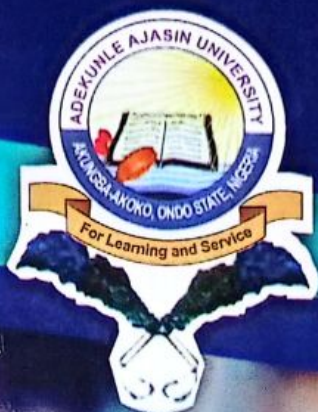




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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Assessment of Body Mass Index of Staff in Kashim Ibrahim College of Education Maiduguri, Borno State - Maryam Saidu SALEH, Prof. Muhammed Wakili Umar GAYA, Abdullah ABDULSALAM, Ph. D., & Dahiru Abdullahi DANASABE, Ph. D.	1 - 7
Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Educational Practices in Upper Basic Schools in Ilorin, Nigeria - Idayat Nike BALOGUN & Dr. Issa Nasiru OLOKOOBA	8 - 16
Effect of Time Circuit Strength Training Programme on Body Weight of Adolescents - James Adebayo ESAN. Ph. D., Oluwayomi Abolade AOKO & Oluwafunmilayo BADEWA	17 - 22
Perceived Influence of Divorce on Students Academic Performance in Essien Udim Local Government Area, Akwa Ibom State - Dr. Grace Enomfon AKPAN & Anthony ARCHIBONG	23 - 30
An Assessment of Quality Assurance Strategies and Implementation in Colleges of Education in Oyo State - Dr. Gbolagade Muritala OLOWO	31 - 38
Effects of E-Learning Strategy on Students' Academic Performance in Junior Secondary School Basic Science in Ondo State, Nigeria - Ololade Mojisola ISIJOLA & Omoboriowo Sunday ALFRED	39-46
Effects of Boko Haram Insurgency on Girl Child Education in Borno State, Nigeria: Implications for Counselling - Aisha BUKAR, Prof. Bulama KAGU & Hamsatu Joseph PUR	47 - 55
The Role of Teachers' Personality Traits in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics in Primary Schools for Sustainable Development - Mary Adejoke JESUTOKI	56 - 63
Effect of the Use of WhatsApp Voice-Call Teaching Platform During Covid-19 Lockdown on Primary One and Two Pupils' Performance in Mathematics - Dr. Emmanuel Sule OLUKO	64 - 70
Assessment of Implementation of Biology Curriculum in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Borno State, Nigeria - Hussaini IBRAHIM, Baba Gana HASSAN & Maryam BUBA	71 - 76
Evaluation of Safety Culture among Workers to Construction Performance on Building Sites in Ondo State, Nigeria - Bamidele Oluyinka OLUMOKO, Olaleye Tolulope FABIYI, & Nzubechukwu Izunna OYEKA	77 - 86
Physical Factors as Predictor of Sexual Behaviour among Adolescents in Ibadan Metropolis, Oyo State - Ameh O RAJI, Akinmade. Olatunde OMOLADE & Emmanuel Olorunleke ADEGBIOSU	87 - 95
Effects of Task Based Learning Strategy on Primary School Pupils Vocabulary Development in Ojo Local Government Area of Lagos State - Patrick Edet PATRICK	96 - 100

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT	PAGE
Public Perception of Online Educational Assessment during Covid-19 Era - Dr. John Joseph AGAH, Samuel Uchenna NWANI & Thaddeus Onyebuchi UKWUEZE	101 - 111
Student and Teacher Factors as Determinants of Secondary School Students' Mathematics Self-Efficacy - Ruth Folake LAWAL & Kolawole Thomas IJADUNOLA	112 - 121
Evaluation of Perceived Impact of Entrepreneurship Education on Reduction of Unemployment and Poverty among University Graduates - Michael Bamidele OJO	122 - 131
Assessment of Domestic Child Labour and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils' in North-Central, Nigeria - Abdulkareem Bibire HUSSEIN, Ph.D. & Ibrahim Saka BABATUNDE	132 - 138
Assessment of Basic School Pupils' Knowledge of Yorùbá Riddles in Ilorin South Local Government Area - Surajudeen Adéwálé BADRU & Victoria Olúdùnní OGÚNNÍRAN	139 - 147
Impacts of Self-Regulatory Skills on Pupils' Academic Performance in Osun State, Nigeria - Olubunmi Christianah OGUNYEMI	148 - 155
Evaluation of Teachers' Qualifications, Teaching Experience, Lesson Periods and Usage of Instructional Materials in Teaching Secondary School Mathematics in Ekiti State, Nigeria - Dr. Olukemi Oluranti AYOOLA & Mojeed Olaoluwa AKINWUMI	156 - 164
Perceived Factors Militating Against Girl-Child Education in Science Subjects in Sabongari Local Government Area of Kaduna State: Implications for Counselling - Dr. Ahmed Yusuf JIBRIN & Safiya Shafiu MUHAMMED	165 - 171
Silver Hanson Strong Learning Style as Correlates of Secondary School Students' Performance in Biology in Ondo State - Folake Olufunke OLATUNBOSUN	172 - 179
Attitude of Nursing Mothers Towards Exclusive Breastfeeding in Bida City, Niger State, Nigeria - Saliu Wahab ADIO, Ph.D., Abdulgafar Alafara ADIO & Akeem Ayodeji ADIGUN	180 - 189
The Influence of Remuneration on Job Satisfaction among University Academic Staff in the North-East Geo-Political Zone of Nigeria - Murtala Umar BABAYI	190 - 198
Impact of Literature Circles' Strategies on Students' Academic Performance in Reading Comprehension - Stella Bolanle APATA	199 - 205
Stakeholders' Perception of the Application of Classroom Time Management Technique in Upper Basic Schools in North-Central Zone, Nigeria - Dr. Bukky KESTON	206 - 212
Strengthening Community Structures for National Security in Nigeria - Chinyere Chinwem NGURUKWEM & Charity Onyeodiri IMO	213—219

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENT

PAGE

Teachers' Perceived Causative Factors of Poor Performance in Christian Religious Studies among Secondary School Students' in Kwara Central Senatorial District - **Oludare David OJO, Ph.D.**

220 - 227

Application of Contingency Theory in Educational Leadership - **Dr. Abdulrasheed OLOWOSELU**

228 - 233

Teachers' Perceived Causative Factors of Poor Performance in Christian Religious Studies among Secondary School Students' in Kwara Central Senatorial District

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Abstract

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is an optional subject at the Senior Secondary School and examined by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO). The teaching of this subject in secondary schools ensures that learners are offered opportunity to develop morally and spiritually. However, over the years, students' performances in CRS have declined. This study therefore examined teachers' perceived causative factors of poor performance in Christian religious studies among secondary school students' in Kwara Central Senatorial District. The research adopted descriptive survey design. The population comprises of all CRS teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District, while the target population was teachers in senior secondary schools in the district. The sample consisted of 120 teachers chosen through a multi stage sampling technique that involved stratified and random sampling. The instrument used for collection of data was a self-designed questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to both face and content validity as well as reliability index of 0.71. Two research questions were formulated. Data were analysed and interpreted using simple counts and percentages. Results of the study showed that some CRS teachers are not qualified and not adequately trained, instructional resources are not used and parents are not encouraging the students to perform well. It was recommended that teachers should be sponsored for seminars and workshops, the use instructional materials should be intensified and the methodology and strategies of teaching should be improved upon.

Keywords: Causative factors, Christian religious studies, performance,

Introduction

Performance is very important in human life and every society has its own goals and aspirations because, it provides information about the learning abilities and capabilities of the learner. Bolarinwa (2012) defined performance as the observable and measurable behavior of a person or an animal in a particular situation, usually an experimental situation. One can therefore say that academic performance measures the aspect of behavior that can be measured at specific academic period. Feneye (2012) says academic performance could be described as how well or bad a student has done in a subject. She stated that lack of interest on the part of the students make them to perform low.

According to Wikipedia (2013) academic performance is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved the educational goals. Thus, performance is characterized by performance on tests associated with course work and the performance of students on other types of examinations (Kyoshaba, 2009). Discussing factors affecting students' academic performance will require looking at the concept of poor performance. According to Aremu (2013) poor performance is a performance that is adjudged by the examinees and some significant as falling below an expected or desired standard as better appreciated from the

perpetual cognitive ability of the evaluator of the performance. Abdullahi (2013) described poor academic performance as any performance that falls below a desired standard.

The performance of students is determined by conducting a test on the students concerned. Thus, according to Adepoju (2002) performance test is the type of mental test in which the student is asked to do something rather than say something. On the teaching – learning process, students' academic performance is one of the important indicators of education quality. Obviously, students' performance is determined by the level of learning in terms of scores and grades recorded against such students' academic performance in the process whereby students' educational activities are measured through examination within the context of a curriculum.

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) plays an important role in human and moral development, because the subject provides a powerful motivation for right behavior by blending spiritual, moral and social values which help in character development. The society is facing unprecedented levels of decline in moral and spiritual growth among students which could be explained by unfavorable attitudes towards CRS on the basis that it is merely an examinable subject.

Understanding the goals of education and students' needs are necessary for an educational system to prosper. A lot of researches have been conducted to find out the causes or factors that have impact on students' academic performance in different subjects (Cascio, 2015, Rahameh, 2012). The outcome of these studies among others have been: poor teaching method, improper evaluative instrument, stress and emotional factors like feelings towards teachers, subject and learning environment and the gap between materials used for teaching and the students' needs Manizhan (2016). Lawal (2010) was of the view that having difficulty in grasping fully the content and concepts of CRS topics seems to be one of the most serious problems that students faced in their course of study.

Researchers for instance have shown that performance of students is dependent on several factors (Nyamubi 2003, Adepoju 2002, Kapoli, 2001). It is a well-known fact that when students fail their examinations people blamed them not being serious whereas, in reality students are often made scape goats. On the other way round, Olayinka (2016) stated that teachers have been regrettably identified as the chief contributor to the poor performance of students in examinations. However, recent findings reveal that many factors are responsible for students' poor performances and failure in their examination.

Various studies have been carried out on the factors that affect students' academic performance or achievement in schools, colleges and universities. Some of the factors identified and reported to have affected the academic performance of students in these different settings will be discussed.

Qualified teachers are an essential ingredient for students' success. The role of a teacher in students' performance is undeniable. Ajidagba (2009) stated that there are inadequate qualified CRS teachers in our secondary schools, some who even studied the course exhibit poor abilities in the content and pedagogical knowledge of it. In some schools, other subject teachers are forced to teach CRS because they are Christian or profess to be of a particular Christian faith. Adedokun (2011) agreed with the above assertion and noted that due to the inadequacy of qualified CRS teachers, untrained teachers of other disciplines were employed to teach and prepare secondary school students for the school certificate examinations in CRS and this situation contributed immensely to poor performance in CRS. In cases like this, teachers will always be blamed for students' poor performance due to the fact that they are not well grounded in that area of specialisation.

Inadequate infrastructural facilities are regarded as another cause of poor performance in CRS in secondary schools. Edohe (2019) was of the view that instructional materials and facilities are important part of the process of learning as they provide practice and feedback in learning track. In our present-day secondary schools, particularly public ones according to Adeyemo (2003), students are in most cases sitting on the floor and windows during lessons. In some cases, students are learning under trees or in dilapidated classrooms. All these cannot allow for proper learning of CRS hence lead to poor performance. Academic performance is one of the fundamental aims of a school, and this cannot be achieved successfully in the absence of good/conducive

environment. When a classroom becomes overcrowded with students with inadequate furniture to accommodate them, teachers may spend much time telling stories not related to the teaching and learning objectives, and controlling students who are misbehaving therein and at the end of the day the teachers may not be able to cover the syllabus which may also lead to poor performance on the part of the students (Nas, 2013; Olayinka, 2016).

Another reason for poor performance of CRS in Nigerian secondary schools is the teachers' attitude towards innovation and use of instructional resources. Most Nigerian secondary school CRS teachers fail to consider the dynamic nature of CRS but continue to bore students with reading of the Bible and memorisation and giving of assignment and fail to imbibe the new trend of using of instructional resources through computer and information technology. The traditional content knowledge-oriented teaching is still very much practiced by them. Abdullahi (2003) was of the view that teachers mostly prefer to use traditional ways of teaching which they have been familiar with or as they are taught which do not necessarily aid proper learning. Oladunni (1989) blamed the CRS teachers for student's poor performance, he stated that they never use instructional resources during their lesson but always carry just a copy of the Holy Bible to the class and read or asked the students to read in the class.

Ojo (2016) was of the view that there is dominance of textbooks, dictionaries, workbook and posters in the teaching of CRS in secondary schools in Nigeria. Modern instructional resources such as video, computers, and so on are rarely used. In another study, Aduwa-Ogiegbaen and Iyamu (2006) examined the factors responsible for the poor quality of teaching in public schools across the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. Results revealed that teachers do not frequently use modern instructional technologies and variety of teaching techniques in their classes and concluded that lack of or insufficient use of instructional materials was among the factors which deter the educational progress of most students in our schools.

Another important cause of poor performance in CRS is the negative attitudes of students towards the learning of CRS. Students particularly in the secondary schools mostly show negative attitude towards CRS because they consider it to be for weaker or dull students. Akanji (2019) was of the view that most students put a kind of negative attitude in learning of CRS believing that it only requires the reading of the Bible thereby making the task of the teachers to be a difficult one. According to researches conducted on the attitude of secondary school students towards CRS, most students that are offering CRS, do it not because they are interested in it but as an additional subject to complete the number of subjects required in the Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations (Lawal, 2010; Ojo, 2016).

According to Manizhan (2016) parents' attitude towards the upbringing of the children leads to poor performance, some parents discourage their children when they learn that their children is offering CRS in the school and thereby suggesting that they should go for the science subjects in order to become doctors, engineers, accountants and so on. Some parents even question their children what profession would they fit in when they offer CRS in school (Ojo, 2016). This type of attitude goes a long way in making the students to be defeated psychologically and leads to poor performance.

Improper method of teaching also causes poor performance in CRS among secondary school students. It is obvious that successful teaching learning take place when right teaching methods are used by teachers. Ya'u, (2003) and Ojo, (2016) were of the view that successful achievement of stated objectives in teaching and learning is always associated with using the right method. Sometimes teachers of CRS do not consider the learners' age, the topic, the time and background of the learners in choosing the method to be used in teaching and this affects the level of learning of the students. Therefore, it is clear that teachers' inability to use proper teaching method contributes to poor performance among secondary school students.

Ogunbanwa (2012) opined that CRS is a subject which discusses dimensions of knowledge in a human being which is invisible and the consequences of encounter with cannot be empirically tested or subjected to scientific analysis. It is an abstract matter. He therefore suggested that though it is an abstract subject, it can be effectively taught by teachers using instructional materials in presenting their lessons. According to Sa'ad (2007), some teachers do not explain the lesson clearly, they do not help students when they need help, do not give them

home work to practice at home just because they believe that the subject is abstract and there is no way they can explain the topics better. Aremu (2013) for example opined that an inexperienced teacher or a teacher with no passion for teaching will not be creative enough to put across to his students these abstract topics for the students understanding which at the end will lead to poor performance on the part of the students during examination.

There are many ways that the teacher can embark upon to improve the poor performance of CRS students at the senior secondary school level. Taking measures to improve academic performance and outcomes starts with improving the behavior of students in the classroom. Teachers can play a large role in creating an atmosphere that encourages learning, improve students' behavior and create better academic performance at every level of education. Adedokun (2012) suggest that teachers should create a supportive environment where learning becomes fun thereby making students to show more interest and participate more in academic exercise.

Good teachers are not only skill in instructional methods but also in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to gauge individuals' needs Dan-Azumi (1996). Teachers should not exclusively rely on traditional paper and pencil test of factual knowledge that tend to promote rote memorization but move to higher order thinking skills (Clements, 2008) Monitoring and evaluation should be a continuous process to ensure schools meet their target. It should also be noted that offering rewards comes as motivational strategies that can help students maintain better performance during examination.

Bolarinwa, (2012) opined that the role of the parents cannot be over emphasized in the performance of the students. It is important for the parents to see to the day to day activities of the students, encourage and give the necessary support in terms of books, financial and moral support where needed. Edorhe (2019) opined that parents should not look down on students offering CRS as a subject but rather help where necessary and motivate them to work and perform better in their examinations.

School should communicate what is expected from the students from the onset and give clearly stated goals and objectives, frequent and challenging assignment, test and feedback from time to time (Adepoju, 2002) On the part of the teacher, highly motivated teachers that show passion for the subject should be employed so that their teaching may help encourage students' to perform better in their examination. And according to Adeyemi (2010) there should be staff appraisal through locally designed forms to enhance standard to ensure that the teachers are doing the right thing.

According to Ogunbanwa (2012), studies have shown that students are more likely to succeed academically when they feel the teachers are supportive, care about their success and honestly assess their weakness and strengths. Incorporating several learning styles into the classroom work will make it easier for students to remain engaged and believing in the students and offering support throughout the school year can help improve their academic performance. The purpose of the study were to examine the causes of poor performance in CRS among secondary school students in Kwara Central Senatorial District and find out views of teachers on ways of improving the learning of CRS among the students.

Research Questions

1. What are the perceived main causes of poor performance in CRS among secondary school students in Kwara Central Senatorial District?
2. What are the teachers' views on ways of improving the learning of CRS among secondary school students in Kwara Central Senatorial District?

The descriptive research design of survey type was used for the study. The target population of the study comprised all Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District; while the sample for the study consisted of 120 teachers selected using multi stage and simple random sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a self-designed questionnaire divided into two sections (A and B) with ten (10) items respectively in the format of Yes/No. The instrument was validated by experts in the Departments of Arts Education and Social Sciences Education for face and content validation to remove any ambiguity in the statements. The reliability of the instrument was determined by using test- retest method. The instrument was used on 20 members of the population and after 10 days the same was used on the same members. The results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result got was 0.71. This made the instrument reliable. Copies of the questionnaire were personally administered to the 120 teachers who were randomly selected. Data collected were tabulated, analysed and interpreted in the light of the objectives of the study. Data collected were analysed using frequency and percentages for each research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the main causes of poor performance in CRS among secondary school students

Table 1

Perceived Causes of Poor Performance in CRS among Secondary School Students

S/No	ITEM	YES	%	NO	%
1.	Are there available qualified teachers to teach CRS in your school?	50	41.7	70	50.3
2.	Do students show interest in studying CRS?	51	42.5	69	57.5
3.	Do you have adequate CRS textbooks to teach the students in your school?	42	35	78	65
4.	Are there available instructional resources and facilities in your school?	36	30	84	70
5.	Do students study or review lessons at home?	33	27.5	87	72.5
6.	Are periods and time for teaching CRS suitable?	40	33.3	80	66.7
7.	Do parents encourage their children to offer CRS as a subject?	30	33.3	80	75
8.	Do students find it difficult to read the Bible on their own?	55	45.8	65	54.2
9.	Are proper teaching methods used in teaching CRS in your school	32	26.7	88	73.3
10.	Is there low social value for CRS as a subject in the society?	27	22.5	93	77.5

Table 1 showed the views of teachers in Kwara Central Senatorial District on the causes of poor performance among CRS students. It revealed that all the factors stated above which are: inadequate qualified teachers, lack of interest on the part of the students, inadequate textbooks to teach the students, unavailability of instructional resources, negative parental and societal attitude towards CRS are responsible for poor performance in the subject.

Research Question 2: What are the teachers' views on ways of improving the learning of CRS among secondary school students?

Table 2
Teachers' Views on Ways of Improving the Learning of CRS among Secondary School Students

S/N	ITEM	YES	%	NO	%
1	Use of instructional resources should be encouraged	87	70	36	30
2	Parents should change their attitude to CRS as a subject	68	56.7	52	43.3
3	Do you think use of appropriate method of teaching by the teachers can improve the learning of CRS	77	64.2	43	35.8
4	Can employment of qualified teachers improve learning of CRS in your school	69	57.5	51	42.5
5	Teachers should go for seminars and conferences for staff development	86	71.7	34	28.3
6	Teachers should explain difficult topics in an easy manner	74	61.7	46	38.3
7	Teachers should prepare adequately for the lessons	66	55	54	45
8	Do you think giving of periodic test and assignments regularly to student will improve their performance	72	60	48	40
9	Condition of service of teachers should be improved	90	75	30	25
10	All topics in the syllabus should be covered in good time	81	67.5	39	32.5

Table 2 showed that the teachers agreed to all the items on the suggested ways of improving the teaching and learning of CRS. Therefore, it could be concluded that if these suggestions are taken into consideration the teaching and learning of CRS can be improved to a large extent.

Discussion

The findings revealed that some schools were staff with unqualified teachers. This is an indication that teachers were not competent in teaching the subject and to some extent they were contributing to poor performance in CRS. Findings from the study agreed with that of Ojo (2016). Some of the teachers who teach CRS are not qualified and teachers of other disciplines are engaged to teach the subject. This is in line with Adedokun (2011) who asserted that this category of teachers contributes immensely to poor performance in CRS examination

The study disclosed that there was lack of teaching facilities particularly textbooks that would support students to master the subject and contribute to effective teaching. Findings from the study confirmed the assertion of Nyamubi (2003) who found that unavailability of teaching and learning materials contributed to students' poor performance.

Parents' motivation and encouragement was expected to increase the level and quality of students' performance however, the study found out that the parents do not encourage or have interest in the students studying CRS when they learn that they are offering CRS, mainly because the society value studying sciences over arts subjects. This situation does not allow the student to put in their best in their studies. It was also discovered that the period and time allocated for the teaching of CRS was not suitable and the student do not revise or study adequately at home.

The findings are also in consonance with Ojo (2016) and Edohe (2019) that inadequate infrastructural facilities and instructional resources are regarded as another cause of poor performance in CRS among secondary school students. The findings also corroborated Ajidagba (2009) assertion that the problem of teaching Religious

Studies is partly because of the low societal value placed on the subject. Akanji (2019) opined that students lose interest in the subject because of the time allocated to CRS is too small. This invariably led to dismal performance in some external examination.

The findings further revealed that the use of instructional resources, effective teaching method and explanation of difficult topics with illustrations should be employed to improve the teaching and learning of CRS. This finding is in line with the views of Abdullahi, (2003), Sa'ad (2007 and Lawal (2010) and Abdullahi, (2013)) who opined that the provision of enough instructional resources, qualified teachers as well as conducive classroom will assist a lot in improving the performance of secondary school students' in CRS and also instructional materials and facilities should be provided for effective teaching and learning of CRS

Conclusion

The study showed that poor performance of CRS students is clearly affected by different factors. There are some teachers who are not qualified to teach the subject and there are inadequate facilities and instructional resources for the teachers use. Moreover, teachers' attitude towards innovation, inappropriate use of methods of teaching by teachers and negative attitude of students affect the performance of the students.

The provision and appropriate use of instructional resources, appointment of qualified CRS teachers, and proper use of teaching methods will improve the performance of secondary school students. Parents' good relationship and interest in the studies of their wards will increase the level and quality of the students' performance, and the government also needs to do the needful in terms of good condition of service and in-service training

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

1. More qualified CRS teachers should be employed and they should be encouraged to undergo professional training, workshops, and seminar to update themselves
2. CRS teachers should use modern teaching methods instead of traditional methods.
3. In-service training for CRS teachers should be planned in order to enhance their attitude towards the subject this will be helpful and equip them with knowledge of modern methodology and techniques regarding the teaching of CRS
4. All CRS teachers should, if possible participate in marking the West African Examination Council and / National Examination Council CRS papers to enhance their professional development
5. Adequate instructional media and resources should be provided, where not available improvisation should be adopted by the teachers

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