

Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Christian Religious Knowledge

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Abstract

The study investigated factors affecting academic achievement of students in Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) in Christian Religious Knowledge. A total of three hundred students in SSII from five secondary schools were randomly selected and used sample for the study. Five hypotheses were tested, using chi-square analysis. The study established that 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 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.

Keywords: *Factors, Academic, Achievement, Students, Examination, Christian, Religious, Knowledge*

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Background to the Study

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 (Orenbanjo, 2002).

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, 2001).

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. Apart from this relative importance to education and moral development, if care is not taken, the country will be eroded of its values and cultures if trends continue like that.

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

Objective of the Study

The study investigate 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 0.05 level of significance.

1. There will be no significant difference in 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 socio-economic status.
3. There will be no significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge 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 achievement scores of art, science and commercial students.

Literature Review

Abioye and Adekunle (2001) 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 (2002) 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 spiritual consideration.

Abioye and Adekunle (2001), Forester (2013) 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 given its proper place in a system which was to be formally approved by the state."

Earlier studies by Butler and Uren (2006) 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 about age 17, most adolescents reach a crisis in the process of shaping their attitudes to religious beliefs and practices and that the crisis is resolved, one way or the other by about the age of 20.

Lewis (2004) has also confirmed in his study that attitude towards many school subject 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 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 the learning and success. While stressing the importance of interest in a student in order to attain effective learning and to help the teachers accomplish effective teaching.

Folayan (2008) 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."

Oyetunjii (2006) 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, Oluyeba (2009) said 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

examination. 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 (2007) were of the opinion that successful dynamic teacher is always searching for ways to make his instructions 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 (2002) 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

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The target population for this study is the population of all students in the SS 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 stage, 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 stages, 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. Peter's 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 A B C and D 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 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 subject offered. Section C was designed to obtain information on students' background variables and finally, section D was designed to collect information on students' attitude and perception on 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 Prophecy 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 researcher. 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 of 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 total variables being considered to obtain the observed frequency. The average score of the students for two promotion examinations (i.e. 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 responses to the items on a four Point-Likert Type Scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), to Strongly Disagree (SD). In scoring the scale, positively state items were scored 4, 3, 2, 1 for SA, A, D, SD respectively while negatively stated items were scored in the reverse order thus: 1, 2, 3, 4 for SA, A, D, SD respectively.

Thus, the minimum score for a student was 26 points (1x26), while the maximum score was 104 points (4x26). 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 socio-economic status and students from parents of low socio-economic status.
4. Sex difference (Male/female)
5. Art and non-Art students

The chi-square formula is given as:

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

Results

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

| Schools | 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 one above shows chi-square of the schools and numbers 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 ($X^2 = 70.28$; df 1; $p < 0.05$).

Table II –Chi-square showing 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 students | df X ² P |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| | High (HAA) | | Low (LAA) | | | |
| | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected | ROW | |
| Positive | 85 | (50.4) | 59 | (93.6) | 144 | 70.28 < 0.05 |
| Negative | 20 | (54.6) | 136 | (101.4) | 156 | |
| Total column | 105 | | 195 | | 300 | |

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 III: 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 students | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------------|------|
| | High (HAA) | | Low (LAA) | | | | | |
| | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected | | df | X ² | P |
| High | 90 | (61.95) | 87 | (115.05) | 117 | | 47.65 | 0.05 |
| Low | 15 | (43.05) | 108 | (79.95) | 123 | | | |
| Total column | 105 | | 195 | | 300 | | | |

Table 3 above presents the result of second hypothesis which confirms that there is a significant difference in the academic achievement of students in Christian Religious Knowledge from high and low socio-economic status homes. 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 IV: 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. | | | | Total No. of students | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------------|-------|
| | High (HAA) | | Low (LAA) | | | | | |
| | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected | ROW | df | X ² | 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 IV above presents the results 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 calculate chi-square yielded a value of 40.87. This is greater than the table values of 3.84. Based on this result, the hypothesis was rejected.

Table V: 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 students | df | X ² | P |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------------|-------|
| | High (HAA) | | Low (LAA) | | | | | |
| | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected | ROW | | | |
| Female | 90 | (52.5) | 60 | (97.5) | 150 | | | |
| Male | 15 | (52.5) | 135 | (97.5) | 150 | | 84.42 | <0.05 |
| Total column | 105 | | 195 | | 300 | | | |

From the above table, it could be observed that calculated chi-square value is 84.42. Since this is greater than the table value of 3.38, the hypothesis was therefore rejected. We uphold that there is a significant difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores on male and female students.

Table VI: Chi-square showing difference in the Christian Religious Knowledge academic achievement scores of science and non-science students

| Student's subject combination | Academic achievement in C.R.K. | | | | Total No. of students | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------|------------|----------|-----------------------|----|----------------|-------|
| | High (HAA) | | Low (LAA) | | | | | |
| | Observed | Expected | Observed | Expected | ROW | df | X ² | P |
| 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 | | | |

From the table above, 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 basis 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 findings 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 homework 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 student's 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 Socio-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 served as great a determinant to the ability of the parents in their adequate provision for their children's education and 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)

Result of this study revealed a wider range of gap between academic achievements in Christian Religious Knowledge of the female students who were more superior than their male colleagues. The result also showed that most of the female students have better attitude and exhibit positive interest to the study of Christian Religious Knowledge than the male students. Most of the male respondents believed that Christian Religious Knowledge is a difficult subject.

e. Subject Combination (Science/ Arts Students)

Analysis of the result indicated that Arts students showed more superiority in Christian Religious Knowledge compared to Science students. Arts students showed more interests, 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 the 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 in Christian Religious Knowledge than science students.

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