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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE PERFORMANCE OF MALE AND FEMALE SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN ILORIN WEST LGA, 2015-2019.**ABURIME, AMINAT OZOHU Ph.D***Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.**aminataburime@unilorin.edu.ng*

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Abstract

This research is a comparative study of the performance of school male and Female senior secondary students in Christian Religious Studies in Ilorin West Local Government Area Kwara State, from 2015-2019. A lot of research studies have been carried out to understand the reason for students' poor performance in the subject. The purpose of this research was focused on examining the factors affecting students' poor performance in CRS, the difference in the academic performance of male and female in CRS and the challenges facing the teaching of CRS in senior secondary schools. To carry out this research, four schools were selected in Ilorin West Local Government Area Kwara State, Nigeria. Four (4) CRS teachers and twenty-four (24) students were randomly selected from each of the four (4) selected schools which equaled Hundred (100) respondents. Simple random sampling technique was adopted to select the sample. The data for the study was gathered using a researcher designed questionnaire. The findings revealed that the pattern of students' performance in examination in Christian Religious Studies is such that students perform well in New Testament topics followed by miracle topics, healing topics and in Old Testament topics, and factors such as students' interest, teacher's methodology, unconducive environment, lack of instructional material and teacher's relationship affects student's performance in CRS. It was recommended that there be conducive environment, students' positive attitude, provision of instructional materials, improved teacher-student's relationship and provision of adequate facilities for better student's performance in CRS.

Keywords: Comparative Study, Performance, Students, Christian Religious Studies**Introduction**

Education is an important instrument for an all-round development of an individual as well as a vital tool for rational development. Kirk (2007) sees education as the systematic training and instruction that result in acquiring knowledge and abilities, mental power and development of characters. Education implies the transmission of what is worthwhile in those who become committed to it (Peter, in Okoro (2015).

Religion has been defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as the believe in and worship of a supernatural man, controlling power or a god. Religion is subjective, designating the feelings and acts of men which relates to God. Religion denotes the influences and motives to human duty which is found in the character and will of God. Religion is a high sense of moral obligation and spirit of evidence or worship which affect the heart of a man with respect to the deity (Oladosu, 2012). Religion is also a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problem of human life. Religion is that system of activities and beliefs directed towards that which is perceived to be sacred value and transforming power. (Peter, 2005).

According to Ajidagba (2002), religion is yet another term that has been given different meaning and subjected to divergent interpretation by the Religionists, religious scholars, exegetes and commentators. In Christianity, religion is a guided belief and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the saviour as illustrated in the Bible. In Islam, Religion is all man's activities carried out to please his creator and his fellow human beings taught by the Qur'an and the Prophet Muhammad. As a matter of fact, moral values can be accomplished only with the teaching of some religious believes. It is difficult if not impossible to teach or seek to cultivate morals without reference to Religion. This account for why religion is part and parcel of all religious practices.

Scholars agreed that both morals and religion are inseparable twins. (Durodola, 2005). Nigeria is a country that is in dire need of moral regeneration and religious rebirth, hence, the successive Nigerian governments, through various educational policies, have accorded the teaching of religions recognition. (Ajidagba, 2002).

Christian Religious Studies is an academic subject just like Mathematics, History, Physics, English and others in the school curriculum in Nigerian schools. Onwuegbuwa (2017) and Lekwat (2012) both asserted that the teaching of CRS on an academic discipline in Nigeria schools has been in existence for over a century now.

The goals of religious studies are related to the levels under consideration. For instance, the goals at the senior secondary or post basic level were meant to strengthen those of the lower level.

These goals are:

- i. To enable the youth to accept guidance of the Holy spirit in their daily activities
- ii. To help the youth recognize Jesus as the founder and sustainer of the Christian church
- iii. To provide opportunity for Nigerian youth to learn more about God and develop their faith in Him

The uniqueness of Christian Religious Studies emerges from its dual function of simultaneous development of the intellectual ability and moral character of the students. It also emphasizes the effective domain of education taxonomy, the domain which may seem to be silent even neglected completely. In the same vein, Okafor (2013) asserts that Christian Religious Studies helps to inject sanity into the society and minimize the turning of a nation into a police state by cultivating citizens who acknowledge metaphysical sanctions, whose acceptable behaviours are often determined not just by external constraints but by spiritual consideration. Poor performance occurs yearly and more students running away from the subject. This alarming rate of poor performance in Christian Religious Studies has generated growing concern from various quarters, the Parents, teachers, schools and the government (Lawal, 2002 and Lawal, 2010).

One is also worried of the importance of the subject to education excellence and moral development, if care is not taken, the country will be eroded of its moral values and cultures if the trends continues like that.

However, research has identified various factors as influencing learning outcomes, perhaps the most important of these factors is the question of attitude of the learner, attitude are positive or negative feelings that an individual hold about subject or an idea (Adebiyi, 2006). The achievement of any learner depends on the attitude of the learner towards the learning materials, hence there is a general believe that a positive attitude more often leads to a successful learning. Earlier studies by Butler and Uren (2000) have also shown that lack of interest on the part of students makes them to perform low. Simonton (2001) has also confirmed in his study that attitude towards many subject can be affected by a host of factors, such as student ability, age, sex, developmental crisis, lack of textbooks, teachers, peer influence and school environment.

According to an investigation conducted on the attitude of most secondary school students towards Christian Religious Knowledge, most students that are offering the subject offers it not because they are interested in it but as an additional subject to complete the number of subjects required in the Senior School Certificate Examination, while some offers it because they are Christians. Parents play a very important role in the process as such they should support and sustain the studies of their children through financial stability. But more than that is the affection, the love, and care students need as a stimulant to forge ahead in their studies.

Statement of the Problem

The aim of teaching Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria is to provide the necessary knowledge, attitude and values to the citizens, so that they can become useful to themselves and the citizens and also to influence the attitude of children positively (Oladosu, 2012). Christian Religious Studies can also be seen as a guide to the lives and characters of students. Personal observations and experience as a CRS student and comments from colleagues at different periods have provided an insight on the performance of CRS students in secondary school examinations.

There has not been much improvement in the results of students in these examinations. In the light of this seemingly deteriorating performance, this study is designed to investigate the role of the teachers and schools' administrators as it affects performance in the secondary school examinations. The need for an intervention into the situation is urgent in the view of the importance of Christian Religious Studies in the socio-economic development of the nation.

The attitude of students to Christian Religious Studies is affected by many factors. A lot of students in Ilorin do not take the subject seriously because emphasis is not laid on the subject unlike subjects like Mathematic, English, Business studies etc. reasons because Kwara is mostly dominated by Muslims, so getting a qualified CRS teacher is not easy to find, also much importance is not attached to the subject, some schools even lack Christian Religious Studies teachers which is also not encouraging. (Lawal, 2002)

Another factor is the career expectation of those concerned, many students who aspire to become doctors, lawyers, engineers etc. develop interest in the subject as early as possible, the interest developed already assist in no small measure in their performance, therefore a lot of them no longer have interest in other subject and see no relevance in them, this also affects their performance in many ways. (Okoro, 2015). Nevertheless, the trend of poor academic achievement among student's over the years seems to be on the increase. It may be due to teacher's use of lecture method which may be the prevalent mode of lesson presentation in secondary schools in Nigeria. This method is teacher centered and may not inspire or motivate the students' interest in learning of the subject in senior secondary schools. The student may end up having low interest which may lead to poor interest achievement in CRS in schools. Student's academic performance in Christian Studies has been on the decline over the years since the introduction of the multi-faith based Christian studies syllabus in 2008 that uses the interpretive approach. Speculations have been made for the low performance and they include; teacher's lack of content and pedagogical knowledge and inadequate assessment skills. Furthermore, the studies show that students also do not perform well due to problems associated with family background and general school environment. (Onwuegbuwa, 2017). This study therefore examines causes of the decline in the performance of Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools.

Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to evaluate the comparative analysis of student's performance in Christian religious studies in secondary schools in Ilorin West local government Area of Kwara State. Other specific objectives are as follows:

- i. To examine the factors affecting student's poor performance in CRS in secondary schools;
- ii. To examine the difference in the academic performance of male and female students in secondary schools in CRS;
- iii. To examine the challenges facing the teaching of CRS in senior secondary schools.
- iv. To recommend ways to improve the student's performance in CRS in senior secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

- i. What are the factors affecting student's poor performance in Christian studies in senior secondary schools?
- ii. What are the recommended ways of improving student's performance in Christian religious studies in senior secondary schools?
- iii. What are the patterns of student's performance in examination in Christian religious studies in Ilorin?
- iv. What are the recommended ways of improving student's performance in Christian Religious studies in Ilorin?

Research Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant relationship between student's attitude toward learning of Christian Religious studies and their academic performance.



- ii. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in examinations in Christian Religious studies.
- iii. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in Senior School Certificate Examinations in Christian Religious studies

Methodology

The survey research method was employed in this study. Rasak (2000) viewed survey research as a study which involves an investigation on the entire population of the people by collecting data from samples drawn from population and assuming that these samples are representatives of the entire population. The population for this study consisted of some CRS teachers and students in senior secondary schools in Ilorin West LGA, Kwara State, Nigeria. Twenty (20) teachers and forty (40) Students were randomly selected from the four (4) schools that were used for this study. These schools were randomly selected from Ilorin West Local Government, GDSS Oke aluko, Corner Stone Independent High School, Glory Land College, Lumex International College. A researcher designed questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers and students and was divided into two sections. Section A contained personal data about the respondents such as name, sex, school, class, gender and year of experience. While section B, contained items that were used to answer the hypotheses generated for the study. The test retest method was employed to determine the reliability of the instrument at 0.05 Alpha level of significance. Frequency counts and percentage were used to analyse the research questions and the demographic data while Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the research hypotheses.

Data Analysis and Results

Data was obtained from a total of One hundred (100) senior secondary school students offering Christian Religious Studies.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	42	42%
Female	58	58%
Total	100	100

In Table 1, out of the One hundred (100) Senior Secondary School Students Offering Christian Religious Studies. Sampled, 42 (42%) were male while 58 (58%) were female. There are more female respondents.

Research Question One: What is the pattern of students' performance in examination in in Christian Religious Studies in senior secondary school?

Table 2: Descriptive analysis of pattern of students' performance in examination in Christian Religious studies

Pattern	Strongly Agree. Freq. (%)	Agree. Freq. (%)	Disagree. Freq. (%)	Strongly Disagree. Freq.
Students perform well in old testament topics	40 (40%)	50 (50%)	10 (10%)	-
Students perform well in new testament topics	80 (80%)	20 (20%)	-	-
Students perform well in miracle topics	60 (60%)	30 (30%)	10 (10%)	-
Students perform well in healing topics	30 (30%)	60 (60%)	10 (10%)	-
Students perform well in early life of Jesus Christ topics	30 (30%)	40 (40%)	30 (30%)	-

Pattern of students' performance in examination in Christian Religious studies revealed on Table 2 is such that Students perform well in new testament topics followed by equal well performance in miracle topics, healing topics and in old testament topics with 80%;20%, 60%;30%, 30%;60% and 40%;50% strongly agree and agree responses.

Research Question Two: What are the factors affecting students' poor performance in Christian Religious Studies in Senior Secondary School?

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Factors that Affect Students' Poor Performance in Christian Religious Studies in Senior Secondary School

Factors	Strongly Agree. Freq. (%)	Agree. Freq. (%)	Disagree. Freq. (%)	Strongly Disagree. Freq.
Teacher's methodology	30 (30%)	50 (50%)	10 (10%)	10 (10%)
Student's interest	70 (70%)	30 (30%)	-	-
Unconducive environment	40 (40%)	40 (40%)	-	20 (20%)
Teacher's relationship with students	50 (50%)	30 (30%)	-	20 (20%)
Lack of instructional materials	30 (30%)	40 (40%)	10 (30%)	20 (20%)

Table 3 shows that factors that affect students' poor performance in Christian Religious studies in Senior Secondary School are student's interest, teacher's methodology, unconducive environment, Lack of instructional materials and teacher's relationship with students with 70%;30%, 30%;50%, 40%;40% 50%;30% and 30%;40% strongly agree and agreed responses respectively.

Research Question Three: What are the recommended ways of improving students' performance in Christian Religious studies in Ilorin?

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis on Recommended Ways of Improving Students' Performance in Christian Religious Studies in Ilorin

Recommended ways	Strongly Agree. Freq. (%)	Agree. Freq. (%)	Disagree. Freq. (%)	Strongly Disagree. Freq.
Provision of instructional materials	60 (60%)	40 (40%)	-	-
Improved teacher-student's relationship	50 (50%)	40 (40%)	-	10 (10%)
Provision of adequate facilities	50 (50%)	40 (40%)	-	10 (10%)
Student's positive attitude	70 (70%)	30 (30%)	-	-
Conducive environment	90 (90%)	10 (10%)	-	-

Table 4 shows that recommended ways of improving students' performance in Christian Religious studies in Ilorin are provision of conducive environment, students' positive attitude, provision of instructional materials, improved teacher-student's relationship and provision of adequate facilities with 90%;10%, 70%;30%, 60%;40%, 50%;40% and 50%;40% responses respectively.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data collected, analyzed and interpreted, the following findings were obtained.

- It was discovered from the finding that, students perform well in New Testament topics, in miracle topics, healing topics and in Old Testament topics.
- The findings also showed that student's interest, teacher's methodology, unconducive environment, lack of instructional materials and teacher's relationship affects student's performance in CRS.
- It was also discovered from the findings that, provision of conducive environment, students' positive attitude, provision of instructional materials, improved teacher-student's relationship and provision of adequate facilities will help improve student's performance in CRS.

Discussions

This study focused on the performance of senior secondary school students in Christian Religious Studies in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara state. Based on the result of the findings, it was discovered that:

Students perform well in New Testament topics, miracle topics, healing topics and in old testaments topics. It readily showed that factors such as students' interest teacher's methodology, unconducive environment, lack of instructional material, teacher's relationship and positive attitude affects student's performance in CRS. Thus,

this finding is in consonance with earlier studies by Butler and Urien (1997); Simonton (2001); Lawal (2010) which shows that lack of interest on the part of students make them perform low in school subjects.

Also, the summary on Table 4 shows that there are varying ways CRS performance can be improved especially if particular attention is being paid to inhibiting factors as mentioned in the study. More so, improved teacher-student relationship will help alleviate the problem of students' low performance in CRS. This finding is also consistent with the work of (Njoku, 2009 & Njoku, 2012).

Conclusions

It should be noted from the findings that, it is not because CRS as school subject is difficult, that students perform low in it, but students, parents and teachers pay less attention to it. This however, inhibits learning. The stakeholders' attitude is important in creating an enabling environment, efficient and effecting learning of CRS that will yield a better and mind- blowing result in student's performance in CRS in Senior Secondary Schools.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Government should endeavour to live up to their responsibilities by supplying adequate facilities to schools and should develop programmes aimed at sensitizing students on the need to develop positive attitude towards all school subjects in order to boost their academic achievement in the subject area.
- ii. The federal government as well as those responsible in recruiting teachers in secondary schools should employ the service of well qualified and experienced Christian Religious Studies teachers and teacher's promotion should be based on effectiveness and student's performance in both internal and external examinations that is checkmated for bias and manipulations.
- iii. Both male and female students should be encouraged to choose Christian Religious Studies as a subject since it imbibes in the learner's moral, civic and social responsibility especially now that some Nigerian is seen as lacking morally.
- iv. Parents and guardians should encourage their children to go to school early enough to enable them use their improved academic performance as compared to delay education of students.
- v. Considering the dual purpose of Christian Religious Studies, it is mandatory that government and other school curriculum planners should make the subject a compulsory subject especially now that the country is facing a huge wave of moral decadence and poor citizenship.

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