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TEACHERS' EVALUATION OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The objective of any programme of study is very important because it is the anchor on which the content of the curriculum is hinged. It is therefore paramount that the key variables of the curriculum be evaluated after some years of implementation.

This study is concerned with the teachers' evaluation of Senior Secondary School Christian Religious curriculum objectives and content in Ondo State. All the Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teachers in the three senatorial districts were used as population for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select a total of two hundred and fifty (250) CRS teachers as sample. Researcher-designed questionnaire was used for the purpose of collecting relevant information from the respondents. Two research questions were raised for the study and the data collected were answered using descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentage. The findings revealed that the curriculum objectives and content were adequate and suitable for achieving the goals of the curriculum. It was, therefore, recommended that the curriculum should be sustained and implemented by all stakeholders.

Keywords: Curriculum, Evaluation, Christian Religious Studies, Senior Secondary School

Introduction

Curriculum is the key factor in education as it determines what should be done and how it should be done in institutions of learning. The teacher is the actual implementer of the curriculum; he defines and re-interpretes the curriculum. A teacher has the potential for enhancing the quality of education by bringing life to curriculum and inspiring students to curiosity and self-directed learning. He is an important agent to achieve the set educational goals.

The term "curriculum" is a latin word whose etymology stems from "curere" which connotes among other meanings "a running course". In the latin usage of the word, it is translated into "a race course" which signifies distance which must be covered in order to arrive at a specific target or goal (Oladosu, 2014).

Dike and Eze (2005) defines curriculum as an embodiment of all the knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation through her schools imparts on her citizens. The emphasis is on learning

experiences needed by the citizens to function properly in the society. One can simply say that curriculum is all the things teachers and students do at school for the benefit of the society.

Christian Religious Studies is a subject concerned with the upbringing, instructing and informing students on Christian beliefs and practices as found in the Holy Bible and Christian traditions (Omali, 2001). The Christian Religious Studies curriculum aims at producing students that will be God fearing, morally sound, highly disciplined and useful to themselves and the society. No wonder it is one of the core subjects at the basic and upper basic levels of the educational system and elective status at the senior secondary school level (NERDC, 2007)

Curriculum is meaningless in the absence of the teacher. The teacher plays a central role in curriculum implementation. He interpretes the curriculum, translates the curriculum into practice, states the attainable objectives, plans the activities that will help the students to achieve the stated objectives, delivers the curriculum and then assesses the extent to which the stated objectives have been achieved at the end of the programme.

Oladosu (2014) maintains that curriculum is so basic and crucial to the teaching and learning processes that any attempt to bypass it will result in a phenomenal disaster. Enaohuwo and Umeuduagu (1996) also posits that a well structured curriculum is germane to effective delivery of lesson by enhancing a good performance.

The place of Christian Religious Studies curriculum in the school system cannot be overemphasized. The curriculum of Christian Religious Studies is to capture what goals are to be achieved, its vision, its philosophy, its mission statement and

objectives. According to the NERDC document of 2007, the content of the curriculum is an attempt to reflect the philosophy and objectives of CRS. It is expected that curriculum should be organized around explicit objectives and the success of the curriculum should be judged on the basis of how well students achieve the objectives. For instance, Fafunwa, (2004) notes that when the nineteenth century Christian bodies established school in 1840's, their aim was to provide training for their converts and their children. To achieve this aim, they taught the Bible and believers or those that were converted got the certification to become teachers. The present CRS curriculum as spelt out in the NERDC (2007) was also designed in such a way that it could lead the teacher and the learners to meet the desired learning objectives. Four components of the curriculum are essential which are, the objectives, content, instructional methods and instructional materials and they are interrelated. The evaluation of the curriculum by the teacher will, therefore, be vital in assessing the success of the Christian Religious Studies programme.

The key to success of any educational programme lies in the attainment of the objective as stated in the curriculum. Avorgba (2006) observes that there has been lots of hues and cries as regards indiscipline, immorality and social malady among the CRS students. And the question has been what is the outcome of the training which these students went through during their Christian Religious Studies lessons?

Today, Nigeria suffers from moral decadence evident in greed, materialism, immorality, corruption and criminalities. This moral decadence is felt in almost all aspects of private and public life, and even in the religious sector. Hence, Ilori

(2002) stresses that the curriculum content of Christian Religious Studies should be properly designed so that, there will be improvement in such areas where there is general decline in discipline and morality. It is assumed that the study of CRS will enable the learners to imbibe the fear of God in their hearts and have faith in the religion they profess without coercion or indoctrination.

One of the basic qualities of a curriculum is dynamism, that is, curriculum is not always static, and it changes along with changes in societal needs and aspirations even in political and economic areas. Not only that, curriculum objectives and content change from time to time according to the conceptions of knowledge and consideration for learner (Onwuka, 1996, Olotu, 2008). In Nigeria for example, the educational system has witnessed some changes in content, context and structure. These changes have come about by the growing awareness of the need to develop technologically.

To determine the effectiveness of a curriculum, it is necessary to evaluate it (Onwuka, 1996). Abiri (2007) opined that curriculum evaluation is an assessment and measurement of the content and organisation of any instructional programme or material. Evaluation can be done in any area of curriculum development such as the objective, content, methodology, instruction materials and aids (Ibrahim, 2006 and Abiri. 2007). It is in view of all these that this study intends to evaluate the adequacy of the objectives and content of the curriculum in the face of changes that have taken place in recent times.

Statement of the Problem

The rapidity of change in science and the application of technology is one of the main focus propelling cultural change and hence curriculum revision. The deep changes produced by science and technology in man's daily life are perhaps nowhere more disturbing than in the area of education. The curriculum needs to be evaluated to keep pace with the expanding technology. According to Nicholls (1978) we live in a changing society in which new knowledge is constantly being discovered and in which old knowledge is being discarded. This problem of tremendous increase in knowledge means that there has been an ever greater selection of what is to be learned, as well as, a reconsideration of how learning should take place. Olotu (2008) agrees with the above view that societal values and goals are not static but rather, dynamic. With the realization of these facts, there is the need to evaluate the Christian Religious Studies curriculum objectives and content and find out whether what they are offering to the students and society is in line with the current trends in the society. Jekayinfa (2014) believes that the human society is not static but dynamic, there are changes in a society's needs, values and goals and in order for education to serve its course in a society, the school curriculum must be reviewed constantly and be modified in line with changes in a society.

Some researches have been carried out on the assessment of curriculum in different areas, Ajidagba (2005) found teachers' views on the suitability of the National Senior Secondary school Islamic curriculum. Some research studies (Bako, 1991; Atikinkpan, 1995; Ladan, 1985) have also been carried out on the availability of instructional materials in the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies. Others

(Awowale, 2005; Malgwi, 1995; Oladapo, 1994) have also researched into the problems of teaching and learning of the subject. According to Oyekanmi (2011) the contents of Christian Religious Studies curriculum have been developed to make it more purposeful and adaptable to the needs of the society. This study, therefore, is set to assess the extent to which the stated objectives and content have been achieved through the teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to evaluate the adequacy and suitability of the Christian Religious Studies curriculum at the Senior Secondary School level in Ondo State.

Specifically, the study sought to determine: the adequacy of the stated objectives of the CRS curriculum; the adequacy of the curriculum content for achieving the stated objectives at the senior secondary school levels;

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in the course of the study.

How adequate are the stated objectives of CRS curriculum?

- a. Is the curriculum content adequate for achieving the stated objectives at the senior secondary school levels?

Research Design

Descriptive survey design was adopted for the study. The population for this study comprised all Senior Secondary School CRS teachers in Ondo State. The samples of this study were drawn from Secondary School teachers who teach CRS in private and secondary schools in the 3 senatorial zones of Ondo State.

A purposive random sampling technique was used to select teachers from the public and private secondary schools.

This is because only degree holders are expected to teach at the senior secondary school level. On a whole 250 teachers served as the respondents for this study.

A researcher - designed questionnaire was used for data collection. The questionnaire is a 4-point Likert's type rating scale: Very Adequate, Adequate, Inadequate, Very inadequate. The questionnaire consisted of two categories covering issues on the adequacy of the objective and content of the CRS curriculum

To establish the face and content validity of the instrument, the draft was given to two curriculum experts from the University of Ilorin, Ilorin and two senior secondary school teachers of CRS to go through the items for their comments and observations on the face and content validity. Their suggestions were later effected on the questionnaire items.

Test- retest reliability was employed to test the reliability of the instrument by using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of reliability statistic. The reliability coefficient stood at 0.84. The instrument was therefore considered reliable. The data collected were analysed by using descriptive statistics of frequency count and simple percentage.

Findings

Two research questions were raised in the course of this study. Research questions 1-2 were answered using percentage.

Research Question One: How adequate are the stated objectives of CRS curriculum?

Table 1 Adequacy of Objectives of CRS Curriculum

S/N	Objectives	VA	A	IA	VI
1.	To provide more opportunity for the Nigerian youth to learn more about God and thereby develop their faith in God;	100 (40.0%)	133 (53.2%)	15 (6.0%)	2 (0.8%)
2.	To enable youth to accept Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer;	88 (35.2%)	135 (54.0%)	22 (8.8%)	5 (2.0%)
3.	To enable the youth to recognize Jesus as the founder and sustainer of the Christian Church;	55 (22.0%)	140 (56.0%)	41 (16.4%)	14 (5.6%)
4.	To enable the youth to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives and activities;	57 (22.8%)	157 (62.8%)	28 (11.2)	8 (3.2%)
5.	To help the youth to understand the basic teachings of Christ and to apply these to their daily lives and work;	88 (35.2%)	127 (50.8%)	20 (8.0%)	15 (6.0%)
6.	To help develop in the youth Christian attitudes and moral values, such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, fair play, spirit of forgiveness, obedience, orderly behaviour or discipline, hardwork and devotion to	102 (40.8%)	118 (47.2%)	28 (11.2%)	2 (0.8%)

	duty, selfless service to God and humanity;				
7.	To prepare the youth for higher education, self reliance, critical thinking and for selfless service within community;	102 (40.8%)	130 (52.0%)	10 (4.0%)	8 (3.2%)
8.	To instill in the youth the spirit of tolerance, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and non violence;	76 (30.4%)	137 (54.8%)	25 (10.0%)	12 (4.8%)
9.	To develop and foster in the youth the spirit of respect for all people and human life.	87 (34.8%)	132 (52.8%)	26 (10.4%)	5 (2.0%)
	Total	70 (4.47%)	1209 (77.25%)	215 (13.74%)	71 (4.54%)

The result of the data analysis shown in Table 1 indicates the teachers' evaluation of the objectives of CRS curriculum. It reveals that an absolute majority of teachers 81.42% evaluated the objectives of CRS as very adequate, while 18.28%

evaluated curriculum objectives as inadequate.

Research Question Two: Is the curriculum content adequate for achieving the stated objectives at the senior secondary school levels?

Table 2: Adequacy of the Curriculum Content for Achieving the Stated Objectives

Levels	VA	A	I	VI	Total
S.S. 1	106 (42.4%)	110 (43.6%)	26 (10.4%)	9 (3.6%)	250
S.S. 2	109 (43.6%)	112 (44.8%)	21 (8.4%)	8 (3.2%)	250
S.S. 3	104 (41.6%)	114 (45.6%)	24 (9.6%)	8 (3.2%)	250
Total	319 (42.5%)	336 (44.8%)	70 (9.4%)	25 (3.3%)	750

The result of the data analysis shown in Table 2 indicates the Teachers' evaluation of the contents of the CRS curriculum and it reveals that an absolute majority of teachers (87.3%) evaluated the contents of the CRS curriculum as very adequate while, 12.7% evaluated it as very inadequate.

Discussion of Findings

Teachers' Evaluation on the Adequacy of the CRS Curriculum Objectives

The findings revealed that majority of the teachers opined that the CRS curriculum objectives are adequate. That is, the objectives are achievable within the three years period that the students are exposed to the curriculum. Majority of the respondents agreed that the objectives of the CRS curriculum were adequate in achieving the objectives of the programme. This finding agrees with the conclusion of Gotan (2005) that the objectives of the CRS objectives of the Junior Secondary School curriculum are adequate. This finding also agrees with the position of Awowale (2005) that the objectives of the Senior Secondary Senior CRS curriculum were adequate. The finding corroborates the submission of Ilori (2014) that the curriculum objectives of the Senior Secondary School CRS curriculum were adequate.

Teachers' Evaluation on the Adequacy of the Curriculum Content.

The findings that the CRS curriculum content is adequate are in line with Ilori (2014) and Gotan (2005) who agree that the curriculum content of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum were adequate. That is to say, that majority of the teachers agreed that the concepts, topics, themes included in the curriculum, were adequate.

The adequacy of curriculum content is key in achieving the objectives of any programme, Though Abuseji (2007) and Ayegboyin (2013) caution that knowledge of the contents of the Bible alone cannot equip children adequately for life, but a curriculum content that can arm the students to face the crisis of life adequately will be a worthwhile one. This point is also relevant according to Gotan (2005) quoting Adewale (1975) on the adequacy of sound curriculum content of CRS that, the purpose of education is not to stuff students with facts only but to refine their morals, educate their spirits and prepare them for a life full of sincerity and purity.

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The existing CRS objectives are consistent with the needs of the Nigerian students and the Nigerian educational system and therefore should be sustained and pursued in CRS curriculum implementation
2. The existing CRS contents are consistent with CRS objectives and capable of enhancing their achievement and therefore should be sustained in the on-going implementation

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