

**ASSESSMENT OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ATTITUDE OF STUDENTS TOWARDS  
CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AND THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN CHRISTIAN  
RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, ZARIA**

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**Abstract**

*The potential of Christian Religious Studies to assure spiritual and moral wellness within a given society justifies its availability at the primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. The approach of students to the course is important since it affects how well they perform in the subject. Therefore, this study entitled “Assessment of the Relationship between the Attitude of Students towards Christian Religious Studies and their Academic Performance in Christian Religious Studies” became imperative. The objective was to examine the impact of attitude of students on the choice and performance in the course in Federal College of Education, Zaria. The research questions are: to what extent has the attitude of CRS students impacted the choice of the course in Federal College of Education, Zaria; and to what extent has attitude of CRS students impacted their performance in the course in the college. Correlational design adopted for this study with the use of questionnaire in data collection using purposive sampling to select a sample of 60 students from a population of 84 NCE II students. Descriptive statistics (standard deviation) was used to analyse the data. The study reveals among others, that students’ attitude towards CRS affect their performance negatively in the course hence, it was concluded that majority of the students do not offer CRS because of personal interest, motivation and for self-fulfillment. It was therefore, recommended among others, to re-orientate the students and instill the right attitude in them and that government should make CRS compulsory at secondary school level.*

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**Introduction**

One of the primary subjects that missionaries brought to the Nigerian education system when they established schools in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was Christian Religious Studies, which has since been taught in our schools since the establishment of Teacher Training schools in Nigeria by the church missionary society (CMS), which began teacher training. Njoku and Njoku in Anyebe and Anyebe (2017), noted that the Church Missionary Society (CMS), started teacher training after building a facility in

Abeokuta in 1833 and the founding of a missionary school in Badagry by Christian Missionaries in 1842 came shortly after that, then followed by the establishment of Saint Andrew’s College, Oyo by CMS in 1896. Since that time, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) has continued to be a relevant subject in our academic program and is currently one of the important courses taught in our schools both at primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. Its importance, therefore, in the Nigerian educational system cannot be overemphasized

because of its moral values. Despite the fact that each subject taught in schools has a special value and significance to the overall educational process, CRS is unique in the sense that its dual purpose of developing students' moral character and intellectual ability simultaneously cannot be overlooked. Similarly CRS assist in restoring sanity to society and lessens all societal ills because human behaviour is frequently influenced by spiritual concern rather than by outside factors.

Aiyedogbon (2023) asserts that a man's mindset determines everything about who he is and what he becomes in life. This, along with the level of effort he possesses and displays, determines the man's chances of success or failure. The potential of CRS to explain paranormal events has made and will continue to make the study of CRS of utmost relevance to humanity. Despite the value of CRS to both individuals and society as a whole, research shows that the field has experienced low patronage and academic performance. Poor academic performance is one of the main problems of Nigeria educational system. For students to perform well in their academic pursuit, they need to have right attitude towards the course as academic performance and attitude are associated hence, attitudes and ability usually goes together. Student who are forced to take a course that they have negative attitude to, may find it difficult to perform well. Majority of students we have today view CRS as a hard course while some feel that they were pushed to read the course because it was not their first choice while looking for admission and this seems to have resulted in a negative attitude towards the course. It has, been observed that majority of students have negative attitude towards CRS thereby leading to poor academic performance. In recent times, reports of large scale academic failures leading to the production

of half-baked and unemployable graduates from our higher institutions have become a subject of concern for stakeholders hence, the need to embark on this study to investigate the impact of CRS students' attitude on their academic performance.

Aaron, Ibemeji and Sunday (2021) opined that attitude has to do with the cognitive, affective and psychometric domains of learning that are very complicated and special concept. The term "attitude" has been defined in a variety of ways by authors. Yahaya (2020) for example, described attitude as a person's emotional propensity, which can be positive or negative. It depends on the student's attitude toward forming learning habits in a classroom whether they will do so favourably or not. According to Yahaya's point of view, one might state that attitude is a collection of emotions and beliefs that lead to a propensity to respond positively or negatively to objects or ideas.

Ebuoh, (2011), accepting the aforementioned viewpoint clarified that attitude is a state of readiness or predisposition to respond in a particular way when faced with a task. He emphasised further that it is a mental, neutral state of preparedness that has been organised by experience and that directs and dynamically influences how people react to all relevant things and circumstances. In a nutshell, a learner's attitude is their mental state as it relates to their personal behaviour. In general, attitude describes how a person tends to feel, believe or prefer something depending on their ideas about it. It is connected to likes and dislikes and can be positive or negative. On this note, a person's perception of an object influences whether they believe it to be essential or inconsequential, pleasant or unpleasant, beneficial or destructive, to be good or bad. As a result, students who have a good attitude stimulate the parts of their thinking, feeling, and

behavior that support performance, whereas students who have negative attitude which is brought on by limiting beliefs and pessimistic thinking lose motivation and impede their ability to advance academically.

The academic performance of students in CRS is influenced by a wide range of elements, which have been identified by multiple research conducted by various authors. The most important factor is the attitude, which Adebisi (2006) defined as the positive and negative thoughts that a person has regarding ideas or topics. Additionally, it was stressed that although attitudes are frequently thought of as taught rather than innate, they can be altered by instruction or experience. The author continues by highlighting the importance of a student's attitude towards the subject in determining how well they achieve academically. It follows that most people think that being optimistic will result in improved academic performance.

In conjunction with the aforementioned study, Aiyedogbon (2023) conducted a study on secondary students' attitudes toward the study of Christian religious studies in tertiary institutions in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State and discovered that the majority of students are pursuing CRS not out of a genuine interest in the field but rather to earn a certificate because some of them are there not because they applied for the course but due to the mode of admission. However, this has affected their academic performance due to lack of interest and dedication. The work of Aiyedogbo above has demonstrated clearly that the connection between attitude of students who studies Christian Religious studies and their academic performance cannot be neglected because students develop either negative or positive attitude towards a course due to some factors which could be the mode of admission as the case may be in the tertiary institutions.

EtseDiaka et al (2021) conducted a research on the challenges facing administration of Christian Religious Studies program in higher institutions in Nigeria and affirmed that negative attitude of students towards Christian religious studies is a major challenge affecting not only the administration of Christian Religious program in the Nigerian higher institutions but also the academic performance of the students. According to them, there is a negative attitude of students toward the study of Christian religious studies as a course across most Nigerian higher institutions. The reason being that many students demonstrate lack of interest in the study of CRS therefore, don't want to offer it as a course and even those who manage to choose it as a course hardly attend lectures. This leads to poor academic performance at the end of their semester examinations. Stressing further the effect of attitude on students' academic performance, Malala et al (2021), highlighting the impact of attitude on students' academic performance, claim that attitude can affect all facets of a person's life, including education. The attitude of the student affects their ability, interest, and readiness to learn. In reality, if the problem of negative attitude is not effectively handled, a student is more likely to perform poorly in a subject since it will continue to restrict student performance because academic performance is impeded when motivation to learn is derailed.

### **Statement of problem**

The way that students approach CRS as a course is crucial since it affects how well they succeed because a good attitude yields good performance. Despite the importance accorded to CRS, students seem not to be interested in this subject but just to pass (Kalu, 2012). This is reflected in low enrolment and poor performance of students in this subject at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels as pointed

out by Mensah (2019). He further added that most students studying this subject in schools seem to attend CRS classes just because it is a course given to them. The above notion was supported by Melad (2022) who noted that researchers have generally agreed that interest acts as a very powerful motive to an individual's behavior that energetically determines choices made. This motive influences the learner's knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies possessed in this subject and others.

Despite the importance of Christian Religious studies to the individual and nation in imparting moral values and behavioural change, it is worthy to note that the performance of students in the subject especially in our tertiary institutions keeps going down by the day. In Federal College of Education, Zaria, the researcher has noticed that there is a yearly drop in performance and many students yearn for a change of course. Teachers are becoming increasingly concerned about this students' startlingly high failure rate in C.R.S. In spite of deliberate efforts to enhance students' performance in C.R.S in F.C.E Zaria through counselling, the researcher has found that poor academic performance is still a persistent issue and that students still struggle to perform well academically, as demonstrated by their results on end-of-semester examinations. This poor performance according to Ojong and Ejar (2017) and Lawal (2012) implies that in the near future, the educational system will be staffed by inept teachers who will undermine the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. This will have negative effects on the achievement of the national objectives which is dependent on the quality and quantity of teaching personnel. The relationship between students' attitudes and academic achievement has been extensively studied in a various fields, however, the impact of attitudes on CRS students' academic

performance appears to have received little attention. Why are we having this state of affairs? Therefore, this study attempted to investigate student attitudes such as personal interest, engaging in self-study after regular class work, their motivation to learn and excel in the course and how they impact CRS students' academic performance in Federal College of Education, Zaria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The research objectives include:

- To examine the impact of the interest of CRS students on the choice of CRS as a course in Federal College of Education, Zaria.
- To investigate the impact of CRS students' attitudes on their academic performance in Federal College of Education, Zaria.

### **Research questions:**

- To what extent has interest of CRS students impacted the choice of the course in Federal College of Education Zaria?
- To what extent has the attitude of CRS students impacted their performance in the course in Federal College of Education, Zaria?

### **Methodology**

The correlational design was adopted for this study because it analyses relationships between variables without the researcher influencing any of them. This is in line with the findings of Devi and Lepcha (2023), who stated that it is a non-experimental method that investigates the relationship between two variables using statistical analysis without the researcher manipulating any of them. A questionnaire was designed to access and describe how the attitude of students towards Christian religious studies has impacted their academic performance in Federal College of Education, Zaria. The primary source of data in

this study was made up of all N.C.E II students with the total number of eighty-four (84). NCE II students were chosen because they were the only students in session at the time of the study. Purposive sampling was used to select sixty (meaning 71.4% out of a population 84 students which was considered adequate). Out of the sixty respondents, fifty seven (or 95%) of the respondents completed and returned the copies of the questionnaire entitled “Attitude of students towards Christian Religious Studies and their academic performance in federal

college of education, Zaria” which was developed by the researcher for this purpose after subjecting it to a pilot study to establish its validity and reliability.

The responses were rated on 5-point Linkert scale: Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Descriptive statistics (simple percentages, mean and standard deviation) were used to analyse the data.

## Results

**Table 1**

Impact of interest of Christian Religious Studies’ students on their choice of CRS in Federal College of Education, Zaria

S/N	Items	Response					Total number	Mean	Standard Deviation
		A	SA	UD	D	SD			
1	Personal interest influences my choice of Christian Religious Studies most	9 (21.0%)	12 (15.8%)	0 (0.0%)	26 (45.6%)	10 (17.5%)	57 (100%)	2.7719	1.46406
2	I feel motivated to learn and excel in Christian Religious Studies	15 (26.3%)	13 (22.8%)	1 (1.7%)	20 (35.0%)	8 (14.0%)	57 (100%)	3.0877	1.45505
3	Christian Religious Studies is always interesting to me	13 (22.8%)	15 (26.3%)	2 (3.5%)	20 (35.0%)	7 (12.2%)	57 (100%)	3.1579	1.46128
4	I don't feel fulfilled each time I am in Christian Religious Studies class	11 (19.29%)	13 (22.8%)	2 (3.5%)	27 (47.3%)	4 (7.0%)	57 (100%)	3.0351	1.37536
5	I feel good whenever I hear the word Christian Religious Studies, but I don't like it as a course	38 (66.6%)	17 (29.8%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (3.5%)	1 (1.7%)	57 (100%)	4.1579	.75094

Field Survey, 2024 & SPSS Output

Responses from table 1 are in respect of the impact of interest of Christian Religious Studies' students on their choice of CRS in Federal College of Education, Zaria.

The mean and standard deviation of 2.7719 and 1.46406 indicate that the level of agreement on whether personal interest influences the choice of Christian Religious Studies most is below average which means majority of the respondents disagree with that view point.

Regarding question on whether the respondents feel motivated to learn and excel in Christian Religious Studies, the mean and standard deviation are 3.0877 and 1.45505. It implies that the level of agreement is also below average which means majority of the respondents are not in agreement with that point of view.

The mean and standard deviation of 3.1579 and 1.46128 are on responses on whether Christian Religious Studies is always interesting to the respondents. This implies that the level of agreement is as well below average which means that majority of the respondents do not view it that way.

The mean and standard deviation of 3.0351 and 1.37536 are in respect of whether the respondents don't feel fulfilled each time they are in Christian Religious Studies class. By implication, this means that the level of agreement is below average. The standard deviation of 1.37536 indicates a better spread of the responses in comparison with the

responses in relations to personal interest, motivation and keen interest on the course.

The mean and standard deviation of 4.1579 and 0.75094 are in respect of whether the respondents feel good whenever they hear the word Christian Religious Studies but they don't like it as a course. It implies that the level of agreement is well below average. Hence, majority of the respondents as reflected in the mean and standard deviation feel excited to hear the title of the course but do not consider it as their favourite course of study.

The findings suggest that the interest of CRS students does not really influence the choice of the course in Federal College of Education, Zaria.

This result above seems to agree with findings of earlier studies such as Aiyedogbon (2023) who carried out a research on "Secondary Students' Attitudes Towards the Study of Christian Religious Studies in Tertiary Institutions in Ibadan South-west Local Government Area of Oyo State". It was revealed in that study that a good number of students who are studying CRS are not there because they are interested in the course but just to obtain a certificate. This is so because they did not apply for the course in the first place but were forced to study the course because of the mode of admission. He further added that this has affected their academic performance since interest and dedication are not there.

**Table 2**

Impact of attitudes of CRS students on their academic performance in Federal College of Education Zaria

S/N	Items	Response					Total number	Mean	Standard Deviation
		A	SA	UD	D	SD			
1	I have positive attitude towards Christian Religious Studies	15 (26.3%)	10 (17.5%)	0 (0.0%)	20 (35.1%)	17 (29.8%)	57 (100%)	2.5789	1.51124
2	My attitude towards Christian Religious Studies has not affected my academic performance	4 (7.0%)	2 (3.5%)	1 (1.7%)	30 (52.6%)	20 (35.1%)	57 (100%)	1.9123	0.98707
3	I often participate in class discussion related to Christian Religious Studies	7 (12.2)	9 (21.0%)	1 (1.7%)	25 (43.8%)	15 (26.3%)	57 (100%)	2.4737	1.41554
4	I always engage in self-study or revision outside regular class work in Christian Religious Studies	5 (8.77%)	8 (14.0%)	2 (3.5%)	27 (47.3%)	15 (26.3%)	57 (100%)	2.3684	1.34472
5	I attend Christian Religious Studies class with the feeling of hesitation	10 (17.5%)	18 (31.57%)	4 (7.0%)	19 (33.3%)	6 (10.5%)	57 (100%)	3.2281	1.47621

Field Survey, 2024 & SPSS Output

The responses in table 2 are in respect of the effect of attitudes of CRS students' on their academic performance in Federal College of Education Zaria.

The mean and standard deviation of 2.5789 and 1.51124 are in relation to whether the respondents have positive attitude towards Christian Religious Studies. This shows that the level of agreement is low. Hence, the standard deviation suggests that most of the responses concentrated above the mean which indicates disagreement.

The mean and standard deviation of 1.9123 and 0.98707 is in relation to whether

the attitude towards Christian Religious Studies has not affected the academic performance of the respondents. It implies that the level of agreement is around average as majority of the respondents have the belief that there is correlation between their attitude towards the course and their academic performance.

The mean and standard deviation of 2.4737 and 1.41554 is on how often the respondents participate in class discussion related to Christian Religious Studies. It implies that the level of agreement is below average, hence, majority of the respondents

were passive as they did not participate in the class discussion.

The mean and standard deviation of 2.3684 and 1.34472 is related to how always the respondents or representative samples engage in self-study or revision outside regular class work in Christian Religious Studies. It implies that the level of agreement is below average which means there is not much agreement among the respondents.

The mean and standard deviation of 3.2281 and 1.47621 on whether the respondents, have attended Christian Religious Studies class with the feeling of hesitation. The above mean and standard deviation shows that the level of agreements is average as only slight majority did not hesitate to attending the Christian Religious Studies class.

Based on the above result, it is evident that some students are of the view that their attitude towards CRS does not really affect their performance in the course. However, a slight majority of the students are of the view that their negative attitude towards the course really affects their performance. This is in consonance with the results of studies conducted by Kalu (2012) which revealed that students' approach to a course is crucial since it affects how well they succeed because a good attitude yields good performance. Also, Mensah (2019) demonstrated that most students studying CRS seem to attend CRS classes just because it is a course given to them which negatively affects their performance.

### **Conclusion**

It is therefore concluded from the study that the perception of the students about CRS as a course varies, however, majority of the students do not choose CRS as a course of study because of personal interest, motivation, and for self-fulfillment. This definitely, has

implication for low enrolment in the program and also their performance in the course. This situation should be looked into critically.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were made:

There is need to re-orientate and motivate our Christian youths to develop interest and right attitude towards CRS because of its moral values. This can be done during students' orientation and teaching in the class.

There is also the need for teachers to inculcate the right attitude and spirit in the students' studying the course.

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