

Reconciling Religiosity and Secularists in a Democratic Society: Social Studies Education Perspective

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Abstract

The paper examines reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society through the angle of Social Studies. The survey design was The target population for the study comprised of all the students in 400 level, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Science Education, Kogi State University, and the sample for the study comprised of 140 students of 400 level, these students were drawn using purposive sampling technique. The instrument used was Reconciling Religiosity and Secularity in a Democratic Society Questionnaire (r=) The data collected was analysed using weighted mean of 2.5 computed as $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ and standard deviation. The findings shows that Relationship exists between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society, religiosity is necessary in a democratic society to reconcile religion and modernity, it is important to avoid religious conflict, secularity of religion can promote inherent plurality, equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society and principle of neutrality of the agents of states can promote religion in a secular society, Social Studies Education as a value laden subject promotes religiosity in a secular society through tolerance, social relation and norms that the society cherishes, It was recommended that Nigerian Government should not interfere in religious matter and equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society through Nigerian constitution among others.

Keywords: Reconciling, Religiosity, Secularity, Democratic Society, Social Studies Education and Perspective

Introduction

Social Studies Education among other school subjects is primarily designed and taught in schools to address issues relating to right type of values, attitudes and behavior with a view to achieving national development. Effective teaching and learning of Social Studies Education will encourage peace and moral education, inculcate religious tolerate and equip the learners with social interaction skills for harmonious coexistence. Adebayo, Olatunde and Obaje (2016) observed that Social values is concern with organization of social relations between the communities' values, social norms, beliefs and customs that needs to be reform to promote social order in the society. The essence of social studies is to study human social, physical, cultural, economic, political and religious environment and of how human being interact with and control the social environment, provides human needs and aspiration and solve human problems in the society, since human being dose not lives in isolation but lives among groups in the society.

Society refer to a number of persons living within a certain geographical areas who share common culture and have a feeling of

solidarity that binds them together into a social unit Society is the people who populate a nation, an encompassing network of social relationship that enclose some more specific phenomenon which is the primary objects of analysis; Societies assist in the complex relation and inter dependence which unite its member into organic whole and which are reflected in the collective consciousness and moral order (Obaje, 2018)

Society implies mutual awareness and sense of belonging together, every society has religious practices and religion is part of the society. Society as the collection of individual who are joined together by relationship of behaviour which distinguishes them from other individual who do not share these relationships or who have different pattern of behavior. Religion is one of the institutions in the society that play a significant function of holding the society together, religion is a ritualized system of beliefs and practices related to things defined as sacred by an organized community of believers. (Obaje, 2003).

Religion is a sacred engagement with which is believed to be a spiritual reality, religion is a worldwide phenomenon that has played a significant part in all human culture. It is a unified

system of beliefs and practices which determines that society's morality Obaje (2018). An adequate understanding of religion must take into account its distinctive qualities and patterns as a form of human experience.

Religiosity is a term used to describe the extent to which religion influences societies and intersects with other areas of public life. It defines the role that religion plays in society, including the extent of people's beliefs, commitments, and levels of engagement with their particular religion. **Religiosity** is about religious orientations and involvement. It includes experiential, ritualistic, ideological, intellectual, consequential, creedal, communal, doctrinal, moral, and cultural dimensions while secularization is a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to a religion. It is a world view and life style oriented to the profane rather than the sacred, the natural rather than the supernatural. Secularism is a nonreligious approach to individual and social life. (Schaefer, 2001).

John, (1992) affirmed that, secularization still means the reduction of formal religious authority while institutional secularization has been fueled by the breakdown of a unified Christendom since the Reformation on the one hand, and by the increasing rationalization of society and culture from the Enlightenment to modern technological society on the other. Therefore, equity and idea of democracy was founded on the premise that the peoples (majority) will supersede the will of the minority.

Akande (2014) stated that the medicine of democracy still remains in democracy itself and democracy is a simple process that is inevitably linked with natural law. Every individual is born free and equal. The necessary integration of individuals into a Society or a country requires a regulation that will provide security and the sustenance of the natural rights of the individual member of the society. Democracy is the Government of the consent of the people, Ogovbaire (1999) observed that the problem of democracy revolves around how to process the idea which is simultaneously participatory for individual citizens, sensitive to, and protective of individual rights, freedoms and liberty; accommodative of multiple and competitive loyalties; and generative of economic growth and distributive justice.

Based on the above expression, in reconciling religiosity and secularity in democracy there is need for mediator in form of peacemaker who will reconcile the two variable and to stop domination of one **religious** community over other, the most **important** aspect of secularism is its separation of **religion** from **State** power. This is **important** for a country to function democratically. The majority could quite easily prevent minorities from practicing their **religions**. Nigerian constitution (FRNC, 1999) did not deprive right of the citizens their religious thought and conscience. The constitution stipulates that people should be guided in their religious activities in order not to go against the stipulation of the constitution since Nigerian society is a multi-religious society, that is why in the national debate it had have been set up as constitutional conference to work as a team in interpreting major trends in the religious life, political life of various faith to consider the future of religion to promote relation among one another.

What the constitution says.

The federal republic of Nigeria constitution section 38 stipulates the following with regards to religion.

1. Every person shall be entitle to freedom of conscience and religion, including freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with other, and in public or in private) to manifest and propagate his/her religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.
2. No person attending any place of education shall be required to receive religious instruction or to take part in or attend any religious ceremony or observance if such instruction, ceremony or observation relates to a religion other than his own, or a religion not approved by his parent or guardian.
3. No religious community or denomination shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for pupils of that community or denomination in any place of education maintained wholly by that community or denomination. (FRNC, 1999)

This section of the constitution, stipulate the rights of a citizen on his or her adherent religion, and the reason for this provision is to maintain peace among one another, maintain integration, co-operative distinct, working under one umbrella for a peaceful co-existence and stability. The constitutional conference put in place with regards to religious issues is to preach against religious bigotry, intolerance and rather tries to instill in the citizens the needs to tolerate one another for a stable society as well adhere to a peaceful co-existence.

Inter religious dialogue as a means of religious confrontation has to discuss issues in common on religious differences purpose of dialogue relevant especially in a pluralistic society like Nigeria. These purpose cannot be over emphasized, its purposes vary from sociological, political, economic and theological factors. Ajibola (2003) perceived the following purposes of religious dialogue among others.

- The fact of multiple religious' presences.
- The reality of the world as a, global village.
- The need to strengthen harmony.
- For joint solution to common problems.
- To help moderate the activities of religious extremists.
- To facilitate the unity of human nature.
- To harness the rich patrimony of our diversity.
- For the purpose of national reconciliation
- To dispel mutual suspicion and distrust

Hoffman (1991) observed that the role of moral education in schools is to reinforce values gained at home. Each child from birth by virtue of his environment belongs to a significant group, family members, friends, relatives, teachers and administrators play a major role in the formation of the character of each child because the teacher solely to shoulder this important task is appealing.

Whether you are a person with strong religious convictions or not, at one point or another you've probably given some thought to the role that religion plays in your community.

Religion and religious institutions have a strong influence on broad areas of public life, such as shaping of public policy, and personal elements like community connections. Regardless of where

an individual stand on the spectrum of religion, the concept plays a very important role in society, and for nearly a century it has been a strong area of interest for sociologist (Obaje, 2018). Sociologists of religion have observed that the people's beliefs, sense of belonging, and behaviour often are not congruent with an individual's actual religious beliefs since there is much diversity in how one can be religious or not. Although it's a rather broad term that can be applied in different contexts, religiosity is generally related to how much a particular religious' doctrine is internalized (belief systems, identity, etc.) and is less related to the actual practice of religion, like going to church. It's important to point out that studies of religiosity are not generally used to find out whether a person is or isn't religious; rather, they are used to determine the extent of their beliefs and the ways in which they influence their behaviors.

There are no known societies that do not have some form of religion, although religious beliefs and practices vary from culture to culture. All religions involve a set off symbols, invoking feelings of reverence, linked to rituals practiced by a community of believers. The three most influential monotheistic religions in world history are Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Although the influence of religion has declined, religion is certainly not on the verge of disappearing. From a historical perspective, the influence of religion has been weakened by the process of secularization. (Obaje, 2018).

Religious beliefs give meaning to life, and experiences associated with them provide personal gratification as well as relief from the frustrations and anxieties of daily life. Freedom of religion is a cornerstone of a free society; a truly free society is one which can accommodate a wide variety of beliefs, diversity of tastes and pursuits, customs and codes of conduct. A free society is one which aims at equality with respect to the enjoyment of fundamental freedoms.

Various ways that a secular state can interact with religion within its borders:

1. Neutral secular: The state is expressly non-religious and must not support religion in any way;
2. Positive secular: The state does not affirm religious beliefs of any particular religion

but may create conditions favourable to religions generally;

3. Negative secular: The state is not competent in matters involving religion but must not act so as to inhibit religious manifestations that do not threaten the common good
4. Inclusive secular: The state must not be run or directed by a particular religion but must act so as to include the widest involvement of different groups faith, including non-religious. Based on the above, religion may be view with its three great characteristic
 - Believes and religious practices
 - The religious feeling i.e. faith
 - Unity in a community of those who share the same faith.

The purposes of the practice of religion are to achieve the goals of salvation for oneself and others, and to render due worship and obedience to God. Different religions have different understandings of salvation and God. There are monotheistic religion, individual that believe in one god and polytheistic religious individual that believe in a number of gods. (Obaje, 2018).

The emphasis here is on the process of religious organization which involves internal changes in the religious movement and an adjustment of religious organisation in the general society since both the founders of religion as well as their followers comes from a variety of social group in the societies. These people hold different attitudes and different values, the condition under which they live and their life styles differ and consequently do their outlooks, needs, responses and motivational stimulus. More so, some religious ideas show a marked affinity for the needs and outlooks of some groups, and little or none at all for others. (Michael, 2007).

Consequently, different groups in society exhibit different kinds of religious behaviour and as a result, open up the relation to social structure. However, there are two relationships here, not only do social conditions affect the rise spread of ideas and values, but ideas and values an individual advocate in society affect the action of men.

More so society is not simply a social structure; it is also a complex of social process. The

relationship of value and goals of the society are at any given moment only relatively stable, slow and cumulative; changes in them are continually taking place. Other changes are more rapid, so rapid that they cause a visible disruption of the established structure. The breakdown of the established social and cultural forms and the emergence of new ones is a process that is continually going on in our present society. (Michael, 2007).

Measures of Religiosity

Obaje (2018) observed the following view on measures of religiosity among others

1. **Membership:** Religious membership is a widely used index, religious membership tells us very little about how active a person is or what he believes. Some members may have lapsed in enthusiasm while their names still remain in the books; others may be keen, but never actually become religious members.
2. **Frequency of Attendance:** This is another valuable index, it has an advantage over religious membership hi that its significance is the same for different religious body and denominations. However, there may be some religious attendees who have no real religious beliefs or feelings. The usual way of studying overt religious activity is by asking people how often they go to a place of worship. In the case of attendance, it is possible to count the number of people who go to place of worship.
3. **Attitudes towards Religion:** Attitudes towards religion provide another index, an attitude here means the extent to which a person is favourable or unfavourable to the organization or set of practices as judged by his verbal expressions. Attitude refers primarily to overt behaviour, verbal measures must be validated or checked against more direct measures. However, since attitudes are invariably assessed by verbal methods, and since attitudes measured in this way often differ from actual behaviour, it is probably best to treat them independently. An objection to attitude as an index of religious activity is that a person may be favourable to

religion without either holding the beliefs or engaging in the practices.

4. **Specific Beliefs:** These can be assessed only by asking single questions and the precise wording of these questions is important. It is important that surveys should not be compared unless the wording of questions is identical. The use of open-ended questions can be illuminating. For example, respondents may be asked to describe what they think the after-life will be like.
5. **Religious Experiences:** These have been asked about in a number of studies. Some scholars think that religious experiences are of great importance. You may for example frame a question to read: 'Have you ever had a religious or mystical experience?'
6. **Multi-dimensional Measures of Religiosity:** These have become widely accepted in recent years, this is because being religious involves several kinds of behavior and the idea that a good measure of religiosity has to include several criteria has gained popularity. Five dimensions of religiosity are ideological, ritualistic, experiential, intellectual and consequential dimensions. The ideological dimension covers religious activities such as prayer and worship. The ritualistic dimension refers to place of worship attendance of various kinds. The experiential dimension covers intense religious experiences such as conversion, speaking in tongues or mystical experiences. The intellectual dimension measures the knowledge of religious dogmas and practices, and the consequential dimensions deals with the effects of religiosity on conduct in other spheres.
7. **Religious Affiliation:** Religious affiliation or denominational membership can be used as a dependent variable or as an independent variable to predictor explain behavioural differences among denominations. Ideas about how members of various denominations differ stem from historical traditions, theological writings

or assumed psychological differences which result from the first two. But other factors such as social class and education as well as historical and social changes modify or blunt denominational distinctions.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to examine reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society; specifically, the objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the relationship between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society
2. Examine the ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society
3. Examine the roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society?
2. What are the ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society?
3. What are the roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society?

Methodology

The study was a descriptive survey design focused on religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. The target population for the study comprised of all the students in 400 level, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Science Education, Kogi State University, and the sample for the study comprised of 140 students 400 level, Faculty of Education, Department of Social Science Education, Kogi State University. These students were drawn using purposive sampling technique from the 400 level students, Department of Social Science Education, Kogi State University. The researcher constructed questionnaire titled reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society, Social Studies

Education perspective (RRSDSSSEP) to measure religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. The instrument has 15 items of a four-point scale of to a very great extent (VGE), great extent (GE), some extent (SE) little extent (LE). This instrument was validated by experts in the field of Social Studies Education, Religious Education and other experts from test and measurement. The researchers distributed and collected the copies of questionnaire with the help of two research assistants from Kogi State University. The data

collected were analysed using percentages, mean weighted mean of 2.5 computed as $4+3+2+1=10/4=2.5$ and standard deviation. Any mean score that is equal to or above 2.5 is considered appropriate.

Results

Research Question I What is the relationship between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society?

Table 1. Relationship between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society

Variables	VGE	GE	SE	LE	N	X	SD	DECISION
1. Religiosity is related to secularity to promote free religion existence in the society	24	75	11	30	140	3.0560	.73691	Accepted
2. Religiosity is related to secularity to avoid disintegration among people in the society	14	49	37	40	140	2.5600	.74856	Accepted
3. Religiosity is related to secularity for people of different faith to live peacefully in the society.	38	70	10	22	140	2.6500	.85047	Accepted
4. Religiosity is related to secularity to avoid religious discrimination in the society	17	84	27	12	140	3.1120	.828371	Accepted
5. Religiosity is related to secularity to promote the principle of religious tolerance.	39	46	28	27	140	2.6520	.08647	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019

Data in table1.above reveals the relationship that exists between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. The respondents' data on religiosity is related to secularity to promote free religion existence in the society reveals an acceptable mean score of 3.0560. However, the question that religiosity is related to secularity to avoid disintegration among people in the society gained a strong mean score of 2.5600. In the same vein, respondents' data on religiosity is related to secularity for people of different faith to live peacefully in the society also got a high mean score 2.6500 and therefore accepted. However,

respondents' data on Religiosity is related to secularity to avoid religious discrimination in the society gained a mean score of 3.1120 considered high and accepted. However, respondents' data on Religiosity is related to secularity to promote the principle of religious tolerance shows a mean score of 2.6520 and therefore accepted. The implication of these findings is that relationship exists between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society.

Research Question 2: What are the ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society?

Table 2. Ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society

Variables	VGE	GE	SE	LE	N	X	SD	DECISION
1. Religiosity is necessary in a democratic society to reconcile religion and modernity	34	75	12	19	140	3.2480	.72429	Accepted
2. Religiosity in a democratic society is important to avoid religious conflict	59	48	18	15	140	3.3080	.72612	Accepted
3. Secularity of religion can promote inherent plurality	30	78	21	11	140	3.2200	.77848	Accepted
4. Equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society	39	64	21	16	140	3.2840	.66111	Accepted
5. Principle of neutrality of the agents of states can promote religion in a secular society	37	70	17	16	140	3.2440	.68288	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019

Data on table 4.1.4 above represents the ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society. Respondents' data on religiosity is necessary in a democratic society to reconcile religion and modernity gained high mean score of 3.2480 and therefore is accepted. Similarly, respondents' data reveals that religiosity in a democratic society is important to avoid religious conflict got a mean score of 3.3080 and so accepted. Furthermore, respondents' data also show that secularity of religion can promote inherent plurality with a mean and acceptable score of 3.2200. In the same vein, equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society with a mean score of 3.2840. Finally, respondents'

data reveals that principle of neutrality of the agents of states can promote religion in a secular society with a mean score of 3.2240. The implication of this finding is that religiosity is necessary in a democratic society to reconcile religion and modernity, it is important to avoid religious conflict, secularity of religion can promote inherent plurality, equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society and principle of neutrality of the agents of states can promote religion in a secular society.

Research Question 3 What are the roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society?

Table 3. Roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society

Variables	VGE	GE	SE	LE	N	X	SD	DECISION
1. Social Studies Education as a value laden subject promote religiosity in a secular society through tolerance	14	95	26	5	140	2.620	.9203	Accepted
2. Social Studies Education promote social relation and norms that the society cherishes	34	49	39	13	140	3.0320	.69924	Accepted
3. Social Studies Education promote the right type of attitudes and behaviour that the society adhere	38	70	27	5	140	3.0600	.71164	Accepted
4. Interreligious dialogue and confrontation in Social Studies Education promote religious peace	67	22	17	34	140	3.3574	.59293	Accepted
5. Social Studies Education promote democratic values of multi-religious tenet in form of mediator for peacemaker	69	46	10	15	140	4.7720	.84962	Accepted

Source: Field survey, 2019

Table 3. Above represents the roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. Respondents' data on Social Studies Education as a value laden subject promote religiosity in a secular society through tolerance gained a mean score of 2.620 and therefore accepted. However, respondents accepted that Social Studies Education promotes social relation and norms that the society cherishes with an acceptable mean score of 3.0320. Furthermore, data also show that Social Studies Education promote the right type of attitudes and behaviour that the society adhere with a mean score of 3.0600. However, data also reveal that Interreligious dialogue and confrontation in Social Studies Education promote religious peace with a high mean score of 3.3574 and finally, Social Studies Education promote democratic values of multi-religious tenet in form of mediator for peacemaker with a mean score of 4.7720 and therefore accepted. Therefore Social Studies Education as a value laden subject promote religiosity in a secular society through tolerance, promote social relation and norms that the society cherishes, promote social relation and norms that the society cherishes, promote the right type of attitudes and behavior that the society adhere, religious tolerance in Social Studies Education promote religious peace and Social Studies Education promote democratic values of multi-religious tenet in form of mediator for peacemaker.

Discussion

Research question one is what is the relationship between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. The result shows that Relationship exists between religiosity and secularity in a democratic society. In line with this, the challenges of reconciling freedom of religion with secularism are two values that may seem incompatible. It looks at the protection afforded to freedom of religion in the Nigeria constitution as well as the country's core democratic values and secularism. Secularism is the most serious challenge of modernity posed by the West. Its main ideology is to liberate man from the religious and metaphysical values and expel religion from the practical aspect of man's life. (https://www.researchgate.net/publication/265023443_The_Impact_of_Secularism_on_Religious_Beliefs_and_Practices retrieved 2019)

Michael (2007) observed that the three objectives of a secular State are One religious community does not dominate another, some members do not dominate other members of the same religious community and the state does not enforce any particular religion nor does it take away the religious freedom of individuals. Schaefer and Lamm (1997) sum it up when there observed that one of the effects of secularism is social disintegration. This is felt more in Africa as there is social tension between those embracing the secularizing tendencies of the West and those struggling to remain African. In the face of all these devastating effects, what should be the response of religion? The people of the same faith must live their lives in this secular world under the Lordship of the God and in obedience to his will rather than the will of the word and the people of the same faith must work to ensure that religion is given a voice among the many other voices struggling to choke it out.

Research question two is what are the ways religiosity can reconcile with secularity in a democratic society? The result shows that religiosity is necessary in a democratic society to reconcile religion and modernity, it is important to avoid religious conflict, secularity of religion can promote inherent plurality, equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society and principle of neutrality of the agents of states can promote religion in a secular society. Based on the above, Schaefer and Lamm (1997) affirmed that majority of the reaction of religion to the secular world is that urgent steps needed to be taken in order to salvage the world from the grips of secularism that "in no sense, of course, is the distinction between the sacred and the secular an unbridgeable gap. These developments make it possible to distinguish between the sacred and secular parts of one's life, a distinction that could not be made in earlier societies in which religion was largely a family activity carried out in the home. Religion institution and the society are interdependent and exist in a reciprocal relationship. Religion is an integral part of culture of the people, while some people tend to refer it to be seen in a narrow sense to refer to a set of theological beliefs held and rituals performed by members of a particular group, It may be used in a broader sense for the belief systems, moral norms and values held by members of a society (Obaje, 2018)

Research question three is what are the roles of Social Studies Education in reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society? The result of the findings shows that Social Studies Education as a value laden subject promote religiosity in a secular society through tolerance, promote social relation and norms that the society cherishes, promote the right type of attitudes and behaviour that the society adhere, Interreligious dialogue and confrontation in Social Studies Education promote religious peace and Social Studies Education promote democratic values of multi-religious tenet in form of mediator for peacemaker. In the view of Nash (1997) the work of character education in schools and homes always starts with the adults. Moral decline of the youth is the result of reflection in the children who learned what are modeled. Therefore, Social Studies as a complex but organized process through which individual acquire worthy, knowledge, attitude, values, skills and competences that are vital for self-fulfillment and effective contribution to the survival and captivity of the society. These definitions imply that social studies have the attribute to develop desirable qualities for an all-round development of rich personality (Danladi, 2005)

Furthermore, Social Studies Education in many countries of the world is a child of necessity. This may imply that the essence of introducing Social Studies in most countries' curriculum was to heal some social ills towards national development (**Ezegbe, Eskay, Anyanwu and Abiogu, 2014**) This modification is through a process of studying human beings, relationship with his or her environment and with the desire to provide solutions to various complements of problems in order to ensure human survival, having been equipped with the necessary tools such as values, attitudes, skills and knowledge.

Conclusion

Social Studies Education could help to promote tolerance in multi-religious society since the society has a complexity of social process and independence of religion in the society is part of the social structure. Therefore, Social studies Education is used by the society to inculcate in students, the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that would allow them to live and function

effectively to promote religiosity and secularization in a democratic society.

Recommendation

The followings are recommended on reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society in Nigeria.

- Nigerian Government should not interfere in religious matter and equality before the law is a way of promoting religion in a secular society through Nigerian constitution.
- The Government should disseminate adequate information through seminars, conferences and workshop on reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society
- Nigerian Government should lay more emphasis on the adequate teaching of Social Studies Education teachers on reconciling religiosity and secularity in a democratic society.

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