
**STUDENT VARIABLES AND CHOICE OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE
AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CROSS RIVER STATE,
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT: *This study assessed student variables and choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among secondary school students in Cross River State. To achieve this purpose, two research questions were put forward and transformed into two null hypotheses. A review of related literature was carried out to examine what has already been documented on the phenomenon under study. The ex-post facto research design was considered most suitable for achieving the purpose of this study. The simple random sampling technique and proportionate sampling technique were used in selecting the sample used for the study. A structured questionnaire titled student variables and choice of Christian religious knowledge questionnaire (SVCCRKQ) was the instrument used for collection of data in the study. The reliability of the research instrument was established through the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Chi-square statistical tool was used for data analysis. The findings obtained from analysis of data and hypotheses testing revealed that there is a significant influence of gender and interest on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in the study area. It was concluded that the gender of students cannot be a barrier when it comes to making choice of subject. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that students with low interest in Christian Religious Knowledge should be encouraged to see the subject as an important tool for developing good behaviour and peaceful co-existence.*

KEY WORD: gender, interest, Christian religious knowledge, choice of subject

Background to the study

In education, whether formal or informal, the success of every student depends on the subjects or skills he chooses to offer. Human reasoning, hopes, aspirations, attitude and values are thus generally known to depend largely on the choice one makes. The degree of importance this variable (choice of subjects) hold on contemporary educational system, has motivated the writers to carry out this study, with the aim of helping students make choice of subjects to offer without the influence of external variables. The purpose of education is said to be attained when students are given the liberty to choose subjects which reflect their ability, capability and interest. However, the case of Christian Religious Knowledge is quite peculiar in the sense that students offered the subject throughout their JSS 1 but on getting to SS 2 and 3 they dropped for other subjects.

Choice of subjects is a complex concept that is characterized by various opinions, by various people. Researches have shown that due to its complexity, students get confused about which subject to choose in their senior secondary school classes (Okumu, 2013). For more than two decades, it is known that the ability for students to choose subjects of study is being

influenced by many factors. According to Oriabi, Uhumuari and Aguelo (2010), choice is the ability to choose between two or more alternatives and the right to choose between several things.

Gender plays decisive role on students' choice of subject in Senior Secondary School Examination (SSCE), Agbaje and Alake, (2014) observed that most societies prescribe different activities and characteristics for male and females which may come to be seen as natural by people involved. Therefore, there are courses such as mathematics and other science subjects that involved calculations which are ascribed as male subjects while those that requires less quantitative implications were attributed to female subjects.

Several studies such as Kagendo (2015); Chimutai (2015) revealed gender to be one of the factors that influenced students' choice of subject vis-a-vis choice of career. This assertion was contradicted by Okumu (2013), the researcher explained that in time past, it was not common to see a female working as a policeman, driving a car, etc. But today female are found in all area of the labour force. There are accountants, doctors or even shoe makers, just to mention but few and are no longer limited to less tedious duties. Okumu assertion also faulted World Health Organizations (WHO, 2010) definition of gender as a socially constructed characteristics of women and men such as norms, roles and relationship between women and men. WHO further declared that the role that gender plays differs from society to society. When individuals or groups do not fit into established gender norms, they often faced stigma, discriminatory practice or social different identities that do not necessarily fit into binary male or female sex category.

There may be some factors that may influence the choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in schools, these include gender. Gender could significantly influence students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK). Traditionally, there is perception that sciences are meant for boys and arts and languages for girls. The reality of this notion is on the fact that girls are known to be excellence in verbal interaction and cannot withstand stress, so they are good in arts and languages, while boys are good in mechanical and stressful task, so they are good in sciences (Becky, 2010). The author looked at the relationship between school subject as masculine or feminine and other attitude towards sex roles and sex traits.

Eyo and Edet (2013) conducted a quasi-experimental study to investigate the influence of gender on the occupational preference of senior secondary school students in Cross River State, Nigeria. The sample consisted of 450 respondents, 225 males and 225 females randomly selected from 2 sampled schools, one school sample formed the experimental group and one the control group. A well constructed questionnaire was used for data collection, one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance using the chi-square statistical test. The finding of the study revealed that gender has a significance influence on students' occupational preference. It also showed the traditional norms which believe gender to be a barrier to what an individual can do.

Despite the importance of Christian Religious Knowledge to the individual and nation in inculcating moral values and behaviour change, it is worthy to note that the attitude of students towards the subject is diminishing. Poor attitude of students toward Christian religion knowledge has revealed in their poor performance in the subject. This has generated

a growing concern from various quarters, parents, teachers, schools and government. One is also worried because of the relative importance of CRK to education excellence and moral development is considered, there is the need for a positive approach toward the study of Christian Religious Knowledge in order for the country not to be eroded of its moral values. Currently, the subject has an optional status for students. Despite the fact that students choose Christian Religious Knowledge at the beginning of their senior secondary school classes, majority of the students drop the subject in their last year for other subjects. This poses a big challenge for the future of the subject (Anyah, 2016). This is not a healthy development, rather, it is evidence of the shortfall in attainment of the goal and objectives of Nigerian education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FBN, 2013).

This attitude defined the things that are acceptable or appropriate for the gender. For an example people vary in the degree to which they endorse the idea that woman should be just as able as to do science oriented as equal with men or even better. Conversely, there is also variation in opinion as to whether humanities and social sciences like religious knowledge are meant for women not men. Such gender attitude has influence on student attitude towards certain subject and in long run may influence performance in those subjects.

In modern age, the quest for knowledge and excellence has made the society more complex and as a result choosing a suitable and interesting subject become a problem which the student might face in future. Quite often, students choose subjects for which they have no interest or ability. It is always a failure on the part of the student which can lead to frustration and eventually leads to drop out. Nyangi (2012) discovered that elements of interest are the basic factor influencing students in their choice of subject. Lack of interest can always lead to low performance, developing interest in a subject goes a long way to enhance a very high performance in any examination as a result a good choice will help to achieve the necessary goals in one chosen subject.

Ideally, students are expected to select subjects that suit their interest and abilities. The learning experiences gained in senior secondary one (SSI) form the basis for students in deciding which subject they are to choose in SS II. According to Ndlichako and Komba the teacher should provide an enabling environment because teaching involves effective communication and interpersonal relationship with students. It is expected that a teacher who develops a friendly teaching atmosphere would motivate students to pursue subjects that suit their interest and abilities.

Bobz (2010) confirmed the above opinion, when he stated that from observation during teaching practice that many senior secondary II students showed lack of interest in the study of Christian Religious Studies and that even those who actually choose the subject refused to attend regular classes or buy recommended textbooks. This led to poor performance in their internal and external examinations.

In another study carried out by Edwards and Quinter (2011), the students were asked to state to what extent their personal interest influence their career choice. The result shows that matching interest with career choice often lead to job satisfaction. From the result, 48.3% of the students strongly agree while 22.9% also agree that their career choice was influenced by their interest. Less than 20% disagreed that their career choice was influenced by their interest. These results show that students' interest provide the main motive for their choice of subject. This result shows that when choosing subjects, most students consider their interest. Nyamwange (2016) conducted a study to examine the influence of interest on career choice decisions among first year university students. To address this objective, the study utilised two hundred and ninety-six (296) first year students selected from six universities. The respondents were selected using purposive as well as systematic sampling approaches within the descriptive survey design, data collected were analyzed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as the main tool of analysis. Data collected indicate that, 74 (61.2%) of the 121 Respondents think that individuals who do not attach importance to their choice of subject lack knowledge and information. Also, 21 (17.4%) believe that lack of interest contributes to individuals not attaching a lot of importance to their certain subject. Vosh and Schauble (2014) maintained that, Individual goals and interest produce motivation, that is, a person is directed towards a particular activity which is aimed at accomplishing goals or exploring interest.

Statement of the problem

The interest for a research in this area was triggered by a sense of concern on number of students that eventually register for Christian Religious Knowledge in their senior secondary classes. With the current situation in Nigeria where youth of our time (both male and female) are involved in all sort of criminality ranging from cultism, terrorism, kidnapping, militancy, etc. Christian Religious Knowledge is supposed to be a dominant subject in secondary school because of its importance which are numerous. The importance may include: inculcation of good moral values, development of sound individual who are morally and spiritually upright, individual who are honest and truthful to develop the society. Despite the fact that many students enrol for Christian Religious Knowledge in their junior secondary level in the state, available statistics as shown in table 1 showed a decline in their enrolment for WAEC/NECO examination. Again, looking at the performance of students on yearly basis, it would be seen that majority of the passes are concentrated on the ordinary pass not at distinction or credit level. The attitude is reflected also in negligible number of candidates seeking admission in Bachelor of Education degree (B.Ed) Christian Religious Knowledge (Kasomo, 2010). It is on this note that the question; how does student variables influence choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among senior secondary students in Cross River State, Nigeria.

TABLE 1: Statistics of those that enrolled for Christian Religious Knowledge and how the number decline from SS1-SS3 in Cross River State.

Name of L.G.A	SS 1	SS2	SS3
Akamkpa	747	513	680
Akpabuyo	307	145	137
Bakassi	125	82	74
Biase	637	475	443
Calabar Municipality	3046	1020	487
Calabar South	1869	471	334
Odukpani	575	380	345
Abi	505	375	354
Boki	492	349	321
Etung	153	99	62
Ikom	20	15	65
Obubra	582	505	511
Yakurr	552	494	457
Bekwarra	366	287	213
Obanliku	399	294	192
Obudu	948	718	563
Ogoja	491	387	314
Yala	740	515	429

Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board, Statistics Division (2018)

Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to investigate whether student variables, influence choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among senior secondary school students in Cross River State.

In specific terms, the study sought to establish whether:

1. gender influences choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among secondary school students; and
2. students' interest influence choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among secondary school students.

Research questions

In pursuance of this research problem and its purpose, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. What is the influence of gender on choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among secondary school students?
2. How does interest influence choice of Christian Religious Knowledge among secondary school students?

Statement of hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of gender on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge.
2. Interest does not significantly influence students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gender and choice of CRK

Gender is the state of being male or female and being able to take role that suit the status. Vleuten, Jasper, Ineke and Lippe (2016) conducted a study aims to explain why boys and girls in secondary education choose different educational tracks. We argue that adolescents internalise gender expectations as to what is “appropriate” male and female behaviour in their gender ideology. Gender ideology can affect educational choices by influencing (1) how adolescents evaluate their competence in certain subjects (competence believers). This study focuses on students in upper secondary education in the Netherlands. At the end of their third year of secondary education (15 years old), Dutch adolescents choose to continue in one of four tracks that vary in math intensity and core subjects: To increase the response rate among schools (34.9%), non-responding schools were replaced with other similar schools, leading to a school participation rate of 91.7%. Within schools, two school classes were randomly selected (class level participation rate = 94.5%) and all students in these classes were surveyed (student level participation rate = 91.1%). In total, 4363 children were surveyed in 222 classes at 100 schools, of whom 3211 (73.59%) also participated in school in the second wave. Of these, 1196 (37.25%) respondents are in the upper two levels of secondary education. After excluding respondents with missing data, we analysed 1062 respondents at 36 schools. This study evaluated how adolescents’ gender ideology affects educational choices via competence beliefs, occupational values and subject preferences in upper secondary education in the Netherlands.

The authors considered not only why girls are not opting for more masculine tracks, but also why boys are not choosing more feminine ones. Results show that a more traditional gender ideology leads to more traditional occupational values for boys, but not girls. In line with the breadwinner ideology, boys with a more traditional gender ideology value having a high income in a future occupation and find helping others less important. These gender-stereotypical traditional values only partially affect educational choices. Boys, who value helping others in a future occupation, are more likely to opt for a track with a focus on biology and physics (science & health).

Adam and Salome (2014) in their study, aimed at eliciting a specific information on female students’ enrolment in science subjects. A total of four hundred and forty-five (445) copies questionnaire were issued, out of which four hundred and twenty-one (421) were properly completed and returned. That represents about 95% of the total number of questionnaires issued to the various schools. The study shows that 18% of the respondents believed that science is for males, while 83% of the respondents disagree with this notion, 42% of the respondents agreed that usually females do better in art and social science subjects while 58% disagreed, 21% of the respondents believed that girls are more interested in science than boys while 76% does not agree that. Then 60% of the respondents believed that boys are more interested than girls while 40% do not share this belief. It can be confirmed that sex of the students does not have any significant influence on choice of science among female students in Jigawa metropolis.

Mmunyao, Mwnia and Mwinz (2017), also conducted a study to investigate the factors that influence the choice of Christian Religious Education by secondary school students in

Makueni Sub-County, Makueni. Gender among other variables were investigated to find out whether it has significance influence on choice of Christian Religious Education among students and to come up with recommendations and suggestions for further studies. Samples for the study included 10 principals and 10 career guidance teachers randomly selected from ten secondary schools from Makueni Sub- County. The sample also included 12 subject teachers and 100 form a mixed method research approach specifically the converged parallel design. The design provides or the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in the same phase and then merging the two design.

The data collected and analysed showed that there were more female C.R.E teachers (60%) than male Christian Religious Knowledge teachers (40.0%). However, the gender for the students was balanced (50%) for each gender since they were selected before the study. The gender representation was however balanced in all categories and the results given represent the views of both gender.

The findings from the research question “are there gender differences in the students’ choice of Christian Religious Education?” revealed that, majority (81.7%) of respondents agreed that gender differences influenced the choice of C.R.E with most girls choosing the subject as opposed to boys. It was also established that that there is a significant association $\chi^2 (1, 4) = 32.21, p < 0.05$) between gender and choice of C.R.E subject. This means that gender differences significantly influenced the choice of Christian Religious Education.

Omondi (2013) view contradicted that of other researchers, the author sought to find out if gender influenced choice of subject. From the findings, 66% of the students indicated that gender did not influence choice of subject while 34% of the students indicated that gender influenced choice of subject. The view above is no more obtainable in recent time as the world keep changing. There is no distinction to what or nature of job a man or woman can do, anybody gender not withstanding can aspire to any level provided the ability is there (Okumu, 2013).

In yet another study reported by Korkmaza (2015) was to explore /investigate whether gender influenced Turkish high school students’ subject choices in science and technology. 1192 high school students (629 females, 558 male) of the participants, 228 were from science high school, 197 were from trade-oriented vocational school, 199 were from industry-oriented vocational school, 177 were from vocational schools for girls, 200 were from Anatolian high school and 191 were from general/common high school. From the finding it was discovered that, Turkish boys’ and girls’ choice in science and technological is comparatively. The MANOVA revealed statistically significant main effect of gender on four of six sub-scales [Pillai’s Trace = .195, $F (6, 1151) = 46.45, p0083$] and dynamism & excitement [$F (1, 1155) = 4.20, p > .0083$] were not observed to be significant factors for the choice of Turkish male and female students’ potential future occupation or jobs. The study established that majority of CRK student were females, the finding indicated that 54.3% of the respondent student indicated they were females, whereas 45.7% of the respondent indicated they were males, this is clear indication that majority of the student taking CRK were females.

The study revealed that majority of the student who were not taking CRK were male, 56.5% of the respondent indicated they were males whereas 43.5% of the respondent indication that

they were females, this is an indication that most of the student who were not taking CRK were males, this clearly showed that male student were avoiding CRK subject as this was thought to be female.

Students' interest and choice of CRK

Interest is perceived to be one of the student variables that may influenced student's choice of Christian Religious Knowledge. It is evidenced that interest plays a major role in decision making because it guides the choice of an individual. Ndalichako and Komba (2014) maintained that interest can be described as preference to engage in some types of activities rather than the other. The authors also said that interest in the subject is regarded as the most important motivational factor in learning. When a student is interested in a particular subject, he/she is favourably inclined to attend to it and give time for it.

Nyamwange (2016) conducted a study to examine the influence of interest on career choice decisions among first year university students. To address this objective, the study utilised two hundred and ninety-six (296) first year students selected from six universities. The Respondents were selected using purposive as well as systematic sampling approaches within the descriptive survey design, data collected were analyzed descriptively using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) as the main tool of analysis. Data collected indicate that, 74 (61.2%) of the 121 Respondents think that individuals who do not attach importance to their choice of subject lack knowledge and information. Also, 21 (17.4%) believe that lack of interest contributes to individuals not attaching a lot of importance to their certain subject. Vosh and Schauble (2014) maintained that, Individual goals and interest produce motivation, that is, a person is directed towards a particular activity which is aimed at accomplishing goals or exploring interest.

Okumu's (2013) way of opinion was that, with good background, students still need to develop themselves on the subject areas they are keenly interested and particularly that they have potentiality for. The author added that students also have to decide what is important to them with regards to their interest, personal academic goals and their schedule.

Despite the important accorded to Christian Religious Knowledge, students seem not interested in this subject but just to pass (Kalu, 2012). This reflected in low enrolment and poor performance of students in this subject at the school certificate level according to Kalu. The author further emphasized that most students in school seem to attend Christian Religious Knowledge classes just because it is one of the compulsory subject in the school curriculum at the basic educational level. This subject is seen as something that should be taught in church and teachers have nothing new to enrich in it. They could influence students' interest greatly in this subject the author queried. The above notion was supported by Ugwu (2014) who noted that researchers have generally agree that interest act as a very powerful motive to individual's behaviour that energetically determines choices made. This motives influence learners' knowledge, skills, abilities and competences possessed in this subject and others.

Elsworth, Adrian, Ainley and Fabris (2010) confirmed that researches on school subject preferences and choices has a long history, 'interest' has frequently been invoke as an explanatory construct. In their study, the result of five recent Australian studies in which interests were related to school subject preferences and choices were reviewed, and a series

of multi-level models of data from the most recent were presented. The models offer a coherent summary of interest school subject choice relations and enable accurate estimate to be made of their relative importance across the curriculum field typically available in the senior secondary years. The consistency in the results of the five study provided strong support for the hypotheses that school subject preferences and choices are systematically related to interest. The authors concluded that, the study provided a coherent account of preferences and choices across a broad range of subjects, activities and contexts encountered in school and work. Lawer (2015) cited Shertzer and Stone who discovered that the element of interest and ability are the basic factor influencing students in their choice of subject in the general certificate of education examination. According to the author, lack of interest can always lead to low efficacy. Developing interest in a subject goes a long way to enhance a very high performance in any examination as a result, a good choice will help one achieve the necessary goal in one's chosen subject and career. Nwagu (2010) also discovered that there are many reasons why majority of students drop out of institutions of learning. These are due to wrong choice of subject, lack of interest, lack of formulated goals and financial constraints and some other variables.

METHODOLOGY

The ex-post facto research design was adopted for the study. The aim was to determine if the variables under study influence the dependent variable. The study was carried out in Cross River State. Cross River State which is made up eighteen (18) local government areas which is divided into three education zones of Calabar, Ikom and Ogoja. The population of this study consisted of all senior secondary school students in public and private secondary schools in Cross River State. Statistics from the Cross River State Ministry of Education shows a population of 27,890.

TABLE 2: Distribution of senior secondary school students in public and private secondary schools by local government areas in Cross River State

S/N	LGA	No. of schools	No. of students		Total
			Male	Female	
1.	Akamkpa	18	981	959	1940
2.	Akpabuyo	6	334	345	679
3.	Bakassi	3	175	162	337
4.	Biase	16	814	741	1555
5.	Calabar Municipality	16	1909	2644	4553
6.	Calabar South	7	1223	2451	2674
7.	Odukpani	15	713	681	1400
8.	Abi	12	618	616	1234
9.	Boki	30	564	623	1187
10.	Etung	12	204	146	350
11.	Ikom	19	1305	879	2185
12.	Obubra	19	896	709	1605
13.	Yakurr	17	923	600	1523
14.	Bekwara	6	561	325	886
15.	Obanliku	13	482	403	885
16.	Obudu	26	1232	997	2229
17.	Ogoja	14	683	509	1192
18.	Yala	20	766	718	1484
Total		269	14,384	13,514	27,898

Source: Cross River State Secondary Education Board, 2018

Simply random sampling was used to select the sample. The sample for the study was seven hundred and three (703) senior secondary school two (SSS 2) students. Instrument for data

collection was a questionnaire tagged Student Variables and Choice of Christian Religious Knowledge Questionnaire (SVCCRKQ) which was constructed by the researchers and validation ascertained.

The reliability was determined using Cronbach alpha and the result obtained ranged between .724 and .843 which showed high reliability of the research instrument.

RESULTS

Hypothesis one

The first hypothesis stated that there is no significant influence of gender on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge. The independent variable in this hypothesis is gender which is categorized into male and female while the dependent variable is students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge which is categorized into Yes and No. Chi-square statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result obtained is presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Chi-square analysis of the influence of gender on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in secondary schools in Cross River State

Gender	Choice of CRK		Total	Chi-square	Sig.
	Yes (%)	No(%)*			
Male	141 (42.60)	190(57.40)	331	4.287*	.038
Female	193 (52.59)	174 (47.41)	367		

*Significant at 0.05; df = 1; Critical $X^2 = 3.84$

As presented in Table 3, the result of analysis of hypothesis one showed that the calculated X^2 value of 4.287 is higher than the critical X^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom of 1. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant weak influence of gender on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) in Cross River State.

The result further revealed that 141 male students representing 42.60 percent were offering Christian Religious Knowledge while 190 representing 57.40 percent were not offering the subject. Again, the result also showed that 193 female students representing 52.59 percent were offering Christian Religious Knowledge while 174 representing 47.41 percent of the students were not offering the subject in secondary schools in the study area. This result showed that more female students were offering Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) at senior secondary school level as compared to their male counterparts in the study area.

Hypothesis two

This hypothesis stated that, Students' Interest does not significantly influence their choice of Christian Religious Knowledge. The independent variable in this hypothesis is students' interest in CRK which is categorized into low and high interest levels while the dependent variable is students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge, which is categorized into Yes and No options. Chi-square statistical tool was used for data analysis. The result generated is presented in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Chi-square analysis of the influence of interest on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in secondary schools in Cross River State

Interest	Choice of CRS		Total	Chi-square	Sig.
	Yes (%)	No(%)			
Low	67 (58.77)	47 (41.23)	114	5.057*	.025
High	276(47.26)	308(52.74)	584		

*Significant at 0.05; df = 1; Critical $X^2 = 3.84$

As presented in Table 4, the result of analysis of hypothesis two showed that the calculated X^2 value of 5.057 is higher than the critical X^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant weak influence of interest on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge (CRK) in Cross River State.

The result further revealed that 67 students representing 58.77 percent of students with low interest in CRK were offering the subject while 47 representing 41.23 percent were not offering the subject. Again, the result also showed that 276 students representing 47.26 percent of students with high interest in CRK were offering the subject while 308 representing 52.74 percent of the students were not offering the subject in public secondary schools in the study area. This result showed that students with high interest in CRK were more involved in the choice of the subject.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Gender and students' choice of CRK

The report of findings showed that the calculated X^2 value of 4.287 is higher than the critical X^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom. The implication of this finding is that there is a significant gender influence on senior secondary school students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in secondary schools in Cross River State. This result can be attributed to perception that Christian Religious Knowledge is purely an Arts subject and male students usually prefer science subjects as compared to their female counterparts who mostly prefer arts related subjects. This variation could be responsible for the difference in students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge based on their gender.

This finding is in agreement with the finding of Chemutai (2015) who reported that a person's gender-role attitude reflects beliefs about the role of men and women. These attitudes define the kind of things that are acceptable or appropriate for men to engage in but not women and vice versa. The author further explained that people vary in the degree to which they endorse the idea that women should be just as able to do science oriented subjects as equal with men and even better. Conversely there is also variation in opinion as to whether humanities and social science like religious education are meant for women and not men. Such gender based attitudes have an influence on students' attitude towards certain subjects and in the long run may influence performance in these subjects.

The finding of this study also supported the finding of Kagendo (2015) which revealed that gender is one of the factors that influenced students' choice of subject vis-a-vis choice of career though there are contradiction in some of the studies. This assertion was contradicted by Okumu (2013), the researcher explained that in time past, it was not common to see a

female working as a policeman, driving a car, etc. But today female are found in all areas of labour force, like accountant, doctor or even shoe maker, just to mention but a few and are no longer limited to less tedious duties.

Interest and students' choice of CRK

The result of this findings showed that the calculated X^2 value of 5.057 is higher than the critical X^2 value of 3.84 at 0.05 level of significance with 1 degree of freedom. The implication of this finding is that there is a significant influence of interest on senior secondary school students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in secondary schools in Cross River State. This result can be attributed to the fact that having high interest in a subject can propel someone to pursue the attainment of a specified goal or objective. Students with high interest in Christian Religious Knowledge will always like the subject, which might not be the case with their counterparts who have low interest in the subject.

This finding is in agreement with the finding of Nyangi (2012) who reported that in modern age, the quest for knowledge and excellence has made the society more complex and as a result choosing a suitable and interesting subject becomes a problem which the student might face in future. Quite often, students choose subjects for which they have no interest or ability. It is always a failure on the part of the student which can lead to frustration and eventually leads to drop out.

The finding of this study also supported the finding of Okumu's (2013) who stated that, with good background, students still need to develop themselves on the subject areas they are keenly interested and particularly that which they have potentials for. The author added that students also have to decide what is important to them with regards to their interest, personal academic goals and their schedule. According to an investigation conducted on the attitude of most secondary school students toward Christian Religious Knowledge. These studies were contradicted by Simonton (2001) who conducted an investigation on attitude of most secondary school students towards CRK, the author opined that most students that are doing it, do it because they are interested and as additional subject to complete the number of subjects required in the senior school certificate examination.

CONCLUSION

Based on the statistical findings obtained from the study, it was concluded that there is a significant influence of gender and interest on students' choice of Christian Religious Knowledge in public and private secondary schools in the study area. The implication of this is that, an individual decision is usually influenced by some other factors. This also challenged the students to be independent bearing in mind that the choice they make might make or mar their future.

Recommendations

- i. Male and female students should be sensitized on the need to choose Christian Religious Knowledge because of the moral values the subject transmits to students, so as to curb the incidence of negative vices.
- ii. Students with low interest in Christian Religious Knowledge should be encouraged to see the subject as an important tool for developing good behaviour and peaceful co-existence

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