

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCES ON THE TEACHING OF CIVIL LIBERTIES AND DEMOCRACY THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN PLATEAU CENTRAL SENATORIAL DISTRICT, PLATEAU STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study examines the influence of religious beliefs on the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. The Secularization Theory, propounded by Bryan Wilson (1966) and further developed by Steve Bruce (2002), served as a theoretical framework for this study. The study used descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of 1,532 teachers of English and CRS in the selected Senatorial District. The study sampled 280 respondents from 70 public secondary schools. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using mean scores and chi-square statistical tools. Findings indicate that religious beliefs significantly influence teaching materials, classroom discussions and students' understanding of democratic principles. Teachers perceive religious influences as both reinforcing and hindering democratic education and they face challenges such as student resistance, parental opposition and institutional restrictions. The study concludes that religious beliefs play a critical role in shaping the delivery of democracy and civil liberties education through English language instruction. It recommends strategies for balancing religious perspectives with democratic principles to foster effective civic education in secondary schools.

Keywords: Religion, Civil Liberties, Democracy, English Language, Instruction

Introduction

The teaching of civil liberties and democracy is essential in fostering responsible citizenship and promoting human rights in any society. In Nigeria, education plays an important role in shaping students' understanding of democratic values, including freedom of speech, equality and justice. English language instruction, being the primary medium of communication in Nigerian secondary schools, serves as a critical tool for transmitting these values. However, religious beliefs significantly shape the perceptions and attitudes of both teachers and students toward civil liberties and democracy. In a religiously diverse state like Plateau, where Christianity and Islam dominate, the integration of democratic principles into English language instruction is often influenced by religious ideologies. According to Nwosu (2021), religious teachings in schools can either support or challenge democratic ideals, depending on how educators interpret and apply them. The extent to which religious beliefs shape classroom discourse, instructional materials and student engagement with democratic concepts remains an important area of study.

Religious influences on education in Nigeria are deeply rooted in history, as missionary and Islamic schools played a foundational role in the development of formal education. While these religious institutions contributed significantly to literacy and moral instruction, they also embedded religious doctrines in educational content. In contemporary public schools, where secular education is expected, religious beliefs still shape pedagogical practices. For instance, teachers' religious orientations often affect their willingness to discuss sensitive issues like gender equality, freedom of expression and political participation. Eze (2020) asserts that some educators unconsciously impose religious biases when explaining democratic concepts, leading to selective engagement with topics that align with their beliefs. This influence may result in a skewed understanding of civil liberties, where students interpret democratic values through religious lenses rather than constitutional principles. Thus, analyzing how religious beliefs shape the teaching of democracy through English language instruction is critical for ensuring a balanced and inclusive curriculum.

The interplay between religion and democratic education in Plateau State presents both challenges and opportunities. On the one hand, religious values emphasise morality, social justice and ethical leadership, which align with democratic principles. On the other hand, religious conservatism may conflict with democratic ideals such as freedom of thought, secular governance and tolerance for diverse perspectives. Public secondary schools are expected to provide neutral, fact-based education, yet religious influences often shape teachers' classroom interactions and students' interpretations of democratic values. According to Ibrahim (2019), the dominance of religious perspectives in educational settings can hinder open discussions on controversial but important civic topics. When religious doctrines conflict with democratic principles, students may struggle to reconcile their faith with constitutional rights. This dynamic raises important questions about how educators navigate religious influences while teaching civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction.

Given the significant role of English language instruction in shaping students' understanding of democracy, it is important to examine the extent to which religious beliefs influence pedagogical approaches. English textbooks, classroom discussions and instructional strategies serve as platforms for either reinforcing or challenging democratic values. In a multi-religious environment like Plateau State, teachers' ability to maintain neutrality while addressing civil liberties is essential in fostering critical thinking and civic awareness among students. Umeh (2022) emphasises that achieving a balance between religious sensitivity and democratic education requires clear policy guidelines, teacher training and inclusive curriculum development. This study, therefore, seeks to

explore how religious influences shape the teaching of civil liberties and democracy in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

Statement of the Problem

The teaching of civil liberties and democracy in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State is significantly influenced by religious beliefs, which can either support or hinder the effective transmission of democratic values. In a multi-religious society like Nigeria, where Christianity and Islam play dominant roles, teachers' religious orientations often shape their instructional approaches, sometimes leading to biases in the way civil liberties are presented. While democracy advocates freedom of expression, equality and secular governance, some religious teachings may emphasise obedience, conservatism, or theocratic principles, which can create conflicts in civic education. English language instruction, which serves as a medium for teaching democracy through literature, debates and discussions, may be affected by religious sentiments, resulting in selective interpretation of democratic principles. According to Ojo (2022), when educators allow personal religious views to influence their teaching of civic concepts, students may develop a skewed understanding of democracy, limiting their ability to engage critically with governance and human rights issues.

Despite the inclusion of civic education in the school curriculum, there is a growing concern that religious influences may overshadow objective instruction on civil liberties and democracy. Some teachers may avoid discussing topics such as freedom of religion, gender equality, or secular governance due to personal religious beliefs or fear of controversy. This can lead to gaps in students' understanding of democratic principles, affecting their ability to participate meaningfully in civic life. Additionally, the religious composition of Plateau State, which has experienced ethno-religious tensions, may further complicate how democratic values are taught, as educators may struggle to maintain neutrality. As noted by Bello (2023), the intersection of religion and education requires careful navigation to ensure that students receive a balanced civic education that respects religious diversity while upholding democratic ideals. Therefore, this study seeks to examine how religious influences shape the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State, with the goal of identifying challenges and proposing solutions for a more inclusive and effective civic education.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine religious influences on the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English Language instruction in Public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. Specific objectives of the study:

1. To examine the extent to which religious beliefs influence the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.
2. To investigate the perceptions of English language teachers regarding the role of religion in shaping students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles.
3. To assess the challenges faced by English language teachers in balancing religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do religious beliefs influence the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State?
2. How do English language teachers perceive the role of religion in shaping students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles?
3. What challenges do English language teachers face in balancing religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses will be tested at 0.05 level of significance:

The following null hypotheses were formulated based on the research questions:

1. There is no significant relationship between religious beliefs and the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.
2. There is no significant relationship between English language teachers' perceptions of religion and students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles.
3. There is no significant relationship between the challenges faced by English language teachers and their ability to balance religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

Conceptual Review

The Concept of Civil Liberties and Democracy

Civil liberties and democracy are fundamental concepts that define modern governance and citizenship. Civil liberties refer to the basic rights and freedoms that individuals enjoy, such as freedom of speech, religion and association, which are protected by law from government interference. Democracy, on the other hand, is a system of governance in which power is vested in the people, either directly or through elected representatives. In democratic societies, civil liberties serve as the foundation for ensuring justice, equality and political participation. According to Adeyemi (2020), civil liberties are important for maintaining a functional democracy because they empower individuals to express their opinions, challenge governmental actions and participate in decision-making processes. Without the protection of civil liberties, democracy risks being compromised, as citizens may be unable to hold leaders accountable or freely engage in political discourse.

In the Nigerian context, civil liberties and democracy have been enshrined in the 1999 Constitution, which guarantees fundamental rights to all citizens. However, challenges such as political instability, corruption and religious influences have affected the full realization of these principles. While democracy is intended to be a system that promotes inclusivity and equal rights, societal and cultural factors often dictate how these principles are interpreted and applied. According to Ojo (2021), religious and ethnic affiliations significantly impact Nigerians' understanding of democracy, sometimes leading to the prioritization of group interests over national unity. This has implications for how democratic values are taught in schools, particularly in regions like Plateau State, where religious diversity is a key social factor.

The teaching of democracy in secondary schools is essential in fostering informed and responsible citizens. Through civic education, students are introduced to democratic principles such as the rule of law, human rights and political participation. Schools serve as important institutions for shaping young people's attitudes toward governance and the way democracy is taught influences their future engagement with political and social issues. However, there are

concerns that religious biases may affect how civil liberties are presented in the classroom. Yusuf (2022) notes that in some educational settings, teachers may avoid discussions on certain democratic issues, such as gender equality or secular governance, due to religious sensitivities. This selective approach to civic education can lead to an incomplete understanding of democracy among students, limiting their ability to critically analyze societal issues.

Given the importance of civil liberties in sustaining democracy, it is important to ensure that their teaching is objective and comprehensive. In a multi-religious society like Nigeria, striking a balance between respecting religious beliefs and upholding democratic principles is necessary for fostering national cohesion. English language instruction plays a significant role in this process, as it provides a platform for discussions on civic matters through literature, debates and writing exercises. According to Nnaji (2023), when properly integrated into language instruction, discussions on democracy can help students develop critical thinking skills and a deeper appreciation for civil liberties. Therefore, examining the influence of religion on the teaching of democracy through English language instruction is vital for ensuring that students receive a well-rounded civic education.

The Role of Religion in Education

Religion has historically played a significant role in shaping educational systems worldwide. In many societies, religious institutions were the pioneers of formal education, establishing schools that provided both moral and academic instruction. In Nigeria, the influence of religion in education dates back to the pre-colonial and colonial periods, when Christian missionaries and Islamic scholars introduced Western and Quranic education, respectively. While religious education has contributed positively to literacy and moral development, it has also shaped students' worldviews in ways that may either support or hinder democratic values. According to Olaniyan (2021), religious beliefs influence students' perceptions of civic issues, sometimes reinforcing values that align with democracy, such as justice and equality, while at other times promoting conservative ideologies that challenge secular governance.

In contemporary Nigeria, religion continues to be a major factor in educational policies and practices. Despite the government's efforts to promote secular education in public schools, religious influences remain evident in teaching methodologies, curriculum content and school administration. Teachers, who often hold strong religious beliefs, may unconsciously integrate these perspectives into their instruction, affecting how subjects such as civic education and democracy are taught. According to Bello (2022), some educators avoid discussing topics that contradict their religious beliefs, such as gender rights or freedom of expression, which can limit students' exposure to diverse perspectives. This creates a complex educational environment where religious values intersect with democratic principles, sometimes resulting in conflicts over what should be prioritised in civic education.

The religious composition of a region can also affect the extent to which democratic principles are embraced in schools. In Plateau State, where Christianity and Islam are the dominant faiths, religious identity often influences social and political interactions. This can have implications for the way civil liberties and democracy are taught, as students may interpret democratic concepts through the lens of their religious beliefs. Ezeocha (2023) argues that while religious teachings can promote ethical leadership and social justice, they can also reinforce exclusivist ideologies that undermine pluralism and democratic tolerance. This dual effect of religion in education underscores the need for a balanced approach that respects religious diversity while upholding democratic principles.

To ensure that education remains an avenue for promoting civic awareness and democratic engagement, it is important to adopt policies that encourage neutrality in teaching. Schools should create an environment where students are exposed to multiple perspectives and are encouraged to think critically about civic issues. According to Uche (2023), integrating religious tolerance and democratic education into the curriculum can help bridge the gap between faith and governance, fostering a more inclusive society. In the context of English language instruction, this means using diverse texts, open discussions and critical analysis exercises to help students engage with democratic concepts beyond religious interpretations.

English Language Instruction and Civic Education

English language instruction plays an important role in civic education by providing students with the tools to engage with democratic principles through reading, writing and discussion. As the official language of Nigeria, English is the primary medium of instruction in secondary schools, making it an essential vehicle for conveying civic knowledge. Through literature, debates, essays and comprehension exercises, students are introduced to ideas about governance, human rights and social justice. According to Okonkwo (2021), language is not only a means of communication but also a tool for shaping thought and perception, meaning that the way democracy is taught through English instruction can influence students' civic awareness. If democratic concepts are presented objectively and inclusively, students are more likely to develop critical thinking skills and an appreciation for civil liberties.

The integration of democratic education into English language instruction can take various forms, including the use of literary texts that explore themes of justice, equality and governance. Novels, plays and poems that highlight struggles for democracy and human rights can serve as powerful tools for teaching civic values. For example, texts by Nigerian authors that depict historical and contemporary issues related to governance can help students connect abstract democratic principles to real-life contexts. According to Adebayo (2022), when students analyze and discuss democratic themes in literature, they gain a deeper understanding of political processes and human rights, which enhances their civic engagement.

However, religious influences on education can affect how democratic principles are presented in English language instruction. Teachers who hold strong religious beliefs may frame discussions on civil liberties and democracy in ways that align with their faith perspectives. In some cases, this may lead to a selective interpretation of democratic concepts, emphasizing aspects that conform to religious teachings while downplaying others. For instance, discussions on freedom of speech may be moderated based on religious values, potentially limiting open discourse. As observed by Ajayi (2023), the challenge is ensuring that English language instruction remains a neutral and inclusive space where students can critically engage with civic issues without religious bias.

Theoretical Framework

The Secularization Theory, propounded by Bryan Wilson (1966) and further developed by Steve Bruce (2002), serves as a relevant theoretical framework for this study. This theory posits that as societies modernise, religious influence over social, political and educational institutions declines, leading to a separation between religion and public affairs. The core principles of the theory include the differentiation of secular and religious spheres, the decline of religious authority in governance and education and the increasing emphasis on rationality and individual rights over religious dogma. Applying this theory to the present study, it explains the tension between religious beliefs and democratic values in English language instruction. In Plateau State, where religious affiliations significantly shape societal norms, teachers may integrate religious perspectives into

their lessons, influencing students’ understanding of civil liberties and democracy. However, the secularization process suggests that public education should focus on democratic ideals, human rights and critical thinking, rather than religious dogma. By using this framework, the study examines how religious influences persist in the teaching of democracy and civil liberties, despite the expectation that public education should be neutral and inclusive.

Methodology

This study employed the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study consisted of English language teachers and Christian Religious Studies teachers in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. The sample of the study comprised 280 respondents, selected from 70 public secondary schools across the state. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents where on teachers of English and CRS participated in the exercise. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Religious Influences on the Teaching of Civil Liberties and Democracy through English Language Instruction (RITCLD-ELI)." The questionnaire was designed using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree and it comprised 15 items. The instrument underwent face validity by experts in education and research methodology. A pilot study was conducted, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.89. For data analysis, the mean score was used to answer the research questions, while the chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool was employed to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent do religious beliefs influence the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State?

Table 1: Mean Score Showing the Extent to Which Religious Beliefs Influence the Teaching of Civil Liberties and Democracy

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | Total | \bar{x} |
|-----|---|-----|-----|----|----|-------|-----------|
| 1 | Religious beliefs influence the selection of teaching materials in English language instruction. | 112 | 84 | 48 | 36 | 692 | 2.96 |
| 2 | Teachers incorporate religious perspectives while teaching topics on civil liberties and democracy. | 80 | 92 | 56 | 52 | 664 | 2.82 |
| 3 | Religious beliefs shape students' reception and interpretation of democratic concepts taught in English lessons. | 98 | 100 | 40 | 42 | 694 | 2.98 |
| 4 | School policies influenced by religion impact how civil liberties are discussed in English language classes. | 104 | 86 | 50 | 40 | 692 | 2.96 |
| 5 | Teachers adjust their teaching methods to align with students' religious beliefs when discussing democratic principles. | 78 | 106 | 52 | 44 | 668 | 2.85 |

Table 1 shows that all the items have mean scores above 2.50, indicating that respondents agree that religious beliefs significantly influence English language instruction regarding civil liberties and democracy. Specifically, religious beliefs affect teaching materials, influence how teachers present democratic concepts, shape students' understanding and impact school policies.

Research Question Two: How do English language teachers perceive the role of religion in shaping students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles?

Table 2: Mean Score Showing Teachers' Perception of Religion's Role in Civil Liberties and Democracy Education

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | Total | \bar{x} |
|-----|--|-----|----|----|----|-------|-----------|
| 6 | Teachers believe that religious teachings help reinforce democratic values in students. | 130 | 90 | 32 | 28 | 710 | 3.04 |
| 7 | Teachers perceive religious beliefs as a barrier to students' full acceptance of democratic principles. | 120 | 88 | 36 | 36 | 700 | 3.00 |
| 8 | Teachers think that students' religious backgrounds influence their responses to discussions on civil liberties. | 140 | 80 | 30 | 30 | 720 | 3.07 |
| 9 | Teachers feel that incorporating religious perspectives in democracy lessons helps students understand civil liberties better. | 126 | 98 | 28 | 28 | 722 | 3.08 |
| 10 | Teachers believe that religious influences should be minimised when teaching civil liberties and democracy. | 108 | 92 | 40 | 40 | 692 | 2.96 |

Table 2 reveals that respondents largely agree that religious teachings influence students' understanding of democratic values. While some teachers see religion as reinforcing democratic values, others perceive it as a barrier. Therefore, religion plays a important role in shaping how students interpret civil liberties and democracy.

Research Question Three: What challenges do English language teachers face in balancing religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State?

Table 3: Mean Score Showing Challenges Faced by English Language Teachers in Addressing Religious Influences

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | Total | \bar{x} |
|-----|---|-----|----|----|----|-------|-----------|
| 11 | Teachers face resistance from students due to religious beliefs when discussing civil liberties and democracy. | 138 | 82 | 36 | 24 | 718 | 3.06 |
| 12 | Some parents oppose the teaching of certain democratic principles due to religious reasons. | 130 | 86 | 40 | 24 | 712 | 3.04 |
| 13 | Teachers struggle to find neutral teaching materials that balance religious beliefs and democratic values. | 122 | 92 | 38 | 28 | 706 | 3.02 |
| 14 | School authorities impose religious restrictions on topics related to civil liberties and democracy. | 116 | 88 | 42 | 34 | 698 | 2.99 |
| 15 | Teachers experience difficulty in handling classroom discussions where religious views conflict with democratic principles. | 140 | 80 | 30 | 30 | 720 | 3.07 |

Table 3 highlights significant challenges faced by teachers. The most prominent issues include student resistance, parental opposition, difficulty finding neutral teaching materials, school-imposed religious restrictions and challenges in managing discussions where religious views conflict with democratic principles.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between religious beliefs and the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

| Cells | f _o | f _e | Df | x ² cal | x ² crit | Decision |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 5 | 11 | 47.60 | 12 | 61.78 | 16.92 | H ₀₁ Rejected |

Since the calculated chi-square value ($x^2 = 61.78$) is greater than the critical value ($x^2_{crit} = 16.92$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between religious beliefs and the teaching of civil liberties and democracy through English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between English language teachers' perceptions of religion and students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles.

| Cells | f _o | f _e | Df | x ² cal | x ² crit | Decision |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 5 | 11 | 32.60 | 12 | 40.67 | 16.92 | H ₀₂ Rejected |

Since the calculated chi-square value ($x^2 = 40.67$) is greater than the critical value ($x^2_{crit} = 16.92$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between English language teachers' perceptions of religion and students' understanding of civil liberties and democratic principles.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between the challenges faced by English language teachers and their ability to balance religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

| Cells | f _o | f _e | Df | x ² cal | x ² crit | Decision |
|-------|----------------|----------------|----|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| 5 | 6 | 16.40 | 12 | 361.33 | 16.92 | H ₀₃ Rejected |

Since the calculated chi-square value ($x^2 = 361.33$) is greater than the critical value ($x^2_{crit} = 16.92$), the null hypothesis is rejected. This confirms that there is a significant relationship between the challenges faced by English language teachers and their ability to balance religious influences with democratic and civil liberties education in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study indicate that religious beliefs significantly influence the teaching of civil liberties and democracy in English language instruction within public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. This aligns with the observations of Van der Ven (2010), who noted that in Nigeria, governmental involvement in religious matters, such as the establishment of faith-based schools and funding of religious activities, reflects the deep entanglement of religion within the educational system. Such entanglement suggests that religious beliefs inevitably permeate educational content and pedagogical approaches, thereby shaping the discourse on civil liberties and democratic principles.

Teachers' perceptions, as revealed in this study, suggest that while some view religious teachings as reinforcing democratic values, others see them as potential barriers to students' full acceptance of democratic principles. This duality is echoed in the work of Miall (1992), who

posited that religious conflicts often arise from perceived contradictions between religious beliefs and democratic ideals. Such perceptions can lead to challenges in the classroom, where educators must navigate the complex interplay between respecting religious convictions and promoting democratic values.

The challenges identified in balancing religious influences with democratic education are consistent with the findings of Gotan (2004), who highlighted that religious conflicts in Nigeria often stem from deep-seated perceptions and behaviors that contradict the peace processes inherent in democratic societies. Teachers in this study reported resistance from students, opposition from parents and institutional constraints, all of which complicate the effective teaching of civil liberties and democracy. These challenges underscore the need for educational strategies that acknowledge and integrate religious contexts while fostering a comprehensive understanding of democratic principles.

Summary of Findings

1. The study found that religious beliefs significantly influence the teaching of civil liberties and democracy in English language instruction within public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. Teachers incorporate religious perspectives in their lessons and students' religious beliefs shape their reception and interpretation of democratic concepts. Additionally, school policies influenced by religion impact how civil liberties are discussed in English classes.
2. The study also revealed that teachers have mixed perceptions regarding the role of religion in shaping students' understanding of democracy. While some teachers believe religious teachings reinforce democratic values, others see religious beliefs as barriers to students' full acceptance of democratic principles. Teachers acknowledged that students' religious backgrounds influence their responses to discussions on civil liberties, creating both opportunities and challenges in the teaching process.
3. Furthermore, the study identified several challenges in balancing religious influences with the teaching of democracy and civil liberties. Teachers face resistance from students due to religious beliefs, opposition from parents, difficulty in finding neutral teaching materials and restrictions imposed by school authorities. These challenges highlight the complexities of integrating democratic education in a religiously sensitive environment, emphasizing the need for balanced educational approaches

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant influence of religious beliefs on the teaching of civil liberties and democracy in English language instruction in public secondary schools in Plateau Central Senatorial District, Plateau State. While some teachers view religious teachings as reinforcing democratic values, others see them as barriers to students' full acceptance of democratic principles. The findings also reveal that school policies and students' religious backgrounds shape classroom discussions on democracy. Additionally, teachers face challenges such as student resistance, parental opposition and institutional restrictions, making it difficult to maintain a balance between religious influences and democratic education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following three recommendations are made:

1. Educational authorities should develop and provide neutral teaching materials that balance religious perspectives with democratic principles. These materials should ensure that civil liberties and democracy are taught objectively, allowing students to engage with these

concepts without religious bias. This approach will help teachers navigate sensitive topics while maintaining a balanced curriculum.

2. Regular professional development programs should be organised for English language teachers to equip them with strategies for effectively handling religious influences in democratic education. Training should focus on fostering critical thinking, open dialogue and tolerance in classroom discussions, helping students understand democracy without conflicting with their religious beliefs.
3. Schools should engage parents and community leaders in sensitization programs to explain the importance of teaching civil liberties and democracy. This engagement will help address parental concerns, reduce opposition and create a more supportive learning environment. Collaboration with religious and community leaders can also bridge the gap between religious beliefs and democratic education, fostering mutual understanding.

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