

Determinants of Secondary School Learners Performance in Christian Religious Education in Lelan Sub County, Kenya

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Abstract

In Kenya, Christian Religious Education is taught and examined by the Kenya National Examinations Council in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education at the end of the four years of Secondary Education cycle. The teaching of this subject in Secondary Schools ensures that learners are offered an opportunity to develop morally and spiritually (Education Act, 2011). Christian Religious Education was earlier on examined with Social Education and Ethics as rival and complementary subjects. But, as years went by, the students' performance in Christian Religious Education declined. This rivalry necessitated the need to investigate students' performance in Christian Religious Education in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education in Lelan Division of West Pokot County. Five objectives and a corresponding number of null hypotheses were adopted. The Stratified sampling technique was employed to select two hundred and four (204); students, teachers, head teachers and a response rate of two hundred (200). Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. It was established that students' poor performance in Christian Religious Education was influenced by; the teaching of Social Education and Ethics (SEE), student-teacher relationship, students' self determination, adequacy of resources, teachers' and students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Education besides the extent of teacher involvement in marking Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examination examinations. The study recommended in-service training for Christian Religious Education teachers, construction of cost effective day secondary schools, Kenya National Examinations Council's involvement of teachers in marking Christian Religious Education and elimination of Social Education and Ethics as an examinable subject.

Keywords: Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education, performance, attitudes, Christian Religious Education, Social Education and Ethics

1.1. INTRODUCTION

One of the oldest curriculums in the world is Religious Education which is considered key in shaping the moral and spiritual life of learners. Given its crucial role, most developed countries have enlisted religion as a non examinable curriculum at secondary level. In Kenya, the Christian Religious Education (CRE) curriculum is taught in all schools alongside Muslim and Hindu Religious Education that has been approved by the Ministry of Education (Education Act, CAP, 211). Christian Religious Education is also among 12 subjects taught, in secondary schools in Kenya.

Since the inception of 8-4-4 cycle of education in Kenya, Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was a non faith based subject that was added to the Arts based curriculum giving students a challenge in choosing a faith based subject since only one subject was selected from the Arts based category in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) Examinations. The introduction of Social Education and Ethics created confusion in the role of Christian Religious Education to students and attitudes towards religion as an academic subject besides its role in spiritual development. Students' performance in KCSE in Social Education and Ethics (SEE) was notably better hence the number of students choosing Christian Religious Education gradually dropped in a few schools besides the fact that it was difficult to establish whether students' spiritual development was still an important goal for all schools. Although there were adequate graduate teachers to teach Christian Religious Education, students for this subject in KCSE examination in certain schools continued to perform dismally. For example, the CRE mean score in (1998-2001) for the schools in Lelan Division of West Pokot was six (6.10) as compared to a mean score of SEE (8.00) in the same period (KNEC, 2001).

The Christian Religious Education performance trend had a notably higher mean score prior to the introduction of Social Education and Ethics. This was considered to account for the variation in students' performance in terms of attitude change and perhaps inadequate content of the Social Education and Ethics curriculum. The following questions were posed: Was the decline of students' performance in CRE and KCSE as a result of teachers' and students' attitudes towards CRE in Lelan Division or was it due to the influence of SEE curriculum on students' and teachers' attitude towards CRE? Koech (1998) noted that more students chose to take SEE in KCSE as compared to CRE even when SEE had less experienced graduate teachers to support quality grades at KCSE. To what extent did teachers' and students' attitude influence students' CRE performance in KCSE? Much of the work on attitude and achievement in Christian Religious Education was

implicitly pegged on the assumption that, “teachers’ attitude and achievement affected students’ attitude and achievement” Wan (2001). This assumption was investigated in order to establish whether there was a relationship between the attitude of teachers to a subject and students’ attitudes, achievement and performance in that subject. But, how did teacher efficiency affect students’ level of performance (Anderson, 1991)?

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Despite the availability of diverse avenues of learning Christian Religious Education to students of this subject, such as Young Christian Students, Christian Union, Christian Youth Crusades/rallies, Youth retreats, Pastoral programmes in schools and Christian Religious Education lessons, many students continued to perform poorly in CRE in KCSE examinations in Lelan Division, West Pokot County. Factors that were responsible for the decline in standards of CRE had not been well understood or investigated empirically in this region. This lack of knowledge in factors that influenced CRE performance made it difficult to put in place strategies to counteract the poor performance. The absence of this information made the efficient and effective teaching of CRE difficult. Furthermore, it was only possible to improve on this poor performance if factors responsible for the decline were explicit. Therefore, it was important that a study be carried out to establish the cause of this problem and appropriate suggestions to remedy the situation.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

The study sought to:

1. establish whether teachers’ attitude towards Christian Religious Education (CRE) influenced students’ attitude towards CRE and subsequently their performance in CRE examinations.
2. find out whether lack of adequate updated teaching and learning facilities had any influence on students’ achievement and performance in CRE.
3. determine the relationship between academic and professional qualification of teachers in respect to students’ performance in CRE in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE)
4. investigate the effect of introduction and teaching of Social Education and Ethics to the Christian Religious Education teaching.
5. analyse the effects of students performance in Kenya Certificate of Primary Education examination on their achievement in KCSE.

1.4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An appropriate research design was selected, supported by a target population using relevant sampling techniques and research instruments as presented below.

1.4.1. Research design

An Ex-post Facto Research design was found to be most appropriate since in this study the researchers did not have direct control of independent variables given that their manifestations had already occurred hence they were inherently not manipulated (Kerlinger, 2007).

1.4.2. Target Population

The study was conducted in Lelan Division of West Pokot County, Kenya and was based on respondents from two secondary schools in the region with two hundred (200) students, and two (2) Christian Religious Education teachers and a similar number of head teachers.

1.4.3. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study used stratified sampling technique and the sample size was based Kerlinger (2007). Teachers and Head teachers were purposively sampled while, students were identified using stratified sampling strategy that ensured equitable representation of students per class and gender.

1.4.4. Research Instruments

Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from Christian Religious Education teachers and students respectively. The head teachers of the two schools were interviewed to ensure a balance between qualitative and quantitative approaches so as to suffice the quality of data. Furthermore, observations of the facilities and academic documents analysis were conducted thus triangulating sources of data.

1.5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Students’ dismal performance in CRE in KCSE in Lelan Division was influenced by factors such as; teachers’ and students’ attitudes towards CRE, introduction of Social Education and Ethics, inadequacy of updated teaching and learning resources, academic and professional development of teachers and to a little extent on students’ performance in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education Examination. It was important to investigate these factors and the extent to which they influenced students’ performance in CRE in KCSE in Lelan division.

The null hypotheses were tested in order to establish whether there was a relationship between attributes

of the study. The presence of a relationship between different variables was aimed at showing that the variables were independent. The variables were classified in tables. The observed frequency was put into cells of the table referred to in this study as cell frequency and the total frequency in each row or column the marginal frequency.

1.6. HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were set and tested as follows:

1. Testing the null hypothesis (Ho1)

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the students' performance in KCPE examinations and their performance in CRE in KCSE.

Ha₁: There is a significant relationship between the students' performance in KCPE examinations and their performance in CRE in KCSE. Data on the students' performance in KCPE and KCSE were used to test the null hypothesis (Ho1) as provided.

TABLE: 1A: PERFORMANCE CONTINGENCY TABLE

	No. Passed	No. Failed	Total
K.C.P.E	16	12	28
K.C.S.E	25	13	28
Total	41	25	56

The results of the tests were as follows:

The expected frequency for numbers in the KCPE and KCSE row was as follows.

KCPE Observed	25	12	28
Expected	20.5	12.5	43
KCSE Observed	25	13	28
Expected	20.5	12.5	43

The computed Chi Square for the attributes in the hypothesis is 2.016 at the significance level of 0.05, while the degree of freedom is 1.

The Corresponding critical Chi Square value at 0.05 significance level and 1 degree of freedom is 3.841.

This showed that the obtained χ^2 is smaller than the critical χ^2 , so the Ho was not rejected.

TABLE 1B: PERFORMANCE CONTINGENCY TABLE

	Passed	Failed	Total
K.C.P.E	16	12	28
K.C.S.E	25	13	28
Total	41	25	56

$$\text{The expected frequency for KCPE} = \frac{(41 \times 28)}{56} + \frac{(25 \times 28)}{56}$$

$$= 20.5 + 12.5$$

To calculate the Chi Square we used the expected frequency alongside the observed using the formula.

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(16-20.5)^2}{20.5} + \frac{(12-12.5)^2}{12.5} + \frac{(25-20.5)^2}{20.5} + \frac{(13-12.5)^2}{12.5}$$

The degree of freedom was 1 and the level of significance is 0.05. So, the critical Chi Square value corresponding to this 1 degree of freedom at 0.05 significant levels was 3.841. This showed that the obtained Chi

Square value was smaller than the critical Chi Square value. In this regard, the null hypothesis was not rejected. It can thus be held that there was no significant relationship between the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) performance and the students' KCSE results in CRE.

These results were further subjected to statistical analysis to establish the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. Due to limited time, it was left for further research using a combination of Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Spearman's Brown Coefficient tests.

2. Testing the null hypothesis (Ho2)

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the adequacy of updated learning and teaching facilities and students' achievement in Christian Religious Education.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between the adequacy of updated learning and teaching facilities and students' achievement in Christian Religious Education.

TABLE 1 C: Ho2 CONTINGENCY TABLE

	YES	NO	TOTAL
Observed	60	140	200
Expected	100	100	200
Total	160	240	400

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

$$\frac{(60 - 100)^2}{100} + \frac{(140 - 100)^2}{100}$$

$$\frac{(40)^2}{100} + \frac{(40)^2}{100}$$

$$= 32$$

The df = 1

The obtained Chi Square value is 32

The critical Chi Square is 3.841

Since the obtained Chi Square value was greater than the critical Chi Square value, we rejected the null hypothesis and held that there was a relationship between the availability of updated learning and teaching facilities and students' performance.

3. TESTING THE NULL HYPOTHESIS (Ho3)

Ho3 : There is no significant relationship between the introduction of Social Education and Ethics in KCSE and students attitude towards Christian Religious Education and performance in CRE and KCSE.

Ha3: There is a significant relationship between the introduction of Social Education and Ethics in KCSE and students' attitude towards Christian Religious Education (CRE) and CRE performance in KCSE.

3a Teachers prefer teaching SEE to CRE

Since teachers' attitude influenced students' attitude, the response to the following statement was used to test the null hypothesis (Ho3).

TABLE 1 D: Ho3 a CONTINGENCY TABLE

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Observed	23	145	32	200
Expected	66.67	66.67	66.67	200
Total	89.67	211.67	98.67	400

Df=2

SL = 0.05

Critical Chi = 5.991

Obtained Chi Square value = 138.64

The null hypothesis was rejected. In this regard there was a relationship between the introduction of SEE and the teachers' attitude to Christian Religious Education (CRE).

3b Whether many students preferred SEE to CRE

TABLE 1 E: Ho3 b CONTINGENCY TABLE

	YES	NO	Undecided	Total
Observed	82	68	50	200
Expected	66.67	66.67	66.67	200
Total	148.67	134.67	116.67	400

Df = 2

SL = 0.05

Obtained Chi Square value = 7.715

Critical Chi Square value = 5.991

The obtained Chi Square value was greater than the Chi Square critical value, so the null hypothesis (Ho3) was rejected hence the alternative hypothesis was supported.

There is a relationship between the introduction of SEE and the teachers' attitude to Christian Religious Education (CRE) and performance in KCSE.

4. Testing the null hypothesis (Ho4)

Ho4 : There is no significant relationship between the teachers' attitude to CRE and students' performance in KCSE.

Ha4: There is a significant relationship between the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' attitude to Christian Religious Education (CRE) and the students' performance to CRE in KCSE.

Data based on the response to the statement given below was used to test the null hypothesis (Ho4). Teachers who were committed to instructing students on how to answer Christian Religious Education (CRE) examination questions made them perform well in Christian Religious Education (CRE) at KCSE.

TABLE 1 F: Ho4 CONTINGENCY TABLE

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Observed	159	7	34	200
Expected	66.67	66.67	66.67	200
Total	225.67	73.67	100.67	400

Df = 2

SL = 0.05

Obtained Chi Square value = 309.14

Critical Chi Square value = 5.991

Results of testing the hypothesis

From the results of testing the null hypothesis, the obtained Chi Square was greater than the critical Chi Square. In this regard, the null hypothesis was rejected in favour of the research hypothesis, which stated that there was a significant relationship between the Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' attitude and the students' attitude towards Christian Religious Education (CRE).

5. Testing the null hypothesis (Ho5)

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between the students' attitude to CRE and the CRE performance in KCSE.

Ha5: There is a significant relationship between the student's attitude to CRE and their performance at KCSE.

The above hypothesis (Ho5) was tested using data based on the response to the statement given here below:

Students performed poorly in CRE compared to SEE because CRE examination was difficult.

TABLE 1G: Ho5 CONTINGENCY TABLE

	Agree	Disagree	Undecided	Total
Observed	38	116	46	200
Expected	66.67	66.67	66.67	200
Total	104.67	182.67	112.67	400

Df = 2

SL = 0.05

Obtained Chi Square value = 55

Critical Chi Square value = 5.991

Result of testing the hypothesis

Since the obtained Chi Square value was greater than the critical Chi Square value, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis is accepted.

This means there was a significant relationship between the students' attitude towards CRE and their Christian Religious Education (CRE) performance at KCSE.

1.7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The society is facing unprecedented levels of decline in moral and spiritual growth among students which could be explained by unfavourable attitudes towards Christian Religious Education on the basis that it is merely an examinable subject. This made Christian Religious Education (CRE) optional in Forms three and four, besides the introduction of SEE as an examinable subject with Christian Religious Education in KCSE. This influenced students' and teachers' attitudes towards the position of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in the secondary school curriculum. Teachers' and students' attitude towards Christian Religious Education (CRE) and the introduction of SEE constituted the main factors that led to the decline of students performance in Christian Religious Education (CRE) This led to a decline in the moral and spiritual development of students. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. In-service training for Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers be planned in order to enhance their attitude towards the subject.
2. The Christian Religious Education curriculum should be made compulsory in basic education in order to ensure full moral and spiritual growth of the students.
3. All Form four class teachers should, if possible participate in marking the KCSE papers in their respective subjects to enhance their professional development.
4. Teachers' and students' favourable attitude towards Christian Religious Education (CRE) should be sustained by providing two Christian Religious Education (CRE) syllabuses. One examinable and the other is the pastoral programme.
5. Social Education and Ethics curriculum did not improve students' moral and spiritual life hence it should not be taught in place of Christian Religious Education (CRE).
6. Selection of students in secondary schools should ensure mixed ability of learners in different classes to enhance equitable distribution of role models in schools.

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