

ATTAINING CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES LEARNING OUTCOMES THROUGH EFFECTIVE TEACHING METHODS AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN SOUTH EAST GEO-POLITICAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: *The study geared to investigate attaining Christian Religious studies learning outcomes through effective use of teaching methods among secondary school pupils in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. A research question guided the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. South East geo-political zone was the area of study and comprised all Christian Religious Studies (CRS) teachers in the geographical area with estimated population of 810. The study adopted a multiple sampling techniques in which 500 CRS teachers were selected as the target population. Instrument for data collection was fixed response questionnaire. Mean was the instrument for data analysis Result shows that effective application and appropriate use of method would help greatly in attaining CRS learning outcomes in the lives of secondary school pupils in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria. Based on the finding recommendations were made on attaining CRS desired learning outcomes among pupils in the area that formed the major contribution of the study.*

KEYWORDS: Attaining, Objectives, Christian Religious Studies, Effective Application, Teaching Methods

INTRODUCTION

Christian Religious Studies is one of the core subjects in the junior secondary and as well as an elective in the senior secondary schools In South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria. The subject gains its root into Nigeria education system through the European Missionaries who introduced the subject as a means of converting Nigerians into white man religion (Christianity). Shortly after Nigeria independence, management of schools shifted from the hands of the missionaries to the Nigerian government. The shift affected the study of CRS such that the name was changed from Bible knowledge to Christian Religious knowledge and later CRS, in the same way series of changes occurred in its contents.

With government take over of schools, there was a call for review of Nigeria education curriculum in 1983, and the curriculum of study was expanded to include Arts, sciences and technological subjects. In the review, many subjects were introduced, and the teaching of CRS was upheld among others. The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) reviewed CRS curriculum with major focus on building human values, moral and attitudes. In that review major objectives of CRS were highlighted to include:

- Inculcating in the learner the respect and knowledge of God and respect for humanity and society.
- Developing in the learner strong personality and character formation, deep sense of responsibility to fellow man.
- Sensitizing in the learners respect for the rights and privilege of others.
- Developing and fostering in the lives of the learner Christian attitude and values such as humility, love, justice and spirit of forgiveness, obedience, faith, fair play that will guide human interaction and co-existence.
- Preparation of learner for useful living by helping them to improve their moral values and attitudes to God and fellow man.
- Inculcating in the learner the understanding the basic teaching of Christ and to apply them in their daily lives and works (1985:34).

Drawing inference from the above set objectives of CRS as a subject of study, CRS is meant to impart in the learner all round development by exposing the pupil to the knowledge and values, respect for authorities whether spiritual or temporary; and equipping the learner with appropriate attitude and moral values required for co-existence with others in any given human environment. This implies that Christian attitude drawn from the teachings and life of Christ as contained in the Holy Scripture are detailed enough to deal with moral formation of a growing child, yet some pupils are not manifesting positive behaviours that depict the knowledge which CRS is meant to inculcate. The attitude of such school pupils seems to suggest that CRS is not properly taught hence the desired outcome has not attend hundred percent boost .

Learning outcomes has to do with the application and integration of the knowledge acquired in a particular unit of instruction. Learning outcomes according to Obanya (2004) are statements that describe significant and essential learning which learners have acquired and can reliably demonstrate at the end of a course or program. The desired or expected learning outcomes of CRS study is on the attainment of ethical and moral behavior of school pupils, in other words, building up the moral character of an individual using example of Christian religion values rather than mere precepts. The main aim of including CRS into Nigerian education curriculum therefore is to advance Christian moral virtues in the lives of school pupils. Most often those desired outcomes do not manifest in some pupils' behaviours judging from the rate of immorality observable in schools and the society at large.

Teaching method refers to the principle, science of teaching and management strategies used for classroom instruction (Njoku, 2002). It involves approaches, styles, tactics and principles used in impacting knowledge to the learner. In the context of this study it refers to class discussion used by teachers in guiding learning, and to transfer given learning content to the learner.

The use of varieties of methods depends on the teachers' disposition and wealth of knowledge. In the past, the teachings of CRS have been through a rote method handed over by the missionaries. The rote methods centered on the use of memorization, discussion and story telling approaches to mention but a few, and those methods are teachers centered which do not give learner the opportunity to participate actively rather make learners' passive listeners. Rote methods according to Okafor (2001) prepare the learner to achieve the

cognitive objectives of the subject without due considerations to the affective objectives. In most cases, pupils taught with the rote methods end up passing their examination without relevance to the learners' needs and character formation which the study of CRS advocates for.

However, one of the distinguishing qualities of the most recent CRS curriculum is on its approach in adoption of varieties of methods in the teaching of CRS which incorporate discussion of local and contemporary moral issues without contrast to the traditional customs and beliefs. This means that the new curriculum advocates the use of varieties of methods in the teaching of CRS.

New approaches to the teaching of CRS according to ILori (2002) may result to excellent attainment of CRS learning outcomes in the pupils. This is possible in that when teachers show interest and make effective use of varieties of methods which are learner centered in teaching, learners are abound to learn better and acquire expected ethical behaviour. For instance in most schools within the area of study some negative attitude are predominant as such it seems that desired behaviour expected in the learner of CRS lessons may not be attained. When CRS teachers deploy methods which are learners effectively pupils will attain maximum experience capable of changing their ethical behavior positively. Duckin (1999) noted that for objectives of any given subject to be achieved the teacher should be acquainted with the use of techniques, in that if good method is adopted and appropriate techniques or skills applied the desired impact of the lesson would be attained. Imperatively this means that attainment of learning outcomes requires effective combination of teaching methods.

Affective impact of CRS lesson in the lives of pupils is as paramount as the cognitive achievement. The learning outcomes are the major aim of inclusion of CRS in the school curriculum. The strategy to achieve the cognitive knowledge is different from that of the affective attainment. Some subject matter demands that the teacher should be current with innovations in education so as to avoid the use of obsolete or outdated methods/ resources. For effective use of methods, the teacher of CRS should consider the age bracket of the pupils and time available. The study addresses method that offers maximum advantage in attaining the learning outcomes as stated in the objectives of the subject. Since the affective and the cognitive aspects of the lessons are equally important, there is need to select appropriate methods that shall nurture the learner's sense of wellbeing so that the desired habits, attitudes and skills will manifest in their ethical behaviour.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian society today like other nations of the world is undergoing through some aspect of moral decadence or moral degradation associated with world-wide development. The moral status of the society has reached to the level one could ask what role multiple religious groups play in building up moral society. The moral ills identified among the secondary school pupils have raised questions on the efficacy of religious studies on shaping moral behavior. CRS curriculum review of 1983 included inculcation of moral values in the content in order to address challenges of moral behaviour among pupils, but the aim seems to be under siege.

Scholars like Njoku (2012) attributed the breakdown in moral behaviour of the school pupils to teachers' attitude and government lack of commitment to the teaching of CRS as some that are committed do not handle the subject well, which has made it almost impossible for learners to attain the set goals. It is against this background that the researcher sought to find out if appropriate selection and effective use of teaching methods could enhance attainment

of desired learning outcomes in the pupils' lives. The question here is: how could effective use of teaching methods help in attaining learning outcomes among secondary school pupils in South East Geo-political Zone of Nigeria?

Research Question

A research question guided the study.

1. How could effective use of teaching methods help in attaining CRS learning outcomes among secondary school pupils in South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

Descriptive survey research design was adopted to investigate on attaining CRS learning outcomes through effective teaching methods among secondary school pupils in South-East geo-political zone of Nigeria. South-East geopolitical zone of Nigeria is made up of five states which are Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu State. Population comprised all CRS teachers in the government owned secondary schools in the five states. Statistic from the Ministry of Education revealed that there are 810 governments owned secondary schools in the area. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select one hundred schools each from the five states which make the total of 500 schools. Accidental sampling technique was employed to select one CRS teachers each from the five hundred selected schools in the area. The reason for the choice of stratified random and accidental sampling techniques is to enable researcher select only CRS teachers who are within accessible location. Fixed responses questionnaire was used for data collection. Face validation was done by two experts in measurement and evaluation to ensure clarity of the sentence, relevance to the purpose, appropriateness of the language and expression to the respondents.

Data Presentation

How does effective use of teaching methods help in attaining CRS learning outcomes among secondary school pupils in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria?

Mean Response Score on Effective Use of Teaching Methods in Attaining CRS Learning Outcomes. N= 500

S/N	ITEMS: CRS learning outcomes could be attained if teachers make effective use of:	MEAN	REMARK
1.	global teaching method	3.6	Agreed
2.	brain research method while teaching	3.0	Agreed
3.	constructivism learning theory while teaching	3.8	Agreed
4.	collaboration learning style	2.8	Agreed
5.	differentiation instruction strategy	3.1	Agreed
6.	conflict resolution strategy	2.4	Disagreed
7.	computer based instruction	3.7	Agreed
8.	Individualized instruction.	3.5	Agreed
9.	instant reward	2.6	Agreed
10.	instant correctional approach	2.5	Agreed
11.	human and non-human models	3.2	Agreed

12.	character education approach	3.8	Agreed
13.	appropriate action plan	3.8	Agreed
14.	appropriate and adequate techniques	3.4	Agreed
15.	cooperative learning style	2.8	Agreed
16.	role playing approach	2.4	Disagreed
17.	life theme approach	2.9	Agreed
18.	thematic approach	2.6	Agreed
19.	drama method	2.5	Agreed
20.	adequate selection of instructional materials	3.6	Agreed
21.	proper planning of the learning experiences	2.8	Agreed
22.	concept mapping strategy	2.9	Agreed
	Grand mean	3.07	

The above table shows that items 6 and 16 scores below the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that respondents disagreed with application of conflict resolution strategy and use of role playing method as effective for attaining CRS learning outcomes. While items 1,2,3,4,5,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,17, to 22 scores above 2.50. This implies that respondents agreed that proper selection and effective application of above numbered instructional methods as effective for attaining CRS learning outcomes secondary school pupils in south-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria. However grand mean of 3.07 shows high level of acceptance that effective use of teaching methods could help in attaining learning outcomes.

Findings of the Study

The following findings were made:

- That effective use of teaching methods could help in attaining CRS learning outcomes among secondary school pupils in the area.
- And that adequate combination of some methods would yield positive result.

Discussions

Results of the study shows that the respondents agreed that effective use of teaching methods could help in attaining CRS learning outcomes among secondary school pupils. This was evident with the grand mean of 3.07. The high score emphasized that effective use of instructional methods is a strategy for attaining desired learning outcomes among secondary school pupils. The finding is quite interesting in that ideas and thought could be shared and transferred through appropriate application of teaching methods. For instance the use of internet and social media has made information available to learners with or without the teachers. Effective use of global education could help pupils to respond faster based on what they observed, read and had access to on the net. This is in line with Ilori (2001) who pointed out that school pupils could gain early information on what the teacher is about to teach through the net. Some difficult concepts in CRS lessons could be made easy through the use of global education. For instance the use of computer has helped to create realistic pictures of some of the biblical abstract concepts like studies on Holy Spirit, hell fire, angels and so on.

The study revealed the use of differentiation or individualized instruction method as paramount in teaching CRS because pupils differ in intelligent quotient, background and exposure. This method according to Duckin (1999) emphasizes the need for the teacher to

attend to pupils individually. Pupils perform better when given attention with specific instruction. The finding is quite interesting in that pupils' study skills are usually improved when attended to individually as individual's interest, preference, readiness, speed and needs are taken into cognizant. No wonder Ilori (2001) emphasized the need for CRS teacher to always pay attention to the needs of the pupils as a factor in attaining CRS learning outcomes. This therefore suggests that considerations to learners' disposition would improve the learners' out put and performance.

Mention was also made about teachers' effective use of constructivism learning theory while teaching CRS. This theory presupposes that pupil learn faster through experience. When pupils are exposed to making their own findings, they gain knowledge faster, and such knowledge is usually permanent. This method advocates teachers to be facilitators of learning other than lecturers. This finding is understandable in that when pupils are allowed to discover ideas by themselves it gives confident and encourages further study which in turn increases pupils' logical and conceptual growth. The above finding synchronized with the submission of Nelson (2002) that constructive criticism yields positive attainment of desired learning outcomes. By so doing the teacher becomes a mentor or a coach. This method supports the adage that says experience is the best teacher hence knowledge is gained from experience.

Effective use of character education method could help CRS in attaining desired learning outcomes. This method involves appealing to the pupils' conscience on the need to learn. Appropriate combination of character education with the use of life model approach would help build esteem in the learner. This agrees with Njoku (2012) that effective use of character education method helps the teacher to develop ethical and responsible individuals by encouraging them to acquire moral values required to operate in the society. This method not only exposes pupils on the need to be diligent with their study but also help teachers to advocate conducive environment that would enable effective learning to take place. The finding complements the observations of Obanya (2004), that character education builds in the learner good attitude, respect for others; and the aura to appreciate the society he found himself and to interact properly with teacher thereby turning the class into a better learning environment.

The use of collaborative or cooperative learning method was highly upheld by CRS teachers because it encourages fast learning. According to Ilori (2001) collaborative learning method encourages pupils to learn faster in small groups through face to face interaction. This strategy offers pupils the ability to participate actively in the class in that as they share and discuss ideas, they internalize the ideas and experiences they got through thoughtful discourse and examination of different perceptions. CRS being an abstract subject could be discussed and understood better if learners are given the opportunity to share ideas and different views on conflicting issues. Furthermore, collaborative or cooperative teaching method according to Njoku (2002) increases students' self esteem, motivation and empathy.

Summarily if CRS teachers effectively make use of those methods while teaching, it they would increase healthier relationships, meta-cognition and high attainment of desired goals. Effective applications of above discussed methods would in addition to providing opportunities for learners' interpersonal skill development but also experiences that would warrant future successes as in any endeavour of life. Above all manifestation of learning outcome could only be attained if learners are taught well. Imperatively appropriate application of teaching methods is a key factor in attaining CRS learning outcomes among secondary school pupils in South East geo-political zone of Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- that CRS teachers should as a matter of seriousness adopt appropriate methods that could enhance effective learning so that school pupils would attain the desired learning outcomes expected of CRS lessons.
- that CRS teachers should make appropriate selection and combination of teaching methods to ensure effective teaching of the subject as a step toward attaining desired learning outcomes among secondary school pupils
- that Nigerian government should as a matter of fact provide adequate teaching and learning facilities especially instructional materials that could help CRS teachers illustrate difficult and abstract concepts in the subject.
- that seminars and workshops should be organized regularly to update CRS teachers' knowledge on modern teaching approaches as this will enhance their performance in transferring knowledge to the pupils.
- that parents, churches and even general public should join the teachers on the character education of the pupils by emphasizing on the right values and proper moral conducts.

Educational Implications

- The finding of the study has implication for teachers of CRS and school administrators. The findings exposed chains of methods teachers of CRS could effectively use in attaining CRS learning outcomes among school pupils.
- The finding further intoned if adequately followed there will be increase in the rate of achievement of CRS goals among secondary School pupils and thereby help in reduction of the immoral behaviours identifiable among pupils of the age bracket.

CONCLUSION

Following the analysis and findings of the study, it could be concluded that adequate selection and careful application of teaching methods will create impressive impact in attaining CRS learning outcomes. In other words, that effective use of teaching methods is of immense help in high attainment of CRS learning outcomes. Furthermore that teaching methods as a major approach in attaining desired outcomes needs to be properly selected and deployed to yield effective result in the lives of school pupils

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