

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EXISTING BOTTLENECKS IN THE TEACHING/LEARNING CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN YOBE STATE

By

ISHAYA J. JIBIR

*Department of Christian Religious Studies,
Umar Suleiman College of Education, Gashu'a
Yobe State*

Abstract

The study was undertaken to uncover the bottlenecks for teaching Christian religious education in secondary schools in Yobe state. Four (4) secondary schools in Gashu'a town (public and private) were selected as case study. Primary data was used for the study. The stratified random sampling procedure was adopted through selecting sample on the basis of different qualities of the population. Through simple random procedure ten (10) teachers and twenty five (25) students from each of the four (4) schools were selected as sample. Out of the twenty five (25) students selected from each school, fifteen (15) were Christians and ten were Muslims. This was done through purposive random sampling. The data was collected using questionnaire and computed. Three hypotheses tested and retained at 5% level of significance with $df = 2$. The results revealed that moral instructions and Christian religious instructions in public and private secondary schools was no difference. There was also no difference between Christian religious instructions and Islamic religious instruction in Yobe state schools, hence the teaching of these subjects should be giving equal treatment. The author recommended that the state government should make equal provision for teaching/learning these subjects without favoring one over and above the other.

Keywords: Teaching, Learning, Christian Religious Education, Moral Education and Secondary schools

Introduction

Nigeria is increasingly vulnerable and totally security porous due to religion factor that has taken form of insurgency, kidnapping and banditry, terrorism and Fulani herds' militia. This is because something crucial is missing on one hand, and on the other, manipulation of one's religion to satisfy one's selfish ends. We are in such a dilemma today due to the absence of foundational

religious and moral instruction or one-sided indoctrination of our children in primary and secondary schools.

Thompson (2000) opines that Christian instruction should be deliberate, systematic, and sustained, divine, and human effort to learn the knowledge, values, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that are consistent with the Christian faith, which encourages the transformation of persons, groups, and structures by the power of the Holy Spirit so that they conform to the Scriptures and primarily in the Person of Jesus Christ. It is sufficiently clear that Christian religious education is purposeful, wholistic, transformative and God-centered education. This type of education, Habamas & Issler as quoted by Jibir (2007) maintain that, it helps children obtain the goals of life modeled by Jesus Christ and leads to the development of the whole children in relation to their God, fellow men, and environment, which is the utmost need of our contemporary Nigeria.

Unfortunately however, instructions in our schools tend to be anti-religious. This results in the ever flourishing decadence, occultism, juvenile delinquency, menace, crime and immorality in our secondary schools, colleges and universities, because the minds and hearts of the youth who have had limited or no opportunity for religious education constitute fruitful soil for the propagation of wickedness and all kinds of atrocities, agues Ilori (2002).

The broad aims of secondary education within the overall national objectives stated in the National Policy on Education commands the urgent need for religious and moral instructions in our schools. An overview of the National Policy on Education reveals the intention of the government that the philosophy of Nigerian Education is pivoted on the integration of the individuals into a sound and effective citizens with equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels towards the inculcation of such values as: respect for the worth and dignity of the individual; faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual principle in interpersonal and human relations; shared responsibility for the common good of society; etc. (FRN 2004). The Nigerian philosophy of education was derived from the five main national objectives of the country as stated clearly in the second national development plan, namely: a free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a united, strong and self-reliant nation; a great and dynamic economy; and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens.

Section 1 (5) of the National Policy on Education (1981) states that the national educational aims and objectives to which the philosophy of Nigerian education is linked include: the inculcation of national consciousness and

national unity; the inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society, the training of the mind in the understanding of the world around, etc. To harmonize the philosophy with Nigerian national objectives, it has to be directed towards self- realization, better human relationships, effective citizenship, national unity, etc, where religious and moral education would heavily contribute to the realization of most or all of these objectives.

Education, including religious instruction is the process by which society through schools or institutions of learning deliberately transmits its cultural heritage and treasures of knowledge, values and skills from one generation to another. The Nigeria (1979) constitution recognizes the importance of religious education in the society by maintaining that, every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion including the freedom to change his religion or belief and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. This is also advocated by the National Policy on Education where it acknowledges the need for religious education to be taught and learned in Nigerian schools. And so it is explicit that every Nigerian child has the right not only to practice his religion but also to be taught in public schools. The kind of religion which should be taught in our schools must contribute to the stability, morality, unity and security of the Nigerian society. It must not compromise freedom of religious expression or the integrity of any religious community in its quest for the truth. There can be no prejudice for or against any of the major religious traditions of Nigeria. 'It is this philosophy of religion', observed Obilom and quoted by Jibir (2007) 'that defines the value systems which shape the morality of our youth both in public and private lives and it is crucial that the teaching of religion in Nigeria should be within an academic, non- sectarian atmosphere'.

The Christian religious education curriculum specifically sets out to achieve three aims; to provide opportunity for the students to learn about God and there on grow in faith in God; to help students apply the teaching and model Jesus Christ in their daily lives; and to develop and foster in the students Christian attitudes and values such as respect for life and dignity for all men, selfless service to God and humanity. Maston quoted by Jibir (2007) argues that "the imparting of knowledge does not complete the Christian education process... for education to be effective; it must lead to action... Students not only have the capacity for knowledge. They also have the ability to feel. And so, the teaching aims to change attitudes which essentially deal with emotions and desires.

The National Policy on Education (2004) acknowledges the need for religious education in Nigerian schools. This is expressed in section one paragraph 5(2), three paragraph 14(d) and 15(2), four paragraph 18(a) and finally in paragraph 26(a and b), where the document attempts to spell out the government's intentions on how to realize the objective of religious education as thus: to provide more opportunity for Nigerian youth to learn more about God and thereby develop their faith in him; to enable the youth to accept Christ as Savior; to enable youth to recognize Jesus as the founder and sustainer of the Christian church; to enable the youth accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives and activities, etc.

Hence, moral and religious instruction will be taught in schools through: the study of biographies of great people, Nigerians as well as non-Nigerians; studies and practices of religion, the mere memorizing of creeds and facts from the holy books is not enough (FRN, 1981).

It is obvious that the document shows the crucial intentions of the government to create equal educational opportunities and provide quality education by developing the man power needed to exploit the resources of the country, use education to foster national unity and security.

To educate the Nigerian child morally and intellectually, religious and moral education should inevitably be taught and learned. Ilori (2002) in agreement, opines that 'education without morals is no education at all'. The curriculum in religious education provides excellent lessons on good leadership, which will certainly prepare students for the utmost needed leadership positions of this country and hence, importance should be attached to this subject.

The aim of education is to produce good citizens who are useful to God, themselves, neighbors and the nation. This key-in with the expectation of most sensible Nigerian citizens that education generally among others should: "prepare children for examination; make children good citizens; give children more knowledge; and help children to lead a good life." Graham, quoted by Jibir (2007), comments that, 'an unregenerate heart is capable of any crime.' Obviously, religious education helps inject sanity into society and minimizes the turning of a nation into a police state. So the teaching of Christian religious education uniquely brings security, peace, stability, decency, law and order in our society that we are struggling with the lack of these today.

Teacher education is regarded as highly indispensable that must aim at turning out teachers who are intellectually, socially and professionally competent, and who possess personal integrity and can teach effectively. The National Policy on Education clearly acknowledges that "no education system

can rise above the quality of its teachers". This statement guarantees improvement of teacher education as foundational for a highly qualitative education. Also, the Policy on Education provides that: "all teachers in our educational institutions from pre-primary to Universities will be professionally trained" (FGN, 1981). This provision could be discerned as a concrete reference point for complete professionalization of teaching in Nigeria. The future of the nation depends on the training of competent and professional teachers who will be able to prepare future citizens for national development and security. A good teacher can pave the way for an enlightened, productive and peaceful society.

Gangel and Hendricks quoted by Jibir (2007), argue that the importance of teacher education as the foundation of the whole educational process had been long recognized. And "if education is the door that leads to modernization, it is the teacher that holds the key that unlocks that door." Anikweze (2002) emphasizes that, the teacher that can confidently hold such a key must not only have a sound knowledge of theory, but also practically reliable model of noble values. Hence, the teacher should possessed mastery of the skills he endeavors to impact. Thus Jonathan (2001) the work of the teacher is filled with rich opportunities to help students learn and influence their lives.

The National Policy on Education acknowledges the need for religious instruction in Nigerian schools and the government seeks to improve the teaching of moral and religious education through the various state ministries of education, the production of a suitable curriculum and the training of teachers for the subjects (FRN, 1981).

In the same vein, the Nigeria 1979 constitution recognizes the importance of religious education in the society by maintaining that "every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion." It merely recognizes the right of individuals to practice their religion unhindered. Not what is 'happening,' agues Jibir (2000) 'in Yobe and other northern states, where Christian children have been denied freedom of religious instruction in public schools.'

Research Questions

- i. Does moral instruction in public and private secondary schools contributes to making students good citizens?
- ii. Does the teaching/learning of Christian religious education and Islamic religious education in public and private secondary schools have the same cause and effect on Christian and Muslim students?

- iii. What negative consequences does lack of teaching/learning Christian religious education have on the Christian youth in Yobe state?

Hypotheses

- i. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools students mean responses of teaching moral education in Gashu'a, Yobe state.
- ii. There is no significant difference between public secondary schools teachers and private secondary schools teachers mean responses on the teaching and learning of Christian religious education in secondary schools in Gashu'a, Yobe state.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between teaching Christian religious education and Islamic religious education in secondary schools in Yobe state.

Methodology

The research design employed in this study was survey method of descriptive research and all teachers and students of the under listed public and private secondary schools in Gashu'a town of Yobe State constituted the population of this study.

S/N	Name of school
1.	GSTC Gashu'a
2.	GDSS Gashu'a
3.	JICON Gashu'a
4.	YUSAD Gashu'a

The stratified random sampling procedure was adopted in this study. This was done through selecting a sample on the basis of different qualities of the population. Through simple random procedure, ten teachers (10) and twenty five (25) students from each of the above four (4) secondary schools was selected as sample. Out of the twenty five (25) students selected from each school, fifteen (15) Christian students were required to respond to all the items on students' questionnaire. The other ten (10) Muslim students were required to respond to all the items except item No. 6, 7, 10 and 11, which involve Christian religious education.

Questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection for the study. It was developed and validated by the researcher based on the objectives, research questions formulated and literature reviewed. The questionnaire was designed into two distinct forms: (i) Teachers Questionnaire and (ii) Students Questionnaire. Each of the questionnaires consisted of 15 items, and the first three, elicit teachers and students personal data.

Items 4- 15 on the students questionnaire and 5 14 on the teachers questionnaire contained likert type questions designed to elicit information on the need for teaching moral education and in particular, Christian religious education in secondary schools in Yobe State.

Ten (10) teachers' questionnaire and. twenty five (25) students' questionnaires were administered to each school. A total of forty (40) and a hundred (100) respectively were distributed to teachers and students in four (4) secondary schools in Gashua'a (public and private).

All the respondents were expected to respond to the questions by ticking A, B or C that expresses best opinion to them.

The researcher in the study used primary source of data collected through administering questionnaire to the target population of the study to gather their responses to the items contained in the questionnaire. With a letter of introduction from the director, Human Resources Development Centre, College of Education Gashu'a, the researcher visited the four (4) schools in Gashu'a selected for the research. The cooperation of the Principals was solicited to gain easy access to teachers and students. The questionnaire was administered to both teachers and students. Completed copies of the questionnaire collected were forty (40) and hundred (100) respectively for teachers and students.

The scores from all the respondents were summarized into tables for analysis. Relevant statistical tests like mean and chi-square were applied.

Chi-square test allows us to determine if two attributes are independent of each other than a mere test for the quality of several proportion. It is used comparing differences between observed and expected after an observation was made.

The formula is
$$x = \frac{\sum(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e}$$

Where: Σ = Summation

f_o = Observed frequencies

f_e = Expected frequencies

Presentation of Results

Table 1: Students' frequency responses in public and private schools

	Responses							
Schools	A	%	B	%	C	%	Total	%
Public	350	71	100	20	41	9	491	48
Private	429	82	53	10	43	8	525	52
Total	779		153		84		1016	100

SOURCE: Results from Student's Questionnaire

Table 1 shows the frequency responses of students selected from public and private secondary schools in Gashu'a town. Scores have shown that 71% of students' responses in public schools and 82% of students' responses in private schools have accepted the fact that students develop moral behavior through religious instruction in their schools. About 20% responses in public schools and 10% responses in private schools responded otherwise. While 9% responses in public schools and 10% in private schools were neutral about it.

Table 2: Teachers' Frequency Responses in Public and Private Schools

	Responses							
Schools	A	%	B	%	C	%	Total	%
Public	85	45	57	30	45	25	187	48
Private	92	46	50	25	57	29	199	52
Total	177		107		102		386	100

SOURCE: Results from teachers' questionnaire.

Table 2 shows the frequency responses of teachers selected from public and private secondary schools in Gashu'a town. The scores revealed that 45% teachers' responses in public schools and 46% of teachers' responses in private schools have agreed that teaching and learning of Christian religious education in secondary schools is appropriate and useful in making students good citizens. About 30% responses in public schools and 25% responses in private schools responded negatively. While 25% responses in public schools and 29% responses in private schools were neutral.

Table 3: Frequency Responses of Christian Students and Muslim Students in Public and Private Schools

	Responses							
Students	A	%	B	%	C	%	Total	%
Christian	535	75	122	17	56	8	713	69
Muslim	271	85	19	6	29	9	319	31

Total	806	141	85	1032	100
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SOURCE: Results from Christian and Muslim Students.

Table 3 shows the frequency responses of selected Christian students and Muslims students in public and private secondary schools in Gashu'a town. The scores showed that 75 % of the Christian students and 85% of the Muslim students in both public and private secondary schools have accepted the fact that both Christian religious education and Islamic religious education should equally be taught in secondary schools in Yobe State. About 17% responses of the Christian students and 6% responses of the Muslim students indicated negatively. While 8% responses of the Christian students and 9% responses of the Muslim students did not make any decision.

Discussion

The following analyses were made based on the research hypotheses stated. The tables above provide the scores for the responses for testing the hypotheses.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools students mean responses of teaching moral education in Gashu'a, Yobe State.

Based on the analysis on table 1, calculated value was found to be 1.80 and the tabulated value is 5.99 at 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom = 2. Since the tabulated value is greater than the calculated value ($5.99 > 1.80$), the hypothesis is retained. This means that there is no significant difference between public and private secondary schools mean responses of teaching moral education in secondary schools in Gashu'a town. This means that teaching of moral education in both public and private secondary schools has no difference based on the result above.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between public secondary schools teachers and private secondary schools teachers mean responses on the teaching and learning of Christian religious education in secondary schools in Gashua, Yobe State.

The score in table 2 shows the calculated value (0.74) and tabulated value (5.99) at 0.05 level of significance with $df = 2$. Since the calculated value is less than the tabulated ($0.74 < 5.99$), the hypothesis is retained or accepted. This indicates that there is no significant difference between public secondary schools teachers and private secondary schools teachers mean responses on the teaching and learning of Christian religious education in secondary school in Gashua, Yobe State. In other words, the need for teaching and learning of Christian religious education in both public and private secondary schools by teachers and students has no difference.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between teaching Christian religious education and Islamic religious education in secondary schools in Yobe State.

The scores in table 3 shows that the calculated value is 0.05 and tabulated value is 5.99 at 0.05 with $df = 2$. Since the calculated value is less than the tabulated value ($0.05 < 5.99$), the hypothesis is retained. This simply means that there is no significant relationship between teaching of Christian religious education and Islamic religious education in secondary schools in Yobe state. In other words, the National Policy on Education states that Christian religious education and Islamic religious education should equally be taught in secondary schools in Yobe state.

Finally, all the hypotheses stated in this study were retained or accepted through the information analyzed. This however, gives credibility to the literature reviewed as well. In summary, there is no serious reason given by the government of Yobe state why Christian religious education was not taught in the secondary schools in Yobe State. Since all the hypotheses stated above was accepted. Meaning there is no significant difference between the teachings of moral education in the two religions. Lack of teaching it will bring serious side effect on the generation of Nigerians as stated in the study.

Conclusion

In a nut-shell, the study was conducted with a view to uncover the bottlenecks for teaching Christian religious education in secondary schools where Christian students are starved with the lack of Christian religious instruction. While adequate provisions are made for Islamic religious instructions.

Research has shown that moral instruction in secondary schools greatly contributes to moral and religious development of the students and thereby making them good citizens. Christian children who lacked moral instructions were automatically exposed to all forms of menace, infidelity, occultism, secularism and materialism, etc. The related literature review was made on the fundamental problems that affect the teaching of Christian religious education in secondary schools in Yobe State.

1. The teaching of moral education has the same cause and effect in both public and private secondary schools. The need for moral education in the public school did not differ in the private schools since it contributes to the moral development of all students.
2. The demand for teaching/learning Christian religious education by teachers and students in public did not differ from the private school.

National policy on education recognizes the teaching/learning Christian religious education in all secondary schools in Nigeria.

3. The teaching of Christian religious education and Islamic religious education should be given the same place in secondary schools in Yobe State. The effect produced will not differ for the Christian children as well as for the Muslim children. The morality developed from studying those subjects contributes to the security, stability, morality and unity of the Nigerian society. The National Policy on Education did not provide an exceptional clause for the teaching of any of these subjects in all the States.

Based on the results obtained within the scope of this study, the public and private secondary schools have equal demands for moral and religious instructions. The public and private secondary schools need the teaching/learning of Christian religious education by teachers and students respectively and both the Christian and Islamic religious instruction is a necessary requirement for all Christian and Muslim children respectively in all secondary schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The state ministries of education should ensure that moral and religious instructions are adequately and equally provided in all secondary schools.
2. The state government should provide adequate qualified resource persons for the teaching of Christian religious education in all the secondary schools where Christian children may be found.
3. The state government and those concerned should not officialize one religion at the expense of the other, since they have been entrusted with responsibility to do justice and treat all religions with equity in a secular state Nigeria.

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