



**Lecturers' Assessment of The Impact of Religious Studies Education on Moral
Development Among University of Ilorin Undergraduates**

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ABSTRACT

Religious Studies education (RSE) has emerged to inculcate sound religious and moral values among students. However, the rate of moral decadence among undergraduates has reached an alarming rate in Nigeria. This study, therefore, examined lecturers' assessment of the impact of RSE on moral development of university of Ilorin undergraduates. Specifically, the study investigated the differences in the lecturers' assessment based on gender and teaching experience. The descriptive study consisted of a sample of 150 lecturers. A researcher designed questionnaire with a reliability coefficient of 0.82 was used for the data collection. Data obtained were analysed using mean, rank order, the t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that RSE foster peace and unity among undergraduates. Also, there was no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' assessment based on gender and teaching experience. The study concluded that RSE is crucial in making undergraduates exhibit sound moral and social behaviours. It was therefore, recommended that RSE should be promoted in the universities and other tertiary institutions, also it should be made a required course for all undergraduates so as to inculcate moral values among students.

Keywords: Lecturers' Assessment, Moral Development, Religious Studies Education (RSE), Gender, and Teaching Experience.



Introduction

Education is the bedrock of the socio- economic and political development of any nation. No nation can develop beyond its educational standard or level. Developed countries of the world have achieved various breakthroughs due to their commitment to ensuring a functional educational system in their countries. These nations have been able to overcome several developmental challenges such as poverty, unemployment, inequality, ignorance, etc. which are inimical to human existence and whose presence could lead to other social vices like insecurity, moral decadence, crisis, conflicts, war among other social ills (Asaju & Adagba, 2014).

Education refers to what can be used by man to solve problems and live comfortable. It is one of the several ways that man employs to bring change and foster all-round development. It is also a formidable tool for man's survival (Aminu, 2013). Through education, the knowledge of society, country, and of the world is passed on from one generation to another. Thus, education is conceptualized more as a process, activity and outcome of skill, knowledge acquisition which makes the citizen a better and more productive person to himself and to the society at large.

Religion on the other hand creates a system which recognises the existence of a supernatural controller of the universe, God, who is the object of worship, obedience and love that ultimately results in practical piety and morality (Azuakor, 2019). Religion and education go hand in hand in the enlightenment and proper formation of the human mind. There is a substantial affinity that one might lose its meaning and place in the society when detached from the other (Chineke, 2016). This is because their essence, values and joint impacts on any society are dependent upon the extent to which they are approached simultaneously. Also, when religion and education are fully harmonised, contemporary students could be liberated from irrational propagation of false ideologies and immoral acts.

Therefore, there is a need to conceptualise religion and education as a twin-concept in which one is continually supported and enhanced by the other. Harmonisation of religion and education gave rise to RSE which is widely regarded as one of the most important subjects in Nigeria today (Chineke, 2016). It could therefore be inferred that the study of RSE could play a significant role in the moral development of Nigerian university students.

According to the 2014 edition of the Nigerian National Policy of Education, one of the primary aims of higher education in Nigeria is to inculcate proper value orientation and



physical and intellectual skills that enable individuals to become useful members of society. This objective underscores the significance of religious studies in the Nigerian educational system. As Njoku and Njoku (2015) noted, universities are built on core values that emphasise moral teaching and student development, particularly among youths. Moral teachings play a crucial role in shaping students' behaviour and character, and lecturers are instrumental in fostering these values. By imparting moral teachings, educators can help counter undesirable behaviours and produce students who excel not only in academics but also in character.

Moreover, the attitudes and values that ought to be instilled in students are all at the core of the Religious Education curriculum, and can shape students and society at large (Eluu & Ikwumelu, 2014). Religious Studies Education cultivate in learners' respect for the dignity of man and emphasises on virtues such as love, tolerance, brotherhood, reconciliation, kindness, justice, humility, unity, self-discipline and respect for human life (Onah, 2017).

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as a course aims at developing and fostering in the lives of the students. Christian attitudes and values such as respect to life, obedience to constitutional authority, responsible self, selfless service to God and humanity. CRS is seen as an academic discipline that is designed to provide the learners with moral and spiritual transformation. Christian Religious Studies is further seen as a social science subject that teaches students good moral behaviour, fear of God, knowledge and skills that will make them to contribute their quota in socio-economic and moral development of the country. The inclusion of sound religious and moral values in the life of students invariably would help in the development of spiritual and moral well-being of the students (Njoku, 2016). Christian Religious Studies education can therefore be perceived as a means of inculcating moral development among the students which will in turn made them useful to themselves and the nation at large.

Moral development refers to the progression of thoughts, behaviors, and feelings regarding standards of right and wrong as individuals grow and mature (Grey & Welsh, 2012). This development is a gradual process, shaped over time, as people are not born with an innate understanding of their society's moral codes. According to Lawal (2013), infants lack a moral sense, as they do not possess an inherent understanding of human relationships. As children mature, they progress through distinct stages of moral development. One of the earliest stages is the pre-conventional stage, typically reached during elementary school age.



At this stage, children's moral orientation is largely selfish, focusing on personal gain and avoiding punishment rather than considering the greater good (Kohlberg, 1984). Their moral reasoning is primarily driven by obedience to rules and fear of punishment.

Assessment in any educational system ascertains the extent to which educational learning outcomes are achieved and also the extent to which students have mastered the subject matter. Lecturers, through assessment can determine whether students are developing desired competencies and values, or whether the curriculum provides the vital knowledge and skills of the discipline, and whether students can integrate learning from individual courses into a complete educational experience that prepares them for future careers (Gable, Park & Scott, 2014).

In higher institutions of learning, assessment of student learning is a fundamental phenomenon and it is also a continuous process geared towards promoting and understanding students' learning outcomes (Adedoyin & Chisiyanwa, 2018). Lecturer's assessment helps to ascertain the current level of students' performance and to determine appropriate teaching strategies for improvement. Such assessment is premised and validated on a variety of techniques to help students succeed in school.

At the tertiary level, there exists a decline in patronage of religious education because people clamor for science education neglecting the fact that religious studies education provides the synergy for harmonious living and peaceful co-existence in the society (Onah, 2017). According to Thornton (2015), the rate of moral decadence among undergraduate students has reached an alarming state in Nigeria and some other parts of the world. Cases of disobedience of rules and regulations, disrespect to teachers and parents, laziness, truancy, selfishness, cheating, bad dressing, covetousness and other anti-social behaviours are common among our youths. No nation can survive when such immoral and unpatriotic behaviours tend to be rampant in the society. This is the reason why the inculcation of social norms and moral values has become one of the major goals of the school curriculum in Nigeria and many other nations of the world.

Njoku and Njoku (2015) observed a high level of immorality in most of the Nigeria societies especially among students. Although, religious education is being taught in relatively moderate universities in Nigeria, most of the undergraduate students that were opportune to partake in such study tend to forget the moral teachings of religion education as a result of peculiar reasons which could be family background or belief.



Furthermore, Chineke (2016) investigated the place of religion in education. The researcher explored how religion can be used as a paradigm for restoring the sanctity and dignity of education, promoting its morality, and actualising its objectives in the society. He concluded that religion has a fundamental role to play in the Nigerian educational system. It impinges its moral values on individuals, especially young people. More so, religion can serve as a paradigm for the restoration of the sanctity and dignity of education. It can achieve this end through discouraging and reducing corrupt practices of academic dishonesty such as plagiarism, fakery and forgery of educational certificates.

To reduce the non-adherence to morality in the society to manageable level, several studies (Kohlberg, 1984; Njoku & Njoku, 2015; Chineke, 2016; Nesta & Solomon, 2017 & Onah, 2017) have investigated religions studies education as a means of curbing moral decadence among youths. However, little seems to have been done on the lecturers' assessment of Religious Studies Education on moral development of students, hence, the gap this study intends to fill.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to examine lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates. Other specific purposes were to:

- a. examine lecturers' general assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates.
- b. determine the difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender
- c. determine the difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience

Research Questions

The following research questions was raised to give this study a focus:

1. What are the lecturers' general assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates?



Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in this study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research type with a sample size of 150 lecturers. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used to gather data for this study. Mean and rank order was used to answer research question 1. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the independent sample t-test and one-way ANOVA respectively all at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Answering of Research Questions

Descriptive statistics of mean were used to answer research questions 1 while other research questions were hypothesised

Research Question: What are the lecturers' general assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among university of Ilorin undergraduates?

Table 1: Table of Inference

Critical Range	Inference
0.0 – 1.49	None at All
1.50 – 2.49	Little Extent
2.50 – 3.49	Large Extent
3.50 – 4.00	Very Large Extent

Table 1 shows the composite mean in answering the Research Question One based on the responses from the respondents on the general lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among university of Ilorin



undergraduates. A cut-off score of 2.50 was used as a baseline for determining the lecturers' responses since the questionnaire items were structured as a four-response-scale. Therefore, items found with the mean scores equal or above 2.50 indicated 'Large Extent' or 'Very Large Extent' respectively of the assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among university of Ilorin undergraduates while items with mean scores below 2.50 were identified as being of either 'Little Extent' or 'None at all'.

Table 2: Mean and Rank Order of lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among university of Ilorin undergraduates

SN	Item	Mean	Rank	Remark
2	Religious Studies Education has fostered peace and unity among undergraduate.	3.71	1st	Very Large Extent
5	Religious Studies Education has given reassurance among undergraduate in their spiritual, personal and academic endeavors.	3.56	2nd	Very Large Extent
8	Religious Studies Education has promoted peaceful co-existence among undergraduate.	3.43	3rd	Large Extent
10	Religious Studies Education has fostered high level of discipline among undergraduates.	3.37	4th	Large Extent
7	Religious Studies Education has helped undergraduates not to involve in cultism	3.34	5th	Large Extent
3	Religious Studies Education has promoted respect for constituted Authorities.	3.02	6th	Large Extent
4	Religious Studies Education has fostered tolerance among undergraduate	3.02	6th	Large Extent
13	Religious Studies Education has made undergraduate exercise good social behaviours	2.94	8th	Large Extent
14	Religious Studies Education has made undergraduate to treat other student the way they want to be treated.	2.91	9th	Large Extent
15	Religious Studies Education has reduced religious extremism among undergraduate.	2.83	10th	Large Extent



1	Religious Studies Education has made undergraduate exhibit high level of humility in school	2.76	11th	Large Extent
9	Religious studies Education undergraduate has shown high level of tolerance.	2.63	12th	Large Extent
6	Religious Studies Education has helped undergraduate to be honest, transparent and trustworthy	2.57	13th	Large Extent
11	Religious Studies Education has made undergraduate exhibit zero tolerance towards cultism they want to be treated.	2.53	14th	Large Extent
12	Religious Studies Education has made undergraduate highly religious.	2.52	15th	Large Extent
Grand Mean		3.0	Large Extent	

As revealed in Table 2, the mean scores of all the items were above 2.50. This implies that Religious Studies Education has fostered peace and unity among undergraduates, provided reassurance in their spiritual, personal and academic endeavors, and promoted peaceful coexistence. Additionally, it has instilled a high level of discipline, discouraged involvement in cultism, and encouraged respect for constituted authorities. Furthermore, Religious Studies Education has fostered tolerance, promoted good social behaviors, and encouraged undergraduates to treat others with the same respect they desire for themselves. It has also reduced religious extremism, cultivated humility, and promoted honesty, transparency, and trustworthiness. Ultimately, it has instilled zero tolerance for cultism and heightened religiosity among undergraduates.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses were tested using independent-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender



Table 3: t-test statistics showing the difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender

Gender	No	Mean	S. D.	df	t-value	Sig	Remark
Male	92	16.821	3.409	148	1.714	0.122	NS
Female	59	17.975	3.454				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

Table 3 shows that the t-value 1.714 is obtained with a p-value of 0.122 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.122 is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis one is retained. Therefore, there is no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender ($t_{148} = 1.714, p > 0.05$).

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of the difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience

Variables	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups	242.645	2	121.322	1.808	0.071	NS
Within Groups	9856.465	147	67.091			
Total	8329.110	149				

*Insignificance at $p > 0.05$

As shown in table 4, the F-value of 1.808 with a p-value of 0.071 computed at 0.05 alpha level. Since the p-value of 0.071 obtained is greater than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis two is retained. This thus implies that there is no statistically significant



difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience

($F_{(2, 147)} = 1.808, p > 0.05$).

Discussion

Findings from this study revealed that Religious Studies Education This implies that Religious Studies Education has fostered peace and unity among undergraduates, provided reassurance in their spiritual, personal, and academic endeavors, and promoted peaceful coexistence. Additionally, it has instilled a high level of discipline, discouraged involvement in cultism, and encouraged respect for constituted authorities. Furthermore, Religious Studies Education has fostered tolerance, promoted good social behaviors, and encouraged undergraduates to treat others with the same respect they desire for themselves. It has also reduced religious extremism, cultivated humility, and promoted honesty, transparency, and trustworthiness. Ultimately, it has instilled zero tolerance for cultism and heightened religiosity among undergraduates. This finding corroborates the submission of Njoku and Njoku (2015) who posited that Christian Religious Studies is deliberately crafted to attain a multifaceted array of objectives in students' lives, spanning from imparting knowledge about the divine to inculcating moral values that shape human behavior and character. Also, the finding aligns with that of Eluu & Ikwumelu, (2014) who submitted that religious studies education trains the students morally and instils in them the desire to do well and be virtuous.

The second finding of this study indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on gender. This signifies that both male and female lecturers hold similar perceptions of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates. This finding corroborates that of Ezebilo (2020) who maintained that the differences in gender does not imply inequality. The last finding showed that there was no statistically significant difference in the lecturers' assessment of the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral



development among University of Ilorin undergraduates based on teaching experience. This implies that regardless of lecturers' years of service, they shared the same views on the impact of Religious Studies Education on moral development among University of Ilorin undergraduates. This finding tallies with that of Gerald, Jacinta & Jared (2020) who submitted that an experienced teacher can be a catalyst for good performance. However, experience is not solely determined by the number of years spent in the teaching profession. Rather, it is shaped by the rate of interaction with the subject matter, students, and the teacher's disposition to acquire and refine effective delivery skills.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study it was concluded that Religious Studies Education plays a vital role in fostering undergraduates' respect for constituted authorities, promoting positive social behaviors, and cultivating humility. Additionally, it helps undergraduates develop essential values such as honesty, transparency, trustworthiness, and a strong stance against cultism. Notably, the study revealed no significant differences in the perceived impact of Religious Studies Education between male and female lecturers, regardless of their years of experience.

Based on the findings and conclusion from the study it was recommended that:

Religion Studies Education should be promoted in universities and other higher schools of learning to inculcate the right values in students for orderliness in schools. The course should be made required course for all undergraduates to as to promote moral values and respect for the constituted authority of the schools by all means. There is need to organise in-service professional development training for religion studies educators to improve their teaching communicative skills for the effective realisation of religion studies education objectives. **Also**, there should be adequate remuneration, prompt payment of salary, and other fringe benefits to motivate religion studies educators for the effective attainment of their goals.

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