religious Issues	Between Groups	37.860	3	12.620	67.446	.000
	Within Groups	110.397	590	.187		
	Total	148.258	593			

Table 8 indicates that on social and religious issues, the mean square values of respondents' opinions with respect to their specializations are 16.573 and 12.620 respectively. The F-values are 99.539 and 67.446 respectively. Also, the significance levels of the analysis of variances of respondents' opinions with regard to their specializations were 0.000 and 0.000 respectively; which was statistically significant at 0.05 level. This result shows that significant difference exist in respondents' opinions on social and religious issues with respect to their specializations. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in perception of lecturers and students on social and religious issues with respect to their specializations.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with regard to their religious affiliations. For the test of this hypothesis, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was computed and the results of the analysis of the data were presented in Tables 8 and 9.

Table 9: Descriptive statistics of respondents' perception about religious and social issues with regard to their religious affiliations

Religious Affiliations	Gender	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
Social Issues	Christianity	416	3.58	0.494
	Islam	136	3.24	0.426
	Others	42	4.00	0.000
Religious Issues	Christianity	416	2.49	0.501
	Islam	136	2.76	0.426
	Others	42	2.00	0.000

Table 9 shows that on social issues, the mean values of the opinions of respondents with respect to their religious affiliations are as follows: Christianity=3.58; Islam=3.24; and Other Category= 4.00. Also, on religious issues, the mean values of the opinions of respondents with respect to their religious affiliations are as follows: Christianity=2.49; Islam=2.76; and Other Category= 2.00.

Table 10: Analysis of variance of respondents' perception about religious and social issues with respect to their religious affiliations

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Social Issues	Between Groups	22.102	2	11.051	51.894	.000
	Within Groups	125.853	591	.213		
	Total	147.955	593			
Religious Issues	Between Groups	19.809	2	9.904	45.570	.000
	Within Groups	128.449	591	.217		
	Total	148.258	593			

Table 10 indicates that on social and religious issues, the mean square values of respondents' opinions with regard to their religious affiliations are 11.051 and 9.904 respectively. The F-values are 51.894 and 45.570 respectively. Also, the significance levels of the analysis of variances of respondents' opinions with regard to their specializations were 0.000 and 0.000 respectively; which was significant at 0.05 level. This

result shows that significant difference exist in respondents' opinions on social and religious issues with regards to their religious affiliations. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in perception of lecturers and students on social and religious issues with respect to their religious affiliations.

DISCUSSION

The study has confirmed the assertion of Benninga (2003) that

Our world is remarkably diverse, and this diversity has implications in work, community, and educational contexts. Issues of diversity, difference, and disability can be quite complex and challenging for ... students and their classroom teachers.

These complex and challenging situations are being witnessed in Nigerian classrooms. In this study, the following findings emerged from the analyses conducted on the data obtained. The result of research question one revealed that poverty and social status perception are factors responsible for participation in religious and social vices. This finding implies that participation in vices can be as a result of a person's social and economic status particularly as it relates to issue of poverty. The result of research question two showed that harmful traditional and cultural practices as well as religious fanaticism have adverse effect on formal education. The finding shows that the problems of Western education stem from social and religious issues. The result of research question three revealed that the most pressing religious and social issues in Nigerian education are ethnicity/tribalism, child labour, unemployment, religious pluralism, intolerance, and insensitivity.

The study revealed that there is significant difference in the perception of lecturers and students about religious and social issues with respect to their gender. This finding implies that gender plays a significant role in determining the differences in the perception of lecturers and students about social and religious issues. Furthermore, it was shown that there is significant difference in perception of lecturers and students on social and religious issues with respect to their specializations. This finding implies that the perception of lecturers and students on religious and social issues can be influenced by their disciplines or specializations. The study revealed that there is significant difference in perception of lecturers and students about social and religious issues with respect to their religious affiliations. This means that religious affiliations of lecturers and students contribute significantly in determining their perception on religious and social issues.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The trend of pluralism seems irreversible in a globalized world. While there would be increased interactions at all strata of the society particularly in schools; the tempo of conflicts shall surely rise. The emphasis should therefore be on the creation of awareness and how to handle the ensuing conflicts, particularly in the school settings. One of the recommendations is the deliberate inclusion of religio-social issues in the curriculum of teacher training institutions. Teachers should be encouraged to use the knowledge of students' background, interests, and experiences to develop a culturally relevant pedagogy (Benninga, 2003). Updating serving teachers would require intermittent, calculated, pragmatic and purposive in-service trainings. States and Federal Ministry of Education should collaborate with the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and relevant bodies to fast track advocacy and mass-literacy campaigns in curbing social-religious issues. Finally, relevant themes on Value/Peace Education and Inter-Religious Dialogue should be integrated into the general courses in all tertiary institutions.

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