

**FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH MASS FAILURE OF STUDENTS IN
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN
OHAUKWU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF EBONYI STATE.**

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ABSTRACT

In recent times, there have been numerous cases of student's poor performance in Christian Religious knowledge in most external examinations. Worried by this trend of events, the researchers took an in-depth investigation into Factors Associated with Mass Failure of Student in Christian Religious Studies in Senior Secondary School in Ohaukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. 411 senior secondary two students offering Christian Religious Studies were randomly selected from among ten secondary schools. Using questionnaire and student's academic achievement test, the researcher carefully collected data on the variables viz: sex, age and attitude towards Christian Religious Studies. Independent t-test and One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used for data analysis. The result of data analyzed showed that the three student's variables: sex, age and attitude have a significant influence on student's academic performance in Christian religious studies. It was recommended that government and school administrators should consider helping school children acquire functional academic when they are still young and that parents should encourage their children to go to school younger to enable them perform better in schools.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The word “Christian religious study” which is a branch of the study of human religion, considered as an educational discipline. It deals with logical reasoning of religion and natural science and its environment. Christian religious study as a school subject is recognized as the foundation of religion. This underscores the importance of Christian religious study competence of all the learners at all levels of education and a reason for making Christian religious study compulsory and one of the leading core subject in the secondary school curriculum. This importance accorded the recognition of the vital role it plays in contemporary society.

There is a general impression that Christian religious study is difficult by its very nature, and because of this impression, there is poor performance among Senior secondary school students who are the focus of this study. This poor performance in Christian religious study has been attributed to two broad factors which include: Hereditary and environmental factors which can be subdivided into students, home, teachers, and school factors. Ola (1998).

However, students reason that Christian religious study is highly structured and is so abstract and required special intellectual attitude. Thus; students see the subject as something esoteric. Emenalo (1986) in Nwogu (1990) articulated the fact that inherent notion held by many Africans that Christian religious study is a very complex subject which is capable of making one “stressed” is at the centre of the phobia which students exhibits for Christian Religious Studies and which had claimed many causalities over the years, Nworgu (1990:123), therefore poses the question “how then would any person in fairness expect our poor and innocent children to be as courageous as to face something which is capable of making even an adult mad? The students would prefer to study something else no matter how difficult rather than to attend Christian Religious Studies.

The Senior secondary school certificate examination is an external examination organized and conducted by the ministry of education. The establishment of this Senior secondary school education by the state government Ohaukwu local government Area of Ebonyi State like any other states has the same aims and objectives as the national policy on education specified that secondary education is the education received after primary education and before the tertiary institution.

According to Adewale (1992), it is the only instrument that could evaluate the performance of both students and teachers at the end of Senior secondary school career. He further stated that, the success or failure of the student in examination is a clear manifestation of the student academic activities during the course. Success or good performance determines a brighter future for the student while failure is disastrous as it always indicate a dropout which is the common effect in the area of this study.

Statement of the Problem

A close look at the 2020/2021 Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) results records, confirms that students' performance in Christian Religious Studies has been very poor generally and the increase number of school dropout in the area of study is a clear pointer of the theme. The poor performance is caused by many factors such as; students ineffective study techniques, quality of teachers and method of teaching, the parent's inability to provide useful materials like textbooks, exercise books and school fees and problem of inadequate instructional materials for teaching and learning of Christian religious study in schools.

In view of these causes, this study therefore is specifically designed to assess the factors associated with mass failure of student in Christian religious study in Senior secondary school in Ohaukwu local government Area of Ebonyi State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to find out the factors associated with mass failure of students in Christian religious study in Senior secondary school in Ohaukwu local government Area of Ebonyi State. The interests of the researchers are to examine critically and identify the causes and effects of mass failure of students in Christian religious study in Senior secondary school specifically, the study sought to find out if:-

1. There are sufficient numbers of qualified Christian religious study teachers and instructional materials for teaching of Christian religious study.

Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the findings of this research will encourage various governments to provide conducive environment, teaching aids and qualified teachers for effective study of Christian religious studies in secondary schools.

This study is of educational importance because it is believed that if Christian religious studies teachers in secondary schools understand the factors which stimulate the growth of interest in Christian religious studies, such knowledge may provide bases not only to make Christian religious studies popular but also to make the teaching of Christian religious studies humanizing.

The study would as well re-orient students with negative attitude towards the study of Christian religious studies in secondary schools.

It would also assist the government to identify students' attitude towards the study of Christian religious studies in secondary schools.

It would equally serve as a basis for other researchers who are carrying out investigation on similar problems facing the development of education in Nigeria.

It would help teachers and educational planners to acquire knowledge of solving problems associated with the attitude of students towards the study of Christian religious studies in secondary schools

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is secondary schools in Ohaukwu local government Area of Ebonyi State.

Research Questions

To carry out a detailed study of the research, the following research questions will guide the study:-

1. Does cultural background affect students' performance in Christian religious studies?
2. Does teacher – students' relationship influence students' performance in Christian religious studies?
3. Does the nature of school environment affect students' performance in Christian religious studies?
4. Does school management system influence teaching and learning process in Christian religious studies?

Research Hypothesis

H0: There is no significant influence of cultural backgrounds on students' performance in Christian religious studies.

H01: There is no significant influence of teacher – students' relationship on students' performance in Christian religious studies.

H03: There is no significant impact of the nature of school environment where teaching is practiced in relation to student's performance in Christian religious studies.

H04: There is no significant influence of school management system on teaching and learning process in Christian religious studies.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This section describes the research methodology. This consists of the research design, the geographical description of Target population, sample size and sampling procedures, Data collection procedures, Questionnaires, Interview schedules Documentary analysis, Instrumentation, Validity of instruments, Reliability of instruments and Data analysis.

Research Design

The survey design will be adopted for this study because data was specifically collected from the sample of the study through the use of questionnaire.

Target Population

The study area is Ohaukwu L.G.A of Ebonyi State. The people practice Christianity, African traditional religion (ATR) and some pockets of other religion like Islam. The educational institutions (secondary schools in the area of study includes; twenty -two (22) public secondary schools and thirty eight (38) private secondary schools approved by government.

Sample Size

population of this study will comprise 6567 students (both males and females) in Senior Secondary School two (SSS II) in the twenty -two (22) public secondary schools and thirty eight (38) private secondary schools in Ohaukwu L.G.A.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection will be a ten (10) item instrument titled, “ICT Utilization and Students Variable Questionnaire.” (IUSVQ) and a 20 item Christian Religious Studies Achievement Test (CAT) will be designed by the researcher for data collection with a four point Likert scale response options. The second instrument will be a 20 item Christian Religious Studies achievement test designed to address major topics covered in SS II syllabus in Christian Religious Studies.

Methods of Data Analysis

Independent t-test and One way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) will be used for data analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Hypothesis 1

The results of the analyses are presented hypothesis by hypothesis as shown below. Hypothesis one: Students' attitude towards CRK does not significantly influence secondary school students' academic performance in CRK in Ohaukwu L.G.A? Students' attitude was categorized into positive and negative attitude. The result of the independent t-test analysis of this hypothesis is presented on table 1.

Table 1: Result of independent t-test analysis of the influence of Attitude on academic achievement in CRK

Dependent	Attitude	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-value	P-value	Variable
Academic	Negative	252	8.2	2.2	398	33.9	.000*	performance
	Positive	148	15.9	2.1				

N=400, P< .05 significant*

The result on table 1 shows the CRK academic achievement mean scores and standard deviations for the two categories of respondents for attitude towards CRK. The mean score for students with positive attitude was greater than the mean score for students with negative attitude (15.9>8.2); this produced t-value of 33.9 with a p-value higher than the .05 significance level with 398 degree of freedom. This implies students' attitude towards CRK has a significant influence on academic achievement in CRK. In other words, students with positive attitude performed better than students with negative attitude. Therefore the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is upheld.

Hypothesis 2

Secondary school student's sex does not significantly influence students' academic performance in CRK in Ohaukwu L.G.A? The independent variable in this hypothesis is Secondary school student's sex, while the dependent variable is students' academic performance in CRK; secondary school student's sex in this case was categorized into male and female. The result of the independent t-test analysis to test this hypothesis is presented on table 2.

Table 2: Result of independent t-test analysis of the influence of sex on academic achievement in CRK

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	p-value
Academic performance	Male	122	10.73	4.4	398	2.41	.016*
	Female	278	11.86	4.2			

N=400, P< .05 significant*

The result on table 2 shows the CRK academic achievement mean scores and standard deviations for the two categories of respondents for sex. The mean score for female students was slightly greater than the mean score for male students ($11.86 > 10.73$); this produced t-value of 2.41 with a p-value higher than the .05 significance level with 398 degree of freedom. This implies students' sex has a significant influence on academic achievement in CRK. In other words, female students performed better than male students in Christian Religious Studies did.

Hypothesis 3

Age of secondary school students does not significantly influence students' academic performance in CRK in Ohaukwu L.G.A? The independent variable in this hypothesis is students' age, while the dependent variable is academic performance in CRK. The students' age was categorized into below 14 years old, 15-17 years old and greater than 18 years. Table 3 shows the result of One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Table 3: One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the influence of age on academic achievement in CRK

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD
Age	Below 14 years	140	11.56	4.09
	15-17 years	199	11.20	4.36
	Above 18 years	61	9.57	4.53
Total		400	11.08	4.33

Variable	Source of Variation	SS	df	Ms	F	P-value
Between Groups	172.932		2	86.46	4.68	0.10*
Within Groups	7503.75		397	18.46		

*significance of the group at $P < .05$ $df = 2$ and 397

The result on table 3 shows the CRK academic achievement mean score, standard deviation and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for the three groups of respondents. Students below 14 years old had the highest mean score of 11.56, followed by students within the age range of 15-17 years (11.20) and above 18 years (9.57). This produced an F-value of 4.68 with a p-value of .010 which is lower than .05 significant levels at 2 and 397 degree of freedom. This implies that age significantly influence students' academic achievement in CRK. This further implied that the mean differences for the three groups of respondents are statistically significant. To understand which group made the difference that produced the significant influence, a post hoc test analysis was carried out on the data via Fisher's protected t-test analysis. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Fisher's protected t-test analysis of the influence of students' age on academic performance in CRK.

Dependent Variable	Age	N	Mean	SD	Groups	t	p-value
Academic Performance	Below 14 yrs	140	11.56	4.09	1 vs 2	0.77	.442
	15-17 yrs	199	11.20	3.93	1 vs 3	3.05	.003*
	18 yrs –above	61	9.57	3.94	2 vs 3	2.57	.012*

*significant at $P < .05$

From table 4, the results shows t-value for groups 1 vs 2 ($t=0.77$), groups 1 vs 3 ($t=3.05$) and groups 2vs3 ($t=2.57$). Group 1 vs 2 implies non significance, as the p-value was greater than calculated t-value at the .05 significance value, meaning that the mean

performance of students aged below 14 years when compared with 15-17 years is not significant. However, the t-value of 3.05 (below 14 years vs 18 years and above) and 2.57 (15-17 years vs 18 years above) had p-values lower than the calculated t-value at 0.5 significant level respectively.

This finding is in consonance with earlier studies by Butler and Uren (1997); Simonton (2001); Lawal (2010) which shows that lack of interest on the part of students make them to perform low in school subjects. The data analysis however revealed that students' gender significantly influences academic performance in CRS, whereby female students performed better than male students. The finding of Lawal (2010) that female students performed better than male students in CRS; in other words, gender has a significant influence on students' performance in CRS supports this findings. However, the finding of this study does not support the findings of Adepoju and Ogurinade (2006) who carried out a study on students' factors as correlates of academic achievement in Junior Secondary School Religious Studies found out that gender was not a significant contributor to academic performance in CRS. In support of this finding is the findings of AbduRaheem (2012) who carried out a study on the influence of gender on secondary school students' academic performance in south-west, Nigeria, his findings revealed that female did better than males in CRS, with a Chi-square value. Thus, there exists a significant influence of gender on academic performance in CRS.

This finding does not support the findings of Adepoju and Ogurinade (2006) who found out that age was not a significant contributor to academic performance in CRS. This further implies that older and younger students would have no significant difference in their achievement in CRS. These findings could be as result of the subject area (CRS) which involves morality and ethics, which at a younger age; students may not be exposed to certain character traits that will make them loose interest in CRS. On the other, older students find themselves in activities that contradict the class lesson in CRS, thereby resulting to a feeling of low interest in the subject, which in the long run, leads to low academic performance. This finding is supported by White (1992) which showed

that as students become older, the correlation between age and school performance diminishes in subject like CRS.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusion

This research concluded that students' attitude, age and gender have significant influence on students' academic performance in CRS among Senior Secondary Schools students in Ohaukwu L.G.A.

Recommendations

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

1. Governments, counselors and concerned agencies should develop programs aimed at sensitizing students on the need to develop positive attitude towards all school subjects in order to boost students' academic achievement in the subject area
2. Both male and female students should be encourage to choose Christian Religious Knowledge as a subject since it imbues in the learners moral, civic and social responsibility especially now that every Nigerian is seen as lacking morally.
3. Parents and guardians should encourage their wards to go to school early enough to enable them use their early age advantage to guarantee their improved academic performance as compared to delay education of students.
4. Considering the dual purpose of Christina religious knowledge, it is mandatory that government and other school curriculum planners should make the subject a compulsory subject especially now that the country is facing a huge wave of moral decadence and poor citizenship.

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