
**AVAILABILITY AND UTILIZATION OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES
(CRS) INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR NIGERIA'S SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION AND
DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract

The study examined the implications of the availability and utilization of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) instructional materials in junior secondary schools (JSSs), for sustainable education and development in Nigeria. It involved a descriptive survey design, and was guided by two (2) research questions and two (2) hypotheses. Purposive and random sampling techniques were used to select 25 respondents from Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State. An observational checklist and questionnaire were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, mean scores, standard deviation, and independent sample t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Results revealed that CRS instructional materials were available in 64% of JSSs in urban areas, 38% of JSSs in rural areas, and in 46% of all the JSSs. The difference in availability of these CRS instructional materials between schools in urban and rural areas, was significant ($p < 0.05$). Chalkboards were available in all the schools (100%), while Bibles, pictures, globes and maps, posters, and images were available in at least 70% of all the schools. The CRS instructional materials were utilized to a low extent ($\bar{x} = 2.24$) in all the schools, including schools in urban ($\bar{x} = 2.31$) and rural ($\bar{x} = 1.91$) areas. Significant ($p < 0.05$) differences existed in mean scores, on the utilization of CRS instructional materials between schools in urban and rural areas. Policies were recommended that will ensure increased availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials, particularly in schools in rural areas.

Keywords: CRS, Instructional materials, Junior secondary schools, Sustainable development

Introduction

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) play a very important role in promoting sustainable education and development of the society. Education is the process of acquiring and transferring knowledge, information, norms, and values, from one person, institution or society to another. It is an instrument for national development and social change (Ali, 2010; Ugwu, 2018). On the other hand, development is the process of meeting the needs and desires of society. The sustainability of education and development lies in preserving the ability of every generation to acquire and transfer knowledge and meet its societal needs (United Nations, 1987). Achieving this requires lots of virtues such as morality, discipline, equity, fairness, love, kindness and empathy (Onaiyekan, 2014). It will also require institutions, law and order, reward and punishment. This makes the study of CRS indispensable, especially, during the formative years of citizens, and therefore provided the rationale for its study in our educational institutions, in primary, and junior secondary schools (JSSs) as contained in the 2013 National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013).

CRS is one of the subjects that is being taught in junior secondary schools. Its roles are specified in the objectives of CRS at the junior secondary school. They include: providing more opportunities for Nigerian youths to learn more about God and thereby develop Christian attitudes and morals such as humility, respect, love, and justice; instil in the youths, the spirit of tolerance, reconciliation, peaceful co-existence and non-violence; and to develop and foster the spirit of respect for all people and human life (NERDC, 2013). CRS as a field of study, offers academic and scholarly explanations, of fundamental Christian teachings and values, which help in shaping the issues in the contemporary world (Enyioke & Mozie, 2012). It is aimed towards character building and the development of responsible members of the society. It helps in streamlining students' thought processes, character, morality and aspirations.

Meeting the objectives of the CRS for junior secondary schools would require effect the teaching and learning of the subject. This in turn requires reasonable availability and adequate utilization of instructional materials in the teaching and learning of the subject. This has become an issue of serious public concern, given the poor academic performance of students in competitive examinations and more so, the rascal, unruly behaviour, immorality, drug addiction, social disorders and vices that are prevalent among the youths in the society. According to Njoku (2009), the poor performance of students in CRS is attributable to teachers' instructional delivery system and personality. However, Abdulhamid (2010) noted that poor use of instructional materials seriously constrain effective teaching and learning in the class.

According to Uzuegbu et al. (2013), instructional materials refer to any device used to assist the instructor in the preparation of a lesson, teaching of the lesson and facilitating students' learning of the subject matter. Such instructional materials could be audio, visual, or audio-visual, and some of them include chalkboard, chalk, charts, graphs, diagrams, models, objects, pictures, textbooks and bibles. These materials enhance teaching and learning, bringing students from realms of intangibility to realms of tangibility (Dike & Umeadi, 2023).

However, the availability and utilization of these materials have become a great cause for concern. This is because in most schools, basic CRS instructional materials are

unavailable, and when they are available, they are rarely utilized. These greatly hinder effective teaching and learning of the subject. Availability according to Ibrahim (2008), is the condition of being obtainable or accessible at a given point in time, while Seels and Richey (1994) defined utilization as the process and use of resources to aid the learning process. It is against these backdrops that this study investigated the availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools in Nigeria.

Society is replete with a series of social vices, violent crimes, and immoral and dissident behavior, especially, among teenagers and youths. More so, their academic performance in CRS subject are not encouraging. Several scholars have attributed these to ineffective teaching and learning of CRS, arising from unavailability and inadequate utilization of CRS instructional materials (Ugwu, 2018; Abdulhamid, 2010; Njoku, 2009). However, studies that investigated the availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials, particularly, in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State, are limited. Undertaking this study, therefore, will be greatly beneficial to policymakers in education, as well as to students and teachers. Also, this will be of great benefit to parents and guardians, thereby fast-tracking the rapid sustainable educational and socioeconomic development of the country.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to:

- i. identify available CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools, and;
- ii. determine the extent of use of available CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools;

Research questions

The research questions of the study included:

- i. What are the available CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools?
- ii. To what extent are the available CRS instructional materials utilized, in junior secondary schools?

Research hypotheses

The research hypotheses of the study were:

- i. There is no significant difference in frequency counts, on the availability of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas;
- ii. There is no significant difference in mean scores, on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas.

Materials and Methods

Area of the study: The study was carried out in Nsukka Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State, Nigeria. It is bounded in the north by Igbo-Eze South, in the south by Igbo-Etiti, in the East by Udeni, and in the west by Uzo-Uwani LGAs, all in Enugu State. In the area, both public and private junior secondary schools exist in their numbers. Also, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) subject is widely taught in these schools, as the majority of the inhabitants are Christians.

Design of the study: Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study, because data were collected and analyzed, from only a few people out of a much larger population. This is in line with the view of Nworgu (2006) that descriptive research systematically collects and describes the features, qualities and attributes of a population, by investigating a few members of the population. As such, this design was used to collect information on the availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools out in Nsukka Local Government Area (LGA) of Enugu State, Nigeria.

Population of the study: The population of this study consists of 35 CRS teachers in 32 public junior secondary schools (JSS 1 -3) in Nsukka LGA of Enugu State, Nigeria. However, only 25 of the schools had CRS teachers. Public schools were chosen because their teaching and learning follow the approved CRS curriculum. Also, junior secondary schools are the basic and most important stage to ensure effective teaching and learning of CRS, in order for goals and objectives of the CRS curriculum to be achieved. This will ensure that there is the right atmosphere for sustainable socioeconomic growth and development in the country.

Sample and sampling technique: Purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used. Firstly, 25 junior secondary schools which have CRS teachers were purposively selected. This consisted of seven (7) schools in urban areas and 18 schools in rural areas. Subsequently, one CRS teacher was randomly selected from each of the selected schools. Instrument for data collection: Two instruments were used for the study. They included the observation checklist and the Teacher and Students' Ratings on the Availability and Utilization of CRS Instructional Materials (TSRAU-CRSIM) questionnaire. The observation checklist contained 18 items, and was used to find out the availability or otherwise, of the instructional materials. The TSRAU-CRSIM questionnaire consisted of only one cluster. The cluster sought for ratings on 9 items on the extent of utilization of available CRS instructional materials. The ratings were carried out on a 4-point scale: very great extent (VGE) [4-points], great extent (GE) [3-points], low extent (LE) [2-points] and very low extent (VLE) [1-point]. The instruments were face validated by three experts in the Department of Arts Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka on the clarity, simplicity and relevance of the items to the study. Trial-testing of the instruments was carried out using 30 students of Nkpogoro Community Secondary School, Afikpo for internal consistency. The observation check list had a reliability coefficient of 0.81, TSRAU-CRSIM (0.72), while the overall coefficient was 0.77.

Method of data analysis: The data collected with the aid of TSRAU-CRSIM structured questionnaire were analyzed using frequency counts and percentages, standard deviation and mean scores on a 4-point rating scale. Cut-off mark for the mean scores was: $\bar{x} \geq 3.50$ (VGE); $2.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 3.49$ (GE); $1.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 2.49$ (LE); and $0.50 \leq \bar{x} \leq 1.49$ (VLE). The null hypotheses were tested using students' independent t-test at critical values, $T_{0.05, 100} = \pm 1.984$ and $T_{0.05, 23} = \pm 2.069$.

Results

Research question one: What are the available CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools?

Table 1: Frequency counts on the availability of CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas

Items	Urban Area (N = 7)		Rural Area (N = 18)		Pooled (N = 25)	
	Available F (%)	Unavail. F (%)	Available F (%)	Unavail. F (%)	Available F (%)	Unavail. F (%)
1. Bibles	6 (85.7)	1 (14.3)	15 (83.3)	3 (16.7)	21 (84.0)	4 (16.0)
2. Textbooks	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (66.7)	6 (33.3)	19 (76.0)	6 (24.0)
3. Bible dictionaries	6 (85.7)	1 (14.3)	1 (5.6)	17 (94.4)	7 (28.0)	18 (72.0)
4. Video and audio aids	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	3 (12.0)	22 (88.0)
5. Concordance commentaries	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	1 (4.0)	24 (96.0)
6. Crosswords	1 (14.3)	6 (85.7)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	1 (4.0)	24 (96.0)
7. Projectors	2 (28.6)	5 (71.4)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	2 (8.0)	23 (92.0)
8. Films	3 (42.9)	4 (57.1)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	3 (12.0)	22 (88.0)
9. Television sets	4 (57.1)	3 (42.9)	1 (5.6)	17 (94.4)	5 (20.0)	20 (80.0)
10. Computer sets	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	2 (11.2)	16 (88.9)	7 (28.0)	18 (72.0)
11. Electronic Bibles	3 (42.9)	4 (57.1)	1 (5.6)	17 (94.4)	4 (16.0)	21 (84.0)
12. Pictures	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (88.9)	2 (11.2)	23 (92.0)	2 (8.0)
13. Globes and maps	6 (85.7)	1 (14.3)	15 (83.3)	3 (16.7)	21 (84.0)	4 (16.0)
14. Models	5 (71.4)	2 (28.6)	2 (11.2)	16 (88.9)	7 (28.0)	18 (72.0)
15. Chalkboards	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
16. Radio	3 (42.9)	4 (57.1)	6 (33.3)	12 (66.7)	9 (36.0)	16 (64.0)
17. Poster	6 (85.7)	1 (14.3)	17 (94.4)	1 (5.6)	23 (92.0)	2 (8.0)
18. Images	7 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (94.4)	1 (5.6)	24 (96.0)	1 (4.0)
Composite	81 (64.3)	45 (35.7)	123 (38.0)	201 (62.0)	205 (45.6)	245 (54.4)
Frequency						
Total number of observations	480					

Key: F – frequency; Unavail. - Unavailable

Source: Field survey, 2022.

The result of the availability of CRS instructional materials for teaching and learning of CRS in junior secondary schools in Nsukka LGA is shown in Table 1. The result shows that the composite frequency was 81 (64.3%) for schools in urban areas, 123 (38.0%) for schools in rural areas and 205 (45.6%) for all schools. These imply that the instructional materials were available for the teaching and learning of CRS in about 64% of schools in urban areas, 38% of schools in rural areas and 46% of all the schools. In other words, the instructional materials were not available in 54% of all the schools, and 36% and 62% of schools in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Further results revealed that the instructional material, chalkboards, were available in all the schools (100%), respectively. Other instructional materials such as bibles, globes and maps, posters and images were available in over 70% of all the schools, respectively.

On the contrary, bible dictionaries, video and audio aids, concordance commentaries, crosswords, projectors, films, television sets, computer sets, electronic bibles and models were unavailable in over 70% of all the schools, cumulatively. However, Bible dictionaries, computer sets and models were available in over 70% of schools in urban areas, only. More results showed that textbooks were available in all the schools in urban areas (100%), but were 67% available in schools in rural areas.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference infrequency counts on the availability of CRS instructional materials, betweenjunior secondary schools in urban and rural areas.

Table 2: *t-test of significant difference in frequency countson the availability of CRS instructional materials,between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas*

Instructional Materials	Location	N	Mean	SD	t-values	Df	Sig.	Dec
1. Bibles	Urban	7	0.857	0.378	0.140	23	0.890	NS
	Rural	18	0.833	0.384				
2. Textbooks	Urban	7	1.000	0.000	1.794	23	0.086	NS
	Rural	18	0.667	0.485				
3. Bible dictionaries	Urban	7	0.857	0.378	6.430	23	0.000	S
	Rural	18	0.056	0.236				
4. Video and audio aids	Urban	7	0.259	0.488	2.579	23	0.017	S
	Rural	18	0.000	0.000				
5. Concordance Commentaries	Urban	7	0.143	0.378	1.661	23	0.110	NS
	Rural	18	0.000	0.000				
6. Crosswords	Urban	7	0.143	0.378	1.661	23	0.110	NS
	Rural	18	0.000	0.000				
7. Projectors	Urban	7	0.286	0.488	2.574	23	0.017	S
	Rural	18	0.000	0.000				
8. Films	Urban	7	0.429	0.535	3.524	23	0.002	S
	Rural	18	0.000	0.000				
9. Television sets	Urban	7	0.571	0.535	3.406	23	0.002	S
	Rural	18	0.056	0.236				
10. Computer sets	Urban	7	0.714	0.488	3.624	23	0.001	S
	Rural	8	0.111	0.323				
11. Electronic Bibles	Urban	7	0.429	0.535	2.463	23	0.022	S
	Rural	18	0.057	0.236				
12. Pictures	Urban	7	1.000	0.000	0.897	23	0.111	NS
	Rural	18	0.889	0.323				
13. Globes and maps	Urban	7	0.857	0.378	0.140	23	0.890	NS
	Rural	18	0.833	0.383				
14. Models	Urban	7	0.714	0.488	3.627	23	0.001	S
	Rural	18	0.111	0.323				
15. Chalkboards	Urban	7	1.000	0.000	NR	NR	NR	NS
	Rural	18	1.000	0.000				
16. Radios	Urban	7	0.429	0.535	0.429	23	0.672	NS
	Rural	18	0.333	0.485				
17. Posters	Urban	7	0.857	0.378	-0.700	23	0.491	NS
	Rural	18	0.944	0.236				

18. Images	Urban	7	1.000	0.000	0.615	23	0.544	NS
	Rural	18	0.944	0.236				
Composite	Urban	126	0.643	0.481	5.173	448	0.000	S
Frequency	Rural	324	0.380	0.486				

Key: NS – not significant; S – significant; NR – independent sample table/result not produced

Table 2 shows the t-test of significant difference in frequency counts on the availability of CRS instructional materials, between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas. The result shows that a composite t-value (5.173) at 0.000 level of significance was obtained. This result is greater than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 100} = 1.984$). Consequently, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in frequency counts on the availability of CRS instructional materials, between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas, was rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in frequency counts on the availability of instructional materials, between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas, for the teaching and learning of CRS.

Further results showed that t-values for instructional materials such as bible dictionaries (6.430), videos and audio aids (2.579), projectors (2.574), films (3.524), television sets (3.406), computer sets (3.624), electronic bibles (2.463) and models (3.627) were greater than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 23} = 2.069$), respectively. These imply that there were significant differences in the availability of each of those instructional materials between schools in urban and rural areas.

More results revealed that instructional materials such as bibles (0.140), textbooks (1.794), concordance commentaries (1.661), crosswords (1.661), pictures (0.897), globes and maps (0.140), radios (0.429), posters (-0.700) and images (0.615), each had a t-value less than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 23} = 2.069$). This implies that there were no significant differences in the availability of these instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas, for the teaching and learning of CRS, respectively.

Research question two: *To what extent are the CRS instructional materials utilized in junior secondary schools?*

Table 3: Mean scores on the extent of utilization of available CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas

Instructional materials	Urban Areas (N = 7)			Rural Areas (N = 18)			Pooled (N = 25)		
	\bar{x}	SD	Dec	\bar{x}	SD	Dec	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
1. Bibles	3.38	0.79	GE	3.82	0.35	VGE	3.63	0.86	VGE
2. Textbooks	3.78	0.25	VGE	3.41	0.98	GE	3.70	1.09	VGE
3. Bible dictionaries	1.60	0.63	LE	1.38	0.93	VLE	1.49	0.74	VLE
4. Video and audio aids	2.25	0.45	LE	1.92	0.41	LE	2.08	0.77	LE
5. Concordance commentaries	1.38	0.84	VLE	1.08	0.00	VLE	1.16	0.25	VLE
6. Crosswords	2.09	0.67	LE	1.36	0.45	VLE	1.91	0.89	LE
7. Projectors	1.47	0.83	VLE	1.06	0.65	VLE	1.12	0.81	VLE
8. Films	1.31	0.19	VLE	1.12	0.45	VLE	1.29	0.96	VLE
9. Television sets	1.40	0.35	VLE	1.19	0.94	VLE	1.36	0.87	VLE
10. Computer sets	2.46	0.85	LE	2.27	0.57	LE	2.30	0.88	LE

11. Electronic Bibles	2.10	0.92	LE	1.90	0.45	LE	1.95	0.71	LE
12. Pictures	2.93	0.11	GE	2.72	0.12	LE	2.81	0.89	GE
13. Globes and maps	1.95	0.21	LE	2.13	0.17	LE	2.05	0.88	LE
14. Models	1.31	0.44	VLE	1.07	0.19	VLE	1.17	0.94	VLE
15. Chalkboards	3.80	0.64	VGE	3.93	0.53	VGE	3.87	0.81	VGE
16. Radio	1.99	0.52	LE	2.08	0.33	LE	2.01	0.70	LE
17. Poster	2.50	0.99	GE	2.63	0.34	GE	2.55	1.04	GE
18. Images	3.90	0.72	VGE	3.95	0.98	VGE	3.92	0.85	VGE
Composite Mean	2.31	0.77	LE	1.91	0.68	LE	2.24	0.73	LE

Key: VLE – very low extent; LE – low extent; GE – great extent; VGE – very great extent

The mean scores and standard deviation on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials in junior secondary schools are presented in Table 3. The composite mean of all the respondents was $\bar{x} = 2.24$, while the mean scores were, for respondents in urban areas ($\bar{x} = 2.31$) and rural areas ($\bar{x} = 1.91$). These imply that the CRS instructional materials were utilized to low extents in the study, irrespective of the location.

Further results revealed that the mean scores of all the respondents, for some instructional materials were bibles ($\bar{x} = 3.63$), textbooks ($\bar{x} = 3.70$), chalkboards ($\bar{x} = 3.87$) and images ($\bar{x} = 3.92$), implying that they were utilized to very great extents, respectively. However, the composite mean of respondents in urban location for some of these instructional materials were bibles ($\bar{x} = 3.38$) and textbooks ($\bar{x} = 3.78$), while in rural location they were bible ($\bar{x} = 3.82$) and textbooks ($\bar{x} = 3.41$). These imply that bibles were utilized to a great extent in urban areas, but in rural areas it was to a very great extent, while textbooks were utilized to a very great extent in urban areas and great extent in rural areas.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in mean scores, on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas.

Table 4: T-test of significant difference in mean scores, on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas

Instructional Materials	Location	N	Mean	SD	t-values	df	Sig.	Dec
1. Bibles	Urban	7	3.380	0.035	-3.360	23	0.000	S
	Rural	18	3.821	0.354				
2. Textbooks	Urban	7	3.783	0.243	2.114	23	0.001	S
	Rural	18	3.411	0.452				
3. Bible dictionaries	Urban	7	1.601	0.249	1.565	23	0.097	NS
	Rural	18	1.380	0.756				
4. Video and audio aids	Urban	7	2.252	0.545	2.040	23	0.024	S
	Rural	18	1.922	0.521				
5. Concordance Commentaries	Urban	7	1.380	0.234	1.998	23	0.042	S
	Rural	18	1.080	0.453				
6. Cross words	Urban	7	2.094	0.123	4.678	23	0.000	S
	Rural	18	1.361	0.243				
7. Projectors	Urban	7	1.472	0.964	3.286	23	0.000	S
	Rural	18	1.061	0.739				
8. Films	Urban	7	1.311	0.534	0.987	23	0.228	NS

	Rural	8	1.122	0.432				
9. Television sets	Urban	7	1.404	0.234	2.045	23	0.884	NS
	Rural	18	1.192	0.211				
10. Computer sets	Urban	7	2.462	0.534	0.990	23	0.225	NS
	Rural	18	2.273	0.443				
11. Electronic Bibles	Urban	7	2.100	0.231	1.042	23	0.144	NS
	Rural	18	1.904	0.121				
12. Pictures	Urban	7	2.933	0.534	0.987	23	0.228	NS
	Rural	18	2.721	0.433				
13. Globes and maps	Urban	7	1.954	0.567	0.980	23	0.232	NS
	Rural	18	2.138	0.345				
14. Models	Urban	7	1.311	0.765	1.643	23	0.087	NS
	Rural	18	1.072	0.654				
15. Chalkboards	Urban	7	3.806	0.344	1.288	23	0.169	NS
	Rural	18	3.935	0.253				
16. Radios	Urban	7	1.990	0.546	-0.546	23	0.522	NS
	Rural	18	2.084	0.463				
17. Posters	Urban	7	2.501	0.231	-1.097	23	0.205	NS
	Rural	18	2.632	0.200				
18. Images	Urban	7	3.901	0.547	-0.500	143	0.613	NS
	Rural	18	3.954	0.432				
Composite Mean	Urban	126	2.311	0.384	2.349	448	0.001	S
	Rural	324	1.912	0.564				

Key: NS – not significant; S - significant

Table 4 contains the result of the test of significant difference in mean scores, on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas. A composite t-value (2.349) at level of significance of 0.001 was obtained in the result. This result is greater than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 100} = 1.984$). As such, the hypothesis that there is no significant difference in mean scores, on the extent of utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas, was rejected. This implies that there is a difference, on the extent of the utilization of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas.

Further result revealed that the t-values of six (6) instructional materials were respectively, greater than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 23} = 2.069$). These instructional materials included bibles (-3.360), textbooks (2.114), video and audio aids (2.040), concordance and commentaries (1.998), cross words (4.678) and projectors (3.286). These imply that there are differences, on the extent of utilization of those CRS instructional materials between schools in urban and rural areas, respectively.

Table 4 further showed that 12 instructional materials, each had a t-value less than the critical t-value ($T_{0.05, 23} = 2.069$). They included bible dictionaries (1.565), films (0.987), television (2.045) and computer (0.990) sets, electronic bibles (1.042), pictures (0.987), and globe and maps (0.980). Others were models (1.643), chalkboards (1.288), radios (-0.546), posters (-1.097) and images (-0.500). The implication of these results is that there are no differences, on the extent of utilization of those CRS instructional materials between

junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas, respectively. In other words, their extents of utilization were the same in the schools, their location notwithstanding.

Discussion of findings

Findings indicated that CRS instructional materials were unavailable in majority of all the schools in the study. However, majority of the schools in urban areas had these instructional materials, unlike schools in rural areas, and these differences were statistically significant. Also, the instructional materials were utilized to low extents in all the schools. Nonetheless, the absolute value of the mean score for schools in urban areas was higher than that of schools in rural areas, and this difference was significant. These results infer that location (urban or rural) is an important factor in the availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials, as the instructional materials were more available and more utilized in junior secondary schools in urban areas than their counterparts in rural areas. These results are attributable to government's lack of interest and commitment to qualitative education and training of its citizens, as the sector is grossly underfunded. Nigeria's education budget has remained abysmally low over the years, less than 10% of total budgetary allocation (Odigwe & Owan, 2019; Suleiman, 2022). This is against UNESCO's (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) recommendation of at least 26% of total public expenditure (UNESCO, 2023). As a result, funds are not sufficient to provide these instructional materials in all the schools in the country. Worse still, the government has bias against rural areas in the provision of basic social and economic amenities, including in education. Governments in Nigeria have the inclination to concentrate their developmental efforts in cities and urban centres, where they are easily seen and appreciated. As a result, teachers in schools in urban areas have higher chances of participating in human capital development and trainings, relative to those in schools in rural areas. This could account for the disparity in the availability of CRS instructional materials between junior secondary schools in urban and rural areas.

Implications for sustainable education and development

These findings have great implications for sustainable education and national development. The unavailability of CRS instructional materials in majority of schools as well as their low extent of utilization will result in poor educational training and poor inculcation of Godly virtues, values and morals in students, thereby undermining the objectives of the CRS curriculum. The CRS curriculum among other things aims at providing students more knowledge and understanding of God and His love for humanity, underscoring the importance of virtues and morals such as love, humility, honesty, hard work, diligence, perseverance, tolerance, forgiveness, reconciliation, peaceful coexistence and sanctity of human life (NERDC, 2013). These virtues and morals are the invisible threads that sew the society together, supporting and fostering sustainable development, in and out of seasons.

Consequently, an undermined CRS curriculum will lead to a dysfunctional society filled with anger, bitterness and hatred, where dishonesty, laziness, negligence, unforgiveness, theft, bribery and corruption, ethnic rivalry and nepotism, violence and willful destruction of human lives and property are the order of the day. Unfortunately, no meaningful development can occur in such an environment, let alone sustaining the

development. The concern for Nigeria therefore, is very worrisome and palpable, considering its massive population estimated at over 220 million people with a growth rate of 2.4%, 46.48% of whom reside in rural areas and about 43% of the population are within and below the age (0 – 14 years) of junior secondary education (UNFPA, 2022; World Bank, 2023a,b,c).

Conclusion

The study examined the implications of the availability and utilization of instructional materials in teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in junior secondary schools, for sustainable education and development in Nigeria. The teaching and learning of CRS was characterized by low availability and low extent of utilization of instructional materials, even though the level of availability and extent of utilization was higher in schools in urban areas. These greatly undermine the objectives of CRS curriculum, thereby constraining sustainable educational and socioeconomic development in the country.

Recommendation

The study therefore recommends the formulation of policies that ensures increased availability and utilization of CRS instructional materials, particularly in schools in rural areas. This will involve increased funding of public education by the government, development partners and well-to-do individuals and organizations with emphasis on Christian religious studies, as well as the continuous training and re-training of teachers on the skills and importance of utilization of CRS instructional materials. It will also entail deliberate actions aimed at ending age-long biases against rural areas by increasing funding and commitment to schools in those locations.

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