

# **SURVEY OF CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF RELIGIOUS DISCRIMINATION AMONG SENIORS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE F.C.T ABUJA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*This research looked at the survey of causes and consequences of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja. This study had two objectives, two research questions and two null hypotheses which guided the study. The research design was a survey design. The population of the study was 12,306, out of which 250 students were selected randomly from twelve schools within the study area. The instrument used to collect the data was self-structured questionnaire entitled: "Causes and consequences of Religious Discrimination Questionnaire" (CERDQ). The demographic data were analyzed using percentage, while answers research questions were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. All the hypotheses were tested using t-test. These hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The findings showed that, erroneous beliefs, ideology, false teaching and background, are the causes of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T. It was also revealed that; religious discrimination led to hatred and killing. Results from the study revealed that religious discrimination is transcended to gender line of both male and female. The findings of the study also revealed that both genders face religious discrimination. It was recommended that, stake-holders like counsellors, social organizations and religious bodies, should always organize programme purely for the teaching of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the F.C.T, Abuja, Nigeria.*

## **Introduction**

In every given society both developed and underdeveloped country like ours, peoples' actions and inaction are governed by certain principles and culture. These principles and culture are embedded in religious beliefs, which tend to influence peoples' behaviours towards one another, either positively or negatively. In view of this, many students exhibit hatred for one another. This act of behaviour is noticeable when they want to choose a leader like class monitor and other leadership positions in the school. Surprisingly, their choice of leadership is not based on competency, but rather on religious basis. In view of the above, Paul (2019) stressed that, everything about Nigeria either politically or economically, is governed by religious beliefs and every sex is involved either

positively or negatively. This according to Paul (2019) is a reflection of false teaching and doctrine inculcated into the heart of the congregation by the religious leaders. That, this false teaching contributes to religious discrimination, which often times turns violent or into religious crises. Bassiomi and Langrehr (2021) noted that erroneous beliefs, false teaching and individuals' background, contribute maximally to religious discrimination all over the world, which led to several religious crises. They added that, this religious discrimination is cut across to every religious. This is because, everyone sees their religious beliefs as the best when compared to other religions (Sharlaine, 2018). In addition, Zoua, Vang, and Elder (2019) stressed that this act of behaviour only makes one's religious faith far from real. They added that, it conditions peoples' minds to certain beliefs which may serve as a source of hatred for one another, as well as the killing of one another.

In this regard, the behaviour of some students towards others in school is largely dependent on their religious beliefs which may be influenced by other factors negatively. Among the over bearing factors are teaching of religious intolerance by religious leaders, false teaching, wrong interpretation of sacred word and keeping people in the state of ignorance (Zheng & Christoph, 2019). Other factors include, hate teaching particularly for disassociation from people's of other religion. On other hand, Anais, Adre & Nicolas (2019) asserted that, peoples' beliefs about religions affect their psychological processes, as well as other areas of life. They added that, despite the effort of the various professional organizations in preaching against religious discrimination among individuals, it appears that no effort has ever be made, due to its predominant nature among Seniors in secondary schools. Without doubt, religious discrimination has a significant impact on mental and physical behaviour of an individual (Murtaza, 2020). It also limits their level of closeness to others, increases social disintegration and lowers interpersonal relationship among many students. Similarly, Ghumman, Ryan, Barclay and Markel (2013) asserted that belief plays a major part in the aspect of cultural beliefs and social life style of an individual. They added that it is deeply rooted in people's experiences and influences their socioeconomic life which direct their affairs of their relationship with others.

Importantly, the role of religion is obviously complex and it varies across time and space. This process is influenced by institutional norms, as well as culture and tradition which are both largely determined by religious Mienah, Mandy, Oishee, Kevin, Jacqueline, Anne, Yin and Priest, (2019). As the relationship between religion and culture is reciprocal, religious systems are locked in a circle of mutual influence with social norms and patterns of social organizations, and these influence students' behaviour negatively among their mates especially those with different religious beliefs. On the other hand, religious discrimination is not limited to a particular gender, rather, it cut across every individual, both male and female inrespective of tribes. And this tends to influence the level of trust towards one another, as well as their beliefs system about some individual, especially people of different religious practice. Consequently, this makes the society full of hatred among many families in general and students in particular (Nakpodia and Urien, 2015). They stress further that; gender base and religious base discrimination is pervasive and costly phenomenon.

However, religious discrimination, according Paul (2016) involves treating a person unfavorably because of his or her religious belief. It is an act of avoiding and refusing to associate with an individual because of his or her religious belief. He added that this act could have short and long-

time consequences, and it cut across to all genders. In view of the above, religious discrimination become a social phenomenon, as well as a global issue which, despite campaigns and public enlightenment, still have a deep root in the society. In addition, Neha, Jonathan, Ariana, Kelsey & Manolo (2021) revealed that religious discrimination has detrimental effects on the students' behaviour as well as their human relationship, especially towards people or students who practise different religions. This discrimination is deeply rooted in the mind-set of an individual which affects students' moral and psychological conditions in making decision. This mid-set makes some students see some persons as their bothers while others are not their brothers, as a result of religious beliefs.

Therefore, the consequences of religious discrimination on the students' behaviour towards others of different religious beliefs in particular, cannot be over emphasized. This is because, it affects their mental and psychological well-being in relation to their attitude towards others from different religion. It also generates hatred and makes individuals nurture evil against one another, which often times lead to killing and religious crisis in the society which appear as a phenomenon. Sadly, it worsens religious intolerance and peaceful coexistence among different religious beliefs. It also limits students' level of closeness to others, increases social disintegration and lowers interpersonal relationship towards one another. Finally, it mars both local and national development and increases injustice in the land, including high rate of religious intolerance especially those with different religious beliefs.

It is on the basis of the above, that the researchers decided to find out if there are any factors predisposing religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja.

### **Objectives of the study**

This study was guided by the following objectives which were to:

- i find out the causes of religious discrimination among senior secondary school students in the F.C.T Abuja on the basis of gender.
- ii examine the consequences of religious discrimination among Senior Secondary School students in the F.C.T, Abuja in terms of gender.

### **Research Questions**

The researchers raised the following questions which guided the study.

- i What are the causes of religious discrimination among Senior Secondary School students in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja based on gender?
- ii What are the consequences of religious discrimination among Senior Secondary School students in the F.C.T, Abuja in terms of gender?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study and it was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- Ho1: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the causes of religious discrimination in Senior Secondary Schools in the F.C.T, Abuja, Nigeria.
- Ho2: There is no significant difference between male and female students on the consequences of religious discrimination in Senior Secondary Schools in the F.C.T, Abuja, Nigeria.

### **Methodology**

For this study, a survey research design was chosen. According to Imam (2019), a survey research methodology or survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group.

The participants in this study are 12306 which comprised of all Senior Secondary School students who are in SS 11 in the F.C.T, Abuja.

The researchers used random sampling technique to select 2 Senior secondary public schools from each of the Area Council of F.C.T, Abuja, through balloting system making a total of twelve (12) schools. Out of which 250 sample size was selected for this study which include of students who were in senior secondary schools particularly SS II in the F.C.T Abuja. The researchers considered the formula of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) as appropriate in selecting the sample size for this study. They opined that there is no fixed number or percentage of subjects that determine the size of an adequate sample. SS II students were selected for this research, due to the fact that they fit the criteria of students who can understand some level of religious discrimination experienced or witness in their day today activities as students.

The instrument utilised in this research was a self-structured questionnaire developed by the researchers entitled: “Causes and Consequences of Religious Discrimination Questionnaire” (CCRDQ). The instrument has two sections: Sections A and B. Section A contain items on the information about the respondents while section B contain 18 items of the research questions. This questionnaire was verified through face, construct and content validity, by the expert in Measurement and Evaluation Department, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja. The test-retest method was used to assess the reliability of the instrument. Within a three-week period, the instrument underwent pilot testing between the first and second administrations. The result of the two administrations was correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which yielded an index of stability of 0.69 and it was considered high enough for the study.

The researchers, with the help of two Research Assistants who were briefed about the subject matter, helped to distribute the copies of the questionnaires to all the respondents in the sample schools, during school hours and the completed questionnaires were collected on the spot.

The data collected from respondents was analyzed using simple percentage; frequency counts and mean scores for the demographic data and answers to research questions. Hypotheses were tested using t-test statistical technique at 0.05 level of significance, because two groups were comparing. The decision rule was that any value from 2.50 and above was accepted and any value below 2.50 was rejected.

## Presentation of Results

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents according to Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	96	44.3
Female	121	55.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 1 showed that 96 respondents (44.3%) were male students, while 121 (55.7%) respondents were female students. This implies that the female students were more than the male students in this study.

Research Question One: What are the causes of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja?

**Table 2: Causes of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja**

N =217

S/N	Statements	$\bar{X}$	Std. Dev	Decision
1	Most religious discrimination is as a result of erroneous beliefs	3.30	.88	Agree
2	False teaching contributes to religious discrimination	3.11	.81	Agree
3	Whatever my friend does is right as long we share the same religion	2.89	1.05	Agree
4	Wrong doctrines contribute to my religious discrimination	3.32	.85	Agree
5	Naturally I see other religious people as less harmful beings	1.65	.90	Disagree
6	Despite my religious doctrine I don't discriminate religiously	3.11	.94	Agree
7	People's ideology about religion leads to discrimination.	3.20	.87	Agree
8	Despite my religious belief, I don't discriminate	1.83	.98	Disagree
9	Identity of people causes religious discrimination	1.79	.92	Disagree
10	Background encourages religious discrimination	3.24	.83	Agree
<b>Sectional Mean</b>		<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.90</b>	

Table 2 showed the mean responses of students on the causes of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja. The mean showed agreement with some of the items and disagreement in others. The sectional mean for the items on students' responses on the causes of religious discrimination among seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja was 2.76 which means that some of the causes are; erroneous beliefs, ideology, false teaching and backgrounds contribute to religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the

F.C.T, Abuja, with a mean score above 2.5 and a standard deviation of 0.90, the F.C.T, Abuja is a major contributor to the majority of the causes of religious discrimination.

**Research Question Two:** What are the consequences of religious discrimination among seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja?

**Table 3: Consequences of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja**

		N =217		
S/N	Statements	$\bar{X}$	Std. Dev	Decision
11	Various killings are traceable to religious discrimination	3.68	1.72	Agree
12	I feel insecure each time I am with people of other religious beliefs.	3.00	1.10	Agree
13	I can kill to protect my religion	3.08	1.08	Agree
14	My love for people of other religious beliefs is not genuine	3.10	1.17	Agree
15	I am not practicing all the teaching of hatred towards other religious groups.	2.58	1.19	Agree
16	I defend my friends even when they are wrong because of religion	2.36	1.18	Disagree
17	My best friends are from other religious groups	2.88	1.10	Agree
18	My conduct is guided by negative religious teaching I received	2.01	1.09	Disagree
<b>Sectional Mean</b>		<b>2.84</b>	<b>1.20</b>	

Table 3 showed the mean responses of students on the consequences of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja. The mean showed agreement with some of the items and disagreement in others. The sectional mean for the items on students' responses on the consequences of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja was 2.84, which means that religious discrimination may also lead to killings and hatred in the F.C.T, Abuja. The mean score is above 2.5 (midpoint on a 4-point Likert scale) with a standard deviation of 1.20, signifying that there are consequences for religious discrimination in the F.C.T, Abuja.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female students concerning the causes of religious discrimination in Senior Secondary School in the F.C.T, Abuja.

**Table 4: t-test on the difference between male and female students on the causes of religious discrimination among Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja.**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	S. D	t-value	Df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	101	2.39	.63	1.84	213	.068	Not Significant
Female	116	2.27	.59				

The analysis in Table 4 was carried out to test difference between male and female students on the causes of religious discrimination in Senior Secondary School in the F.C.T, Abuja. The significant value of .068 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis that says that there is no significant difference between male and female students on the causes of religious discrimination in senior secondary school in the F.C.T Abuja, is thus, accepted and concluded that both male and female do not differ significantly in the causes of religious discrimination in senior secondary schools in FCT, Abuja.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference between male and female students on the consequences of religious discrimination in Senior Secondary School in the F.C.T, Abuja.

**Table 5: t-test on the consequences between male and female students on religious discrimination in senior secondary school in FCT, Abuja.**

Gender	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	t-value	df	Sig(2-tailed)	Decision
Male	103	2.41	.65	1.86	215	.065	Not Significant
Female	114	2.25	.58				

Table 5 was analyzed to show the differences amongst students, both male and female in religious discrimination in Senior Secondary School in FCT, Abuja. The significant value of .065 which is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the hypothesis that asserts there is no significant difference between male and female students on the consequences of religious discrimination in senior secondary school in the F.C.T Abuja, is thus, accepted and conclude that male and female students did not differ in religious discrimination in seniors in secondary schools in FCT.

### Discussion of Results

The answer to the first research question revealed causes of religious discrimination, such as erroneous beliefs, ideology, false teaching and background of the Seniors in secondary schools in the F.C.T, Abuja. The underlying causes are capable of destroying the peace and unity of any community, as well as marbled the progress of any country. And if these ideologies are not re-structured among Seniors in secondary schools, it may complicate future problems where peace and progress become a yearning desire for all. This finding is in line with that of Bassiomi & Langrehr (2021) who are of the opinion that erroneous beliefs, false teaching and individuals' background contribute maximally to religious discrimination all over the world, which lead to several religious crises. Naturally, what we hear and learn has the capacity to form part of our behaviour consciously and unconsciously. It, therefore, implies that false teaching, as well as erroneous beliefs are part of what one hears and they could do more harm than good to any society including the F.C.T, Abuja.

The second finding from the research question revealed that religious discrimination led to killings and hatred in the F.C.T, Abuja. There is always a consequence of any action, and religious discrimination may not be exempt. This is because, discrimination of any kind is always built on falsehood. This finding is in accordance with that of Zoua, Vang, and Elder (2019), who are of the opinion that, religious discrimination only makes one's religious faith far from reality. They added

that it conditions peoples' minds to certain beliefs which always generate hatred and make individuals to nurture evil against one another and often time leads to killings and religious crisis in the society. In fact, killing because of religion, could be ignorant of the true knowledge of any religion. In relation to this, Nakpodia and Urien, (2015). who are of the opinion that, gender-based and religious-based discrimination is a pervasive and costly phenomenon.

Hypotheses One which states that, male and female students do not differ significantly with regard to the causes of religious discrimination. The hypotheses, therefore, was accepted. Naturally, people tend to prefer their religious beliefs to other, but should not be at the cost of other religion. No doubt, the idea of open preference is common in our contemporary society and it contributes to religious intolerance that one may witness or experience day by day. The finding of this first hypothesis is in agreement with Bassiomi & Langrehr (2021) who are strongly believed that, the religious discrimination cut across to every religious.

Hypothesis Two which states that, male and female do not differ significantly with regard to the consequences of religious discrimination. The hypothesis was, therefore, accepted that, male and female do not differ in religious discrimination in Senior Secondary School in FCT. Naturally, discrimination of any kind does not recognize gender nor the object of discrimination which is religious. This finding is in agreement with the submission of Paul (2016) who noted that the consequences of religious discrimination have short and long-term consequences and it cut across to all genders. More so, the finding was also in support of Jegede (2019) who believed that everything about Nigeria, either politically or economically is governed by religious and every gender is involved either positively or negatively. It, therefore implies that no gender is free when it comes to the consequences of religious discrimination.

### **Conclusion**

From the findings of the study, it was noted that, factors like erroneous beliefs, ideology, false teaching and the background of an individual, are the major factors contributing to religious discrimination in the Senior Secondary School. The study also discovered that the consequences of religious discrimination is hatred which metamorphosises to killing and religious crises. It was also discovered in this study that various religion are involved in discrimination and no gender is safe when it comes to the consequences of religious discrimination.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Religious leaders at all levels, should dwell more, both openly and secretly, on religious tolerance, which may reduce religious discrimination in our present society. The study also recommended that effort should be made by the government to monitor the teaching of the various religious leaders and be objective at all times.
2. There should be reorientation by various religious group about the need not to fight for God. There should be also a capital punishment to be meted out to any group or persons that kills through organized religious crises.
3. There should be periodic counselling programmes for all our religious leader in order for them to guide their follower appropriately without fear or favour. It was also recommended that stake-holders, like counsellors, social organizations and religious bodies should always



organize programme purely for the teaching of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence in the F.C.T Abuja, Nigeria.

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