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Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Christian Religious Knowledge *(Pp. 420-433)*

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Abstract

The study investigated the factors affecting academic achievement of students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Christian Religious Knowledge. A total of three hundred students in SS III from five secondary schools were randomly selected and used as sample for the study. Five hypotheses were tested, using chi-square analysis. The study established the following: Students who have positive attitude, interest and good perception of the subject perform better than those with negative attitude towards Christian Religious Knowledge. Students from high socio-economic status perform better than those from low socio-economic background in Christian Religious Knowledge. Students from private primary schools perform better than students from public schools in Christian Religious Knowledge. Girls perform better than boys in Christian Religious Knowledge. Arts oriented students show more superiority in Christian Religious Knowledge compared to science students. Recommendations that can enhance the students' achievement in the subject were made.

Introduction

Religion can be defined as the beliefs, attitudes, emotions or behaviour constituting man's relationship with the power and principles of the universe, especially with a deity or deities. It is also an object of conscientious devotion or scrupulous care (Lawal, 2002).

Christian Religious Knowledge is an aspect of religion that is peculiar to the followers of Christ. Christian religion was first regarded as a sectional religion. It was a religion of the Jews, then called Judaism or Yahwehism otherwise called Hebrew (Orebanjo, 1992).

Christian religion is being practiced in Nigeria till today because it is a builder of attitude and morality. Religion cannot be separated from education that is the reason why religious education is included in the National Curriculum of Education right from the primary to the university education (Abioye and Adekunle 1991).

Despite the importance of Christian Religious Knowledge to the individual and nation in imparting moral values and behavioural change, it is worthy to note that the performance of students in the subject is diminishing and poor (Lawal, 2002).

Poor performance occurs yearly and more students are running away from the subject. This alarming rate of poor performance in Christian Religious Knowledge has generated growing concern from various quarters, the parents, teachers, schools and the government.

One is also worried because of the relative 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 trends continue like that.

The poor academic performance in Christian Religious Knowledge is of interest to the researchers, thus, the following questions were asked: Who is to blame for the poor performance? Is it the child? The teacher? Society? Or parent?

In summary, the present study investigated the factors affecting academic achievement of students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Christian Religious Knowledge.

Research Hypotheses
The following hypotheses were tested at 0.5 level of significance.

1.   There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge achievement scores of students with positive attitude towards Christian Religious Knowledge and those with negative attitude towards it.

2.   There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge achievement scores of students from high and low social economic status.

3.   There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of students who attended public and private primary schools.

4.   There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge achievement scores of male and female students.

5.   There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of art, science and commercial students.

Review of Literature

Abioye and Adekunle (1991) were of the opinion that, every subject has its unique value and importance, the uniqueness of Christian Religious Education emerges from its dual function. It is a single subject which aims at simultaneous development of the intellectual ability of the pupils as well as moral character. It also emphasizes the effective domain of education taxonomy - the domain which many seem to be silent about give less emphasis or even neglect completely.

In the same vein, Okafor (1992) said that Christian Religious Knowledge helps to inject sanity into society and to minimize the turning of a nation into a police state by cultivating citizens who acknowledge metaphysical sanctions and therefore, whose acceptable behaviours are often determined not just by external constraints but by spiritual consideration.

Abioye and Adekunle (1991) described the Elementary Education Bill of 1870 in the House of parliament as being" To bring elementary education within the reach of every home, there was no doubt in anybody's mind that religious teaching must be give its proper place in a system which was to be formally approved by the state".

Earlier studies by Butler and Uren (1960) have also shown that lack of interest on the part of students make them to perform low. For example, there is some evidence to suggest that at about age 17, most adolescents reach a crisis in the process of shaping their attitudes to religious beliefs and practices and that this crisis is resolved, one way or the other by about the age 20.

Lewis (1968) has also confirmed in his study that attitude towards many school subjects can be affected by a host of factors, such as student ability, developmental crisis, lack of textbooks, teachers and school environment.

According to an investigation conducted on the attitude of most secondary school students towards Christian Religious Knowledge, most students that are doing it, do 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. Some do say, I offer it because I am a Christian.

Personal ambition on the part of the students motivates them to learn. It is an intrinsic towards learning and success. While stressing the importance of interest in a student in order to attain teaching, Folayan (1980) commented that:

The most significant finding of the analysis of factors influencing the choice of courses (subject---) is that more than half of respondents choose their subjects as they found them most interesting.

Oyetunji (1976) further emphasized on the training of teachers when he stated that:

"The number of unskilled teachers of English in West Africa is still very large and discouragingly alarming. It is not only their unawareness of modern techniques but also their mistaken confidence in their own effectiveness which militate against their improvement".

The above shows that there is need for every teacher to be trained in his subject before teaching. In his own contribution, It has been observed that most students get very high marks in their schools, but performed woefully in the school certificate examination. He pointed out that the teachers score their students high when indeed the students least deserved such grades. The false sense of security so created in the students always led to their dismal performance in the public examinations.

It has been found that Christian Religious Knowledge tends to be abstract in some situation and to remove the abstractness associated with the subject, the use of teaching aid is essential.

Johnson and Rising (1967) were of the opinion that successful and dynamic teacher is always searching for ways to make his instruments more meaningful. They know that the proper use of audio-visual materials may help build in students the space perception and imagination to master ideas.

Teaching aids no doubt enable students to learn faster, remember longer, gain more accurate information and receive and understand delicate concept meanings.

Also, Okafor (1992) stressed the role of Christian Religious Knowledge when he noted that "It injects human qualities into their 'humanness' for their own good and for the social good".

Methodology
Sampling and Sampling Procedure
The target population for this study is the population of all students in the S8.3 Class of secondary schools in Ogun State of Nigeria. The sample consisted of 300 students randomly drawn from five schools from Abeokuta North Local Government Area of the state in a 3 stage cluster sampling design. At the first state, 5 schools were randomly selected from the list of schools in the geographical area selected and which have the students within the defined population.

At the second stage, one classroom was randomly selected and the third stage, 60 students (30 males, 30 females) were randomly selected from the classes that had the winning tickets at the second stage. The selected secondary schools were:

1. Premier Grammar School

2. Lafenwa High School

3. Olumo High School

4. Unity High School

5. St. Peters College

Research Instrument
The instrument used consisted of one set of questionnaire for the students and analysis of records that is the Continuous Assessment (C.A) score in Religious Knowledge of the Senior Secondary Three Students (SS. III) and structured interview conducted on students, teachers and the principals of the selected schools.

The questionnaire was in four sections ABC and 0 and all the sections were completed by the students alone. Section A was designed to collect the students personal data like the name of school, age, sex, class and type of primary school attended. Section B was designed to obtain information on

the students' performance in their last promotion examination in form of Continuous Assessment.

In addition, students were told to indicate their choice of five best subjects in order of performance for the SSCE and the Art subjects offered. Section C was designed to obtain information on students' background variables .and finally, section 0 was designed to collect information on students attitude and perception of the subject.

Test Validation
To establish the content validity of the instrument, it was given to experts in the areas of Christian Religious Education and test and measurement. Based on their suggestions, some of the items were modified to suit the purpose of the study.

Instrumentation
The reliability of the instrument was determined by using split-half and test-retest techniques. The pretest was administered on all the 60 students from each school.

For the split-half, the scores on two equivalent halves of the instrument odd and even items were totaled separately and the correlation between the two halves was calculated using the Pearson's Product Moment Coefficient Formula. The obtained value was corrected by using Spearman Brown Prophesy Formula. Through these approaches, a reliability index of 0.88 was obtained.

Data Collection Procedure
Following the granting of permission by the principals of the randomly selected schools, the instrument was personally administered by the researchers. The administration was personally administered by the researchers. The administration was done during the school hours and this facilitated the administration of the instruments as well as retrievals.

Method of Data Analysis
The data collected from the responses to the items in the questionnaire were tabulated. The data consisted of the responses of each of the three hundred students to each of the main variables used for the study.

The total responses were counted depending on the aspect of the variables being considered to obtain the observed frequency. The average score of the students for two promotion examinations (Le. SS I and SS 2) in Christian

Religious Knowledge was used to rate the students as High Academic Achievement (HAA) and Low Academic Achievement (LAA).

The subject attitude score was his total score assuming all the statements were attempted. The questionnaires were designed in such a way that for each statement, a respondent is required to choose the most appropriate response to the items on a four Point -Liikert Type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), to Strong Disagree (SO). In scoring the scale, positively stated items were scored 4, 3,2, 1 for SA, A, 0, SO respectively while negatively stated items were scored in the reverse order thus 1, 2, 3, 4, SA, A, 0, SO respectively.

Thus, the minimum score for a student was 26 points (1 x 26), while the maximum score was 104 points (4 x 26). Any student who scored 78 points was considered as having favourable attitude, interest and perception towards Christian Religious Knowledge.

The statistical procedure employed to tackle the specific questions in the data analysis was the chi-square. The chi-square was used to test whether or not academic achievement in Christian Religious Knowledge is dependent on the following variables:

1. Students with positive attitude towards religious Knowledge and those with   negative attitude towards it.

2. Students who attended public primary schools and students who attended   private primary schools.

3. Students from parents of high social economic status and students from parents of low social economic status.

4. Sex difference (Male/Female)

5. Art and non-Art students.

The chi-squarer formula is given as.

$$X^2 = \frac{\sum(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Results

Table one shows chi-square of the schools and number of high and low academic achievement in the continuous assessment in Christian Religious Knowledge.

HAA   -   above 55%

LAA   -   below 55%

The first hypothesis which says there is no significant difference in academic achievement of students with positive attitude towards Christian Religious Knowledge and those with negative attitude towards it was tested using chi-square analysis (X2 = 70.28: df I : P < 0.05).

The calculated chi-square yielded a value of 70.28. this is greater than the table value of 3.84 using degree of freedom of 1 at 0.05 level of significance. Consequent upon this result, the hypothesis was rejected.

Table 3 presents the result of second hypothesis which confirm that there is a significance difference in the academic achievement of students in Christian Religious Knowledge from high and low socio-economic status home. The calculated chi-square yielded a value of 47.65. This is greater than the table value of 3.84. On the basis of this result, the hypothesis was also rejected.

Table 4 presents the result of the third hypothesis which shows that there is significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge achievement scores of students from public and private primary schools.

The calculated chi-square yielded a value of 40.87. This is greater than the table value of 3.84. Based on this result, the hypothesis was rejected.

From table 5, it could be observed that calculated chi-square value is 84.42. Since this is greater than the table value of 3.84, the hypothesis was therefore rejected. We uphold that there is a significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of male and female students.

From table 6, it could be seen that the calculated chi-square value is 41.98 is also greater than the table value of 3.84. On the basic of this result, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The implication of this is that there is a significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of science and non-science students.

Discussion of Findings

The research work which set out to investigate the academic achievement in Christian Religious Knowledge of secondary school students made use of three hundred (300) secondary school students from five selected schools in Abeokuta North Local Government Area of Ogun State.

The research tested five variables as they affect academic achievement of students in Christian Religious Knowledge. From the finding of this study, the following conclusions can be derived.

(a) **Attitude, Interest and Perception (Positive/Negative)**
From the analysis of the response to the study by the students, it was found that most of the students, who believed that Christian Religious Knowledge is not a difficult subject are those who find Christian Religious Knowledge lesson interesting and enjoy Christian Religious Knowledge lesson, students who do their home work regularly perform better in the subject than students who feel that Christian Religious Knowledge can "turn the brain". This negative attitude vividly shows from the responses to the students' order of preference of subjects for the SSCE where despite the fact that Christian Religious Knowledge is an Art Subject in SSCE, only about 48% of the respondents show preference for Christian Religious Knowledge as a subject.

(b) **Parent Social-Economic Status (High/Low)**
Result of this study showed that a reasonable number of the respondents parents fall into the group of parents who are termed to be high .in socio-economic status. The result also revealed the parents educational background in reference to their income and this adequate provision for their children's education arid other vital needs.

(c) Previous Educational Background (Public/Private Primary School)
From the analysis of the data, it was found that a greater percentage of the students with high academic achievement in Christian Religious Knowledge attended private primary schools and are from monogamous homes', and the socio-economic status of the parents can be classified as high.

Many of the large sized families in this study were discovered to be illiterates or semi-illiterates who found it difficult to feed themselves not to talk of educating or giving the best to their children.

A large number of the Children from the large sized families belonged to the parents who were having more heads to cater for especially those of them

with either many children and /or with the load of the extended families on them.

(d)   Sex Difference (Male/Female)

Analysis of the result indicated that Arts students showed more superiority in Christian Religious Knowledge compared to Science students. Arts students showed more interest, positive attitude and better perception of the subject compared to Science students.

Conclusion

The study investigated factors affecting Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement of students in Senior School Certificate Examination. The following conclusions were derived from the study.

(a) Students with positive attitude towards Christian Religious Knowledge had better academic achievement scores than students with negative attitude towards the subject.

(b) Students from high socio-economic status had better academic achievement scores in Christian Religious Knowledge than students from low socio-economic status.

(c) Students who attended private primary schools had better academic achievement scores in Christian Religious Knowledge than students who attended public primary schools.

(d) Female students had better academic achievement scores in Christian Religious Knowledge than male students.

(e) Non-science students had better academic achievement scores in Christian Religious Knowledge than science students.

Recommendations

- Teachers of Religious studies should make teaching of the subject very interesting to the students.

- Appropriate instructional materials should be used to teach the students.

- Parents should not discourage their children from offering Christian Religious studies.

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Table 1: Chi-square table showing the number of high and low academic achievement in Christian Religious Knowledge

School	High Academic Achievement in CRK	Low Academic Achievement	Total
A	27	33	60
B	15	45	60
C	29	31	60
D	18	42	60
E	16	44	60
Total	**105**	**195**	**300**

Table 2: Chi-square showing the difference in the academic achievement of students with positive and negative attitude towards Christian Religious Knowledge

Attitude Interest And perception	Academic Achievement in C.R.K		Total No of Student	
	High (HAA)	**Low (LAA)**		
	Observed Expected	Observed Expected	ROW	df X^2 P
Positive	85 (50.4)	59 (93.6)	144	
Negative	20 (54.6)	136 (101.4)	156	70.28< 0.05
Total Column	**105**	**195**	**300**	

Table 3: Chi-square showing the academic achievement of students from high and low socio-economic status

Parents Socio-Economic Status	Academic Achievement in C.R.K.				Total No Of Stu		df	X2	P
	High (HAA)		Low (LAA)						
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected			df	X2	P
HiQh	90	(61.95)	87	(115.05)	177				
Low	15	(43.05)	108	(79.95)	123			47.65	0.05
Total Column	105		195		300				

Table 4: Chi-square showing difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of students from public and private primary schools

Previous Education (Primary School)	Academic Achievement In C.R.K. of				Total No Student	df X² P
	High (HAA)		Low (LAA)			
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Row	df X² P
Private	63	(31.5)	27	(58.5)	90	
Public	42	(73.5)	168	(136.5)	210	40.87 < 0.05
Total Column	105		195		300	

Table 5: Chi-square showing difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement of female and male students

	Academic Achievement In C.R.K.				Total No of Student	df	X²	P
	High (HAA)		Low (LAA)					
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Row			
Female	90	(I52.5)	60	(97.5)	150		84.42	<0.05
Male	15	(52.5)	135	(97.5)	150			
Total Column	105		195		300			

Table 6: Chi-square showing difference in Christian Religious knowledge academic achievement scores of science and non-science students

Students Subject Combination	Academic Achievement in C.R.K				Total of Students	df	X²	P
	High (HAA)		Low (LAA)					
	Observed	Expected	Observed	Expected	Row			
Science	81	(54.25)	74	(105.75)	155			
Non-Science	24	(50.75)	121	(94.25)	145		41.98	<0.05
Total (Column)	105		195		300			