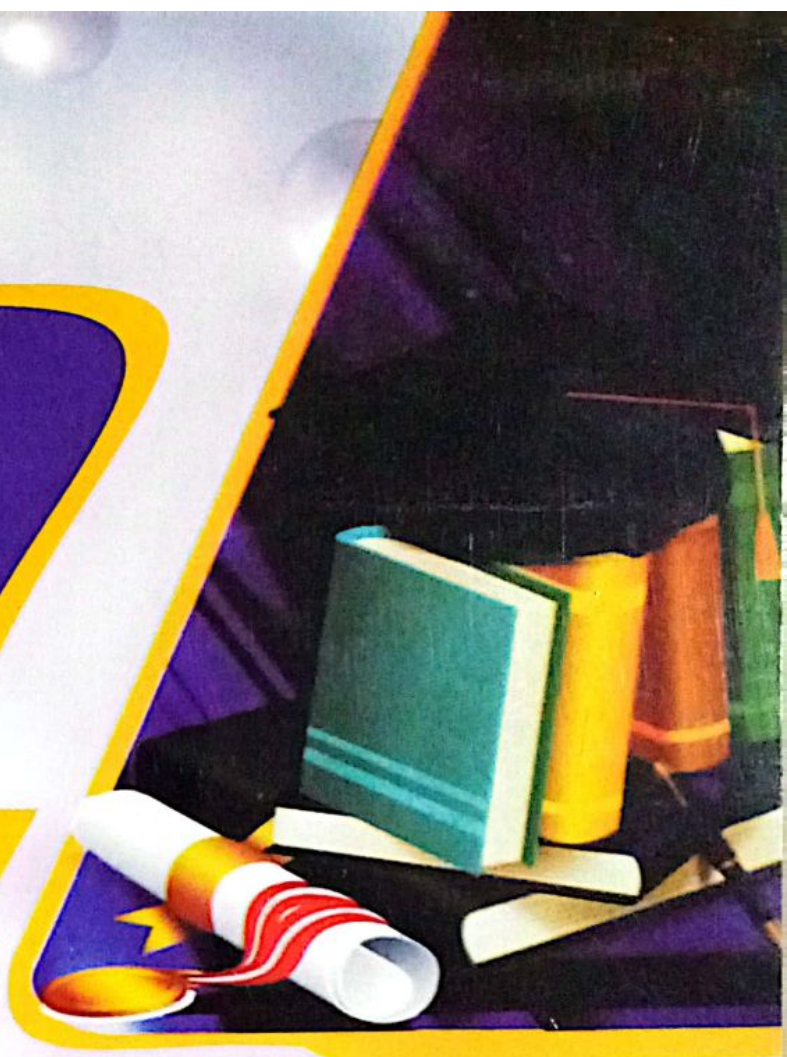


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ASSESSMENT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES TEACHERS' CONTENT AND PEDAGOGICAL KNOWLEDGE IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Christian Religious Studies teachers are expected to possess some content and pedagogical knowledge in the course of discharging their duties in the classroom. This study investigated the content and pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers in Ondo State senior secondary schools in relation to teaching diverse learners in terms of their academic ability, religious and socio economic background. The study was a survey aspect of descriptive research design. The population for the study comprised all CRS teachers in public senior secondary schools in Ondo State. Multi stage sampling techniques were used to select 120 CRS teachers as respondents. The instrument used for the data collection was a 24 item a self-designed questionnaire titled: "Questionnaire on 'Content and Pedagogical Knowledge of Teachers (QCPKT)" was used as data collection with reliability value of 0.83. The data collected were analysed using frequency, percentages and mean score to answer research questions. Also, t-test were used to test the hypotheses of the study at 0.05 level of significance. The result showed that CRS teachers carry out their duties optimally, because they are well grounded in the content and pedagogical knowledge of what they are to teach which made them able to pass it across to the students. The result also revealed that there was no significant difference in the level of content and pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers based on gender. Based on the findings, it was concluded among other that CRS teachers have deep content and pedagogical knowledge in the teaching learning classroom since majority of them had higher means from the variables (items) on content knowledge. Therefore, the study recommended that government should employ qualified and experienced teachers to teach the subject matter in all levels of education this will enable them to become professional expert in religious competent

Keywords: Teacher, Content, Pedagogical knowledge and Christian Religious Studies,

Introduction

Teaching is a complex and demanding intellectual work that cannot be accomplished without adequate preparation. Apart from providing students with learning opportunities, it

also meets curriculum outcomes. Teaching emphasizes the development of values, ideas, skills, and guides students in their social relationships. Christian Religious Studies is one of the school subjects that provide opportunity for full

development of a child in cognitive and affective domains. It plays an important role in human moral development as the subject provides a powerful motivation for right behaviour by blending spiritual, moral and social values which help in character development (Adeboye, 2020). According to the Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Curriculum Research and Development Council (FRN, 2013), Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is recognised as part of the school curriculum at all levels of the Nigeria educational system. 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. It is one the core subjects at the basic and upper basic levels of educational system and elective status at the senior secondary school level (NERDC, 2007). At the secondary school level, the subject is meant to prepare learners for useful living through the inculcation of Christian attitudes and values, and to prepare learners for higher education (FRN, 2013). A competent Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teacher is supposed to have undergone teacher education programme where the teacher would have acquired the needed content and pedagogical skill. This is due to the fact that the attainment of the objectives of any lesson is achieved by the ability of the teacher to display a good understanding of content knowledge, the approaches, and likewise the instructional materials adopted during the teaching-learning process.

The content is the body of knowledge to be learnt at all level of

educational system in Nigeria. Ojebode (2005) submitted that, content specifies subjects, subject-matter and the extent to which the subject-matter should be taught, examination conditions, regulation and the reading system. The content of the Christian Religious Studies curriculum in the senior secondary schools are arranged to reflect the objectives and philosophy of the Bible as the principal source, material for instruction and inspiration for Christian living (FRN, 2013). The content of the Christian Religious Studies curriculum is structured along with seven components which are:

- a. Topic;
- b. Behavioural Objectives;
- c. Content;
- d. Teachers' Activities;
- e. Students' Activities;
- f. Teaching and Learning Materials;
- g. Evaluation Guide (FRN, 2013).

Ojo (2016) asserted that, the content of the Christian Religious Studies curriculum in the secondary schools are carefully stated and designed in themes, units, objectives, suggested teaching methods, materials activities and evaluation for easy understanding by the teachers and students. The teachers' content knowledge refers to the teachers' knowledge of the subject matter which make up the curriculum and this include "knowledge of concepts, theories, ideas, organizational framework, as well as established practices and approaches towards developing such knowledge" (Koelher and Mishra, 2009). Shulman (2008), defined subject content knowledge as for teachers' knowledge of the specific

content they teach to students including topic, facts and relationship within a subject.

Mastery of the content knowledge is vital since it enables the teacher to confidently and satisfactorily deliver the various concepts as well as plan, implement and deliver it to students. In order to enhance the implementation of the content in the Christian Religious Studies curriculum, Adeboye (2021) identified some ways in which CRS teachers can be improve in the CRS curriculum content during teaching and learning process. Some of the ways are the following:

- a) Teaching should be learner-centered, this involves discussion, question and answer sessions.
- b) Teachers should begin from previous knowledge of the subject.
- c) Text or passages from the Bible should be given both orally and in written form.
- d) Every available tools should be employed by the teacher in order for them to achieve the objectives of the curriculum such as a good Bible dictionary, concordance, commentaries over all the books taught in the curriculum and other Bible study aids.
- e) The use of stories, visual illustrations, role play, drama, video and audio aids, word puzzle, projectors, films, television, etc, as these are instructional aids that make teaching and learning to be more meaningful for both the teachers and the learners.

Examining the above stated ways in which teachers can improve in the CRS

curriculum content, 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 learner to meet the desired learning objectives. Five components of the curriculum are essential which are, the objectives, content, instructional methods, instructional materials and evaluation and they interrelated. The evaluation of the curriculum by the teacher will therefore, be vital in assessing the success of the Christian Religious Studies programme. However, knowledge is power and an vital tool to acquired information in a developing country. Pedagogical knowledge can be defined as an ability to organise, meditate and impart the subject matter to the learners. Berling (2004) noted that pedagogical knowledge refers to the teachers' knowledge of the teaching and learning process in terms of how the content is organized by applying various techniques and how the class is managed. It entails a deep knowledge about the processes and methods of teaching and learning (Koelher& Mishra, 2009).

Pedagogical knowledge comprised all the educational purposes, values, aims, lesson plan development, implementation, student learning activities and teacher's classroom management. More so, it is the intersection of the teacher's knowledge of the subject with knowledge of how to teach and how students learn (Niess, 2005). It connotes the teacher's understanding of an educational context, for example, in terms of the composition of the student population. This knowledge enables the teacher to plan, implement and evaluate the teaching and learning process

while transforming the subject matter into a form that will facilitate student learning (de Berg & Grieve 1999). Pedagogical knowledge will enable the teacher to have good interpretation of the content in terms of finding and using several ways to present it and making it accessible to the learners (Shulman, 2008). Therefore, this knowledge enables teachers to bring in and use students' prior knowledge for a successful understanding of the subject in the teaching and learning process. However, teachers need to have a vast knowledge of pedagogies to draw from in order for them to deliver the content confidently. In Nigeria, teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge are vital in all teaching subjects especially in CRS. Although, CRS is a core subject at the primary and basic school level much effort is exerted in teaching it but evidence from numerous research studies makes it clear that many students' attitude and behaviour is not at the level they need or are expected to be. For a CRS teacher to be effective in the teaching, he/she needs to combine the subject content knowledge and the pedagogical skills in the teaching and learning process. Thus, the teacher is expected to exhibit skills in the use of analogies, illustrations, instructional materials, examples, variety of instructional strategies among others. According to Darling-Hammond (2000), the key factor to students' academic success in today's classrooms solely rely on teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge. This implies, the CRS teachers must have a mastery of the subject matter by showing interest desirable for teaching CRS and be a

good/role model for the learners, in order to a effectiveness of teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge.

Statement of the Problem

It seems that lack of qualified and experienced teachers teaching the subject matter of CRS in both public and private secondary school have been a great concerned to all educational stakeholders. This is because some of these teachers are not well trained in the content and pedagogical knowledge of the subject matter. These challenges may emanate from a number of factors in which teachers are exposed to during teaching and learning process. Such factors include unqualified teachers, poor method of teaching; inability to select appropriate instructional teaching aids, poor classroom management, weak academic background and lack of experience. Furthermore, some researchers such as Kosoko-Oyedeko (2013), Eze (2012), Ojo (2016), Edohe (2018), Ikuwuka, and Adigwe (2018) observed that some teachers teaching CRS in the Nigeria public secondary schools are not qualified and experienced trained teachers. The reason is that most of them were teaching the subject because their principal instructs them to do so; but they were trained in humanities disciplines like social studies, civil education, languages and also because some of them are Christians. As a result of this, they will not be able to perform optimally due to lack of the training in the content and pedagogical knowledge of the subject.

Similarly, survey studies in various states of the federation have

reported that incompetent teachers are handling CRS teaching, and they are confronted with subject content knowledge and pedagogical difficulties as a result of their poor professional background and knowledge of the content (Sofowora, 2008). Various studies have been carried out in the teaching and learning of CRS. Some have based their studies on teaching e.g methods, instructional materials, poor academic achievement and practical activities effectiveness among others. But studies comparing the content knowledge mastery and pedagogical skills of CRS teacher is not much and this is of utmost interest the present study intends to fill. The purpose of the study was to assess CRS teachers' opinion in the content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching CRS at the senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine CRS teachers' opinion in the content and pedagogical knowledge for teaching CRS at the senior secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the:

- a. level of teachers content knowledge in teaching and learning of CRS;
- b. level of teachers pedagogical knowledge in teaching and learning of ;CRS
- c. difference in CRS teacher's content knowledge based on gender;
- d. difference in CRS teachers' pedagogical knowledge based on gender.

Research Questions.

The following research questions were answered based on the opinion of teachers:

1. To what extent is the level of the teachers' content knowledge in the teaching and learning of CRS?
2. To what extent is the level of teachers pedagogical knowledge in the teaching and learning of CRS?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no significant difference in teachers' content knowledge based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in CRS teachers; pedagogical knowledge based on gender.

Methodology

The research design used for this study was a descriptive research of survey and *ex-post facto* method. Daramola (2006) defined descriptive survey as the systematic attempt to describe the characteristics of a given population or area of interest factually. The population for the study comprised all CRS teachers in public secondary schools in Ondo State, Nigeria. While the target population of this study consisted of all the public senior secondary schools in Ondo State. The study sample was made up of 120 CRS teachers respondent were randomly sampled with 52 male and 48 female CRS teachers at different stages. The instrument used for data collection was a 24 item, self-designed questionnaire titled: "Questionnaire on 'Content and

Pedagogical knowledge of Teachers" (QCPKT). It was divided into two sections: Sections A and B. Section A requested for personal information about the respondents. Section B contained a 24 item designed by the researchers to elicit information from the respondents which was divided into two, where we have 11 item centered on content knowledge of CRS teacher, while 13 item centered on pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers which was based on a three point modified Likert scale; High, Medium and Low weighted 1, 2, 3, respectively. The validity of the instrument was determined by Measurement and Evaluation experts in the Department of Arts Education and Social Sciences Education in the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The draft of the instrument was given to them for content and face validation, and their

corrections were effective before the final version of the instrument was administered on the respondents. The study adopts a test re-test method for the reliability of the instrument. An interval of about two weeks between the first test and the re-test of the instruments on the same respondents were given. The data collected were analysed using frequency count, percentage and mean score to answer research questions, while t-test statistical tool were used to test the hypotheses of the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question 1: *To what extent is the level of the teachers' content knowledge in the teaching and learning of CRS?*

Table 1: Level of Teachers' Content Knowledge

	Items	High %	Medium %	Low %	Mean
1.	I have a sufficient knowledge of CRS	76(63.3)	35(29.2)	9(7.5)	2.56
2	I can use a historical way of thinking	74(61.7)	37(30.8)	9(7.5)	2.54
3	I have various ways and strategies of developing my understanding of CRS	76(63.3)	24(20.0)	20(16.7)	2.47
4	I know the topics I can teach to different levels of students	77(64.2)	23(19.2)	20(16.7)	2.48
5	Use concrete examples to explain CRS concepts	66(55.0)	36(30.0)	18(15.0)	2.40
6	Explain basic concepts in CRS by using life-situation	69(57.5)	40(33.3)	11(9.2)	2.48
7	I bring out the moral implication of bible stories	84(70.0)	25(20.8)	11(9.2)	2.61
8	Use local examples to explain CRS content	65(54.2)	45(37.5)	10(8.3)	2.46
9	I have enough information to explain CRS content	51(42.5)	50(41.7)	19(15.8)	2.27
10	I have adequate information and knowledge on the history and development of biblical times	1(8.0)	105(87.5)	14(11.7)	1.89
11	Aware of common students misconception in CRS and use it to planning to ensure students understand	37(30.8)	56(46.7)	27(22.5)	2.08

Weighted Mean 2.38

The result in table 1 shows the content knowledge of CRS teachers in Ondo State. Based on the responses, the teachers showed high level of content knowledge, they have sufficient knowledge of CRS (2.56), use historical way of thinking (2.54), they have various ways and strategies of developing an understanding of CRS(2.47), know the topics to teach to different levels of students(2.48), use concrete examples to explain basic concepts in CRS by using life situations (3.48), bring out more implications of biblical stories(2.61) and use local examples to explain CRS content(2.46). This result shows that the teachers have a high level of content knowledge their means are greater than

the weighted mean of 2.38. However, their CRS content on having enough information to explain CRS content (2.27), adequate information on biblical times (1.87) and aware of common students misconception in CRS (2.08) is low. Because they fall below the weighted mean of 2.38. This implies that the teachers will be able to carry out their duties optimally. This is because they are well grounded in the content knowledge of what they are to teach and will be able to pass it across to the students.

Research Question 2: *To what extent is the level of teachers' pedagogical knowledge in the teaching and learning of CRS?*

Table 2: Level of Teachers Pedagogical Knowledge

S/N	Items	High	Medium	Low	X
1	I know how to assess student performance in a classroom	76(63.3)	29(24.2)	15(12.51)	2.51
2	I can adapt my teaching based upon what students currently understand or do not understand	58(48.3)	45(37.5)	17(14.2)	2.34*
3	I can assess student learning in multiple ways	78(65)	24(20.0)	18(15.0)	2.50
4	I can use a wide range of teaching approaches in a classroom setting	50(41.7)	55(45.8)	15(12.5)	2.34
5	I am familiar with common understanding and misconceptions	69(57.5)	23(19.2)	28(23.3)	*
6	I know how to organize and maintain classroom management	67(55.8)	40(33.3)	13(10.8)	2.45
7	I can select effective teaching approaches to guide student thinking and learning CRS	60(50.0)	44(35.8)	16(13.3)	2.53
8	Encourage critical thinking of students	57(47.5)	43(35.8)	20(16.7)	2.31
9	Use adequate instructional strategy/ methods	62(51.7)	38(34.2)	17(14.2)	2.38
10	Use appropriate measures to stimulate or sustain learners interest in teaching / learning	68(56.7)	29(24.2)	23(19.2)	2.38
11	Use appropriate reinforcement to ensure orderly students behavior	68(56.7)	40(33.3)	12(10.0)	2.47
12	Adequate use of required /recommended instructional resources	60(50.0)	46(38.3)	14(11.6)	2.42
13	Adequate manages the allocated time for classroom activities	71(59.2)	37(30.8)	12(10.0)	2.49

Weighted Mean 2.41

Table 2 shows the pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers in Ondo State. Considering the weighted mean of the respondents, it showed that the teachers had a high level of pedagogical knowledge in the following: knowledge of how to assess students' performance in the classroom (2.51), assess students in multiple ways (2.50), know how to organize and maintain classroom management (2.45), select effective teaching approaches (2.53), use

appropriate reinforcement in classroom (2.47), manages time allocated for classroom activities (2.49). Whereas, the CRS teachers responses were low in some areas because it fell below the weighted mean average of 2.41

Hypotheses Testing

HO₁: *There is no significant difference in teachers' content knowledge based on gender*

Table 4: The t-test analysis on the difference in teachers' content knowledge based on gender

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig	Decision
Male	43	27.2558	.12.11865	118	-.949	0.23	Not Rejected
Female	77	29.7403	14.58045				

Table 4 shows the t-value (-.949) is obtained with p-value 0.23 computer at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.23 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is retained. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the

teachers' responses in the level of content knowledge based on gender. ($t_{118} = -.949$ $p > 0.05$)

HO₂: *There is no significant difference in teachers' pedagogical knowledge based on gender*

Table 5: The t-test analysis on the difference in teachers' pedagogical knowledge based on gender

Variables	No	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	Sig	Decision
Male	43	33.9767	15.78500	118	-1.171	.173	Not Rejected
Female	77	37.6753	17.02586				

Table 5 shows the t-value of (-1.171) is obtained with the p-value of (0.173) computed significance. The null hypotheses is not rejected. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference in the level of pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers based on gender ($t(118) = (-1.171)$, $p\text{-value} > 0.05$) at 0.05 alpha level of significant.

Discussion

The researchers investigated the assessment of content and pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers' in senior secondary school in Ondo State, Nigeria. The teachers exhibited a high content knowledge level in the teaching of students and this contradicted what Obeng, Opare and Dzinyela (2003) observed that teachers were not strong in

subject matter contents. More so, the results from the pedagogical knowledge revealed that the teachers had high pedagogical knowledge in the teaching of CRS in the classroom. This confirms what Oyedeko (2013) said that effective CRS teaching is linked to both teachers content and pedagogical knowledge. Similarly, there was no significant difference in the level of content and pedagogical knowledge of CRS teachers based on gender. This study was in agreement with the study of Adeboye (2020) and Araashi (2019) analysis they established that gender has no significant difference on students' academic performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings, the study was concluded that CRS teachers have deep content and pedagogical knowledge in the teaching learning classroom since majority of them had higher means from the variables (items) on content knowledge. In addition, there was no significant difference in the of content and pedagogical knowledge of teachers in respect of male and female CRS teachers. It is therefore recommended that emphasis should be placed on both content and pedagogical knowledge during seminar or workshop for the CRS teachers this will enable them to become professionally and religiously competent in CRS classroom in order to carry out their duties perfectly. Similarly, government should employ qualified and experienced teachers to teach the subject matter at all levels of education in Nigeria.

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