

TOWARDS THE ENHANCEMENT OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES THROUGH THE INSTRUMENTALITY OF DRAMA IN JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN F.C.T., ABUJA

BY

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Abstract

This study geared towards the enhancement of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) through the instrumentality of drama in junior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The traditional methods of teaching CRS often rely heavily on teacher-centered approaches, such as lectures, rote memorization, and passive note-taking. These methods prioritize the delivery of content over interactive learning, which makes it difficult for students to connect personally with religious principles and moral values. Thus, integrating drama into CRS instruction can improve students' comprehension, participation and moral development. Therefore, this study adopted a descriptive research design. One hundred and thirty (130) Junior Secondary School students were randomly sampled for the study. The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard response scores to answer the research questions. The findings revealed that the main challenges faced by CRS teachers in using drama methods in teaching and learning are their reluctance, lack of expertise, inexperience and time constraints and that good classroom atmosphere, physical environment, planning drama lessons and evaluation are the ways of implementing drama methods in teaching and learning of CRS in Junior Secondary Schools in the study area. The study recommended that, priority should be given to qualified teachers in the field to teach the Christian Religious Studies in the Junior Secondary schools and that government on its part should provide all instructional materials' equipment lacking in Junior Secondary Schools for the teaching of CRS in schools among other recommendations proffered.

Keyword: Christian Religious Studies, Instrumentality of Drama, Junior Secondary Schools, FCT Abuja.

Introduction

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is one of the subjects approved by the National Policy on Education (2013) to be taught and studied in the secondary schools in Nigeria. The aim is to encourage students to participate in those activities, which foster personal discipline, character training, tolerance, reconciliation and peaceful co-existence. The Christian Religious Studies in Secondary School curriculum is therefore designed to teach not only the content of the Holy Bible, but also the moral lessons desirable. These

concerns emphasize the need for standard strategies from the conventional method of teaching to an activity based one. The choice of teaching methods depends on the information or skills that are being taught and different teaching methods such as demonstration, drama, recitation, memorization, lecture method among others is a means used for instruction in the classroom, which can either affect the learners' achievement and interest positively or negatively (Uwameiye and Ojikutu, 2018). However, teaching methods recommended for teaching and learning of CRS include: stories,

illustrations, role play, drama, video and audio aids (Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2014). Among all mentioned, drama is believed to provide active participation and creativity (Ozdemir and Cakmak, 2018). Drama is the "re-production" of a life situation by one or more people in a theatrical process (Saglamoz, 2016). Drama improves one's skill and contributes to human development. In teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies, drama provides individuals with an opportunity to get encouraged, to have new experiences, to be at peace with oneself and with others, and to be tolerant towards others since every member of the group has the opportunity to participate in the process.

In Nigeria today, with the high rate of immorality and indiscipline ranging from cultism, conflicts, killing, kidnapping, stealing, prostitution, exam malpractice, abortion to mention but a few, it becomes vital to reinforce the teaching and learning of CRS. Perhaps, these immoral behaviours could be eradicated if CRS is taught with good teaching methods which will enhance students' achievement in the subject. Methods such as drama are often believed to encourage rote learning, memorization and a lack of deeper engagement with the material. This approach, which tends to yield less profound knowledge, is still prevalent in many secondary and tertiary institutions in Nigeria (Offorma, 2016). Similarly, Asogwa and Echemazu (2011) observed that Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is still predominantly taught using the traditional 'talk and chalk' method in schools. This method reduces students' interest and enrolment in CRS thereby making students' achievement very low and poor (Ayogu, 2018). Effective teaching of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) can contribute to reducing indiscipline among learners in Nigerian society when drama method is used in the teaching of CRS in the Junior Secondary Schools.

Statement of the Problem

The moral decadence among secondary school students in Nigeria overtime has been a major concern to educators, parents, and policymakers. The inadequate teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) values has contributed to a decline in moral standards, leading to an increase in social vices such as cultism, conflicts, theft, prostitution, exam malpractice, violence, abortion and other immoral behaviours among youths in Nigeria. To address this, enhancing the use of the drama method in CRS can help overcome the communication challenges posed by the technological age. This is because the drama method in CRS fosters social interaction and engagement between participants and leaders. Therefore, this study aims *towards the enhancement of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) through the instrumentality of drama in junior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja*.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study was geared towards the enhancement of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) through the instrumentality of drama in *junior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja*. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. investigate the effectiveness of using drama in enhancing the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools.
- ii. assess the impact of the drama method on students engagement and understanding of Christian Religious Studies classrooms.
- iii. examine the academic outcomes of students taught Christian Religious Studies using the drama method in junior secondary schools.
- iv. identify the challenges faced by teachers in implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies

Research Questions

The study seeks to answer the following questions:

- i. to what extent does the use of drama enhance the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja?
- ii. how does the drama method impact students engagement and understanding of Christian Religious Studies classrooms?
- iii. what are the academic outcomes of students taught Christian Religious Studies through the drama method in junior secondary schools?
- iv. what challenges do teachers face when implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies classrooms in junior secondary schools?

Literature Review

The integration of drama into education has been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool that enhances student engagement and comprehension across various subjects including Christian Religious Studies (CRS). Drama is an experiential learning method that allows students to interact with the subject matter in a dynamic and immersive way. According to Heehner (2018) drama encourages active participation which not only strengthens cognitive understanding but also fosters emotional engagement with the content. Therefore, the review were discuss subsequently in alignment with the stated objectives of the study.

Effectiveness of Using Drama in Enhancing the Teaching and Learning of Christian Religious Studies

In the context of CRS, drama allows students to embody and internalize Christian values, making abstract religious concepts more relatable and accessible. For example, role-

playing biblical figures or re-enacting key scriptural events can deepen students' emotional connection to the teachings of the Bible as well as provide a tangible way to understand Christian ethics and moral teachings. As Richard (2010) opined that drama is effective because it bridges the gap between internal thought and external action, enabling students to empathize with religious narratives and perspectives. Drama promotes a deeper understanding of the spiritual, moral and social implications of Christian teachings. In a study by Saglamoz (2016) it was found that drama-based learning in religious education led to improved student engagement and retention as it encouraged students to reflect on their own values and beliefs. This active form of learning is essential in enhancing the teaching and learning of CRS.

Impact of the Drama Method on Student Engagement and Understanding in Christian Religious Studies

The drama method has a profound impact on student engagement and understanding in the classroom, particularly in CRS. Research indicates that drama not only captures students' attention but also fosters deeper intellectual and emotional connections with the subject matter. Duban and Duzgun (2014) assert that drama allows students to move beyond passive learning to become active participants, thus enhancing both cognitive and emotional understanding. In the teaching of CRS, drama encourages students to embody and explore moral dilemmas, ethical choices, and spiritual concepts. This form of participatory learning increases engagement by making religious lessons more interactive and relatable. As Furman (2017) notes, drama activities facilitate social interaction among students, allowing them to share different perspectives on biblical teachings and Christian values. This collaborative aspect of

drama also enhances students' understanding by providing opportunities for peer learning and dialogue. Drama allows for differentiated learning, where students with diverse learning styles can participate in ways that resonate with their individual strengths. For instance, visual and kinesthetic learners may benefit from the physical enactment of biblical stories, while auditory learners may engage more through dialogue and narration (Ozdemir & Cakmak, 2018). As such, the drama method caters to a wide range of learning preferences, making it an inclusive and effective teaching tool in CRS in Junior Secondary Schools under study.

Academic Outcomes of Students Taught Christian Religious Studies Using the Drama Method

The use of drama in education has been shown to positively impact academic outcomes by improving students' critical thinking, problem-solving, and retention of information. When students are actively involved in drama-based learning, they are more likely to retain and apply the knowledge gained. According to Leonard (2014), the active engagement required in drama-based lessons leads to a deeper understanding of the subject matter, as students are more likely to remember concepts that they have physically enacted or emotionally experienced.

In the context of CRS, drama can also help students better understand the historical, social, and cultural contexts of Christian teachings. By participating in role-play and dramatization of biblical events, students gain a more nuanced understanding of Christian history and doctrine, which can improve their overall academic performance in CRS. Also, the collaborative nature of drama encourages teamwork, communication and problem-solving, all of which are essential skills for academic success (Duban & Duzgun, 2014). Students who engage in drama-based CRS lessons demonstrate improved verbal expression, critical thinking, and the ability to

analyze religious texts in a more sophisticated manner (Furman, 2017). As a result, drama has been linked to enhanced academic outcomes in CRS and other subjects that require critical analysis and deep reflection.

Challenges Faced by Teachers in Implementing Drama as a Teaching Method in Christian Religious Studies

While the benefits of drama in education are well-documented, its implementation in CRS classrooms faces several challenges. One of the main obstacles is the lack of teacher training and expertise in drama-based teaching methods. According to Ozdemir and Cakmak (2018), many CRS teachers are unfamiliar with drama techniques and have not received adequate training to incorporate them into their teaching practices. As a result, teachers may be reluctant to use drama as a teaching tool, even when they recognize its potential benefits.

Another challenge is the lack of resources and support for drama-based activities. Drama requires space, materials, and time for planning and rehearsals, which may not always be available in underfunded schools. Teachers may also face resistance from students or parents who are unfamiliar with the pedagogical value of drama in religious education (Furman, 2017). Also, drama-based teaching can be time-consuming, and teachers may struggle to balance it with the academic curriculum and other teaching responsibilities. Despite these challenges, the potential benefits of drama in CRS education are significant, and addressing these barriers through teacher professional development and resource allocation could help overcome these obstacles. As Duban and Duzgun (2014) suggest, providing teachers with the necessary tools and support to incorporate drama into their teaching can lead to more effective and engaging CRS lessons.

Methodology

This study outlines the research design, population, sampling technique, data collection methods, and data analysis techniques employed in this study.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is particularly useful for collecting data from a representative sample of a population to assess perceptions, opinions, and behaviors. The descriptive survey design allows for a comprehensive examination towards the enhancement of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) through the instrumentality of drama in junior secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprises all Junior Secondary School students in public secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja. Specifically, the target population includes a total of 202,210 JSS students from various public secondary schools. This large number represents the broader demographic of interest for the study.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A simple random sampling technique was employed to select the participants for this study. This sampling method ensures that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected, which helps to minimize bias and increase the representativeness of the sample. From the total population, a sample of 130 JSS II and JSS III students was selected from five (5) approved public secondary schools in FCT. In each school, 26 students were randomly selected, resulting in a total of 130 respondents. The selection of students from multiple schools ensures a broader representation of the student population across the FCT.

Data Collection Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was used as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire was designed specifically for the study with items tailored to capture the

relevant information from the respondents. The questionnaire was based on a four-point Likert scale, allowing respondents to rate their agreement or disagreement with each statement. This type of scale provides a range of responses, facilitating a detailed analysis of the data.

Data Collection Procedure

A total of 130 copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the respondents. The questionnaires were personally delivered to each of the participants to ensure a high response rate and to provide an opportunity for clarification if needed. The researcher made every effort to ensure that the respondents understood the questions and felt comfortable providing honest answers.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the respondents was analyzed using descriptive statistical methods, specifically mean scores and standard deviation. The mean score was used to assess the central tendency of the responses, while the standard deviation was used to measure the variability of the responses. To interpret the results, a threshold of 3.00 was set: any item with a mean score of above 3.00 was considered to be accepted, while items with a mean score below 3.00 were deemed to be rejected. This criterion helped to simplify the interpretation of the data and ensured that only significant findings were considered in the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Research Question One: To what extent does the use of drama enhance the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Use Drama Enhance the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in JSS in FCT **N=130**

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	SD	D	X	SD	Remark
1	Dramatic activities help Christian Religious Studies students develop self-confidence.	65	34	18	13	3.16	1.81	Accepted
2	Drama motivates students to learn Christian Religious Studies in Junior Secondary School.	75	41	10	4	3.43	1.81	Accepted
3	Drama helps the Christian Religious Studiesteacher introduce the material in untraditional way to JSS students.	82	23	20	5	3.6	1.83	Accepted
4	Drama enhances cooperation, unity, understanding and, decision making skills among CRS students and JSS students.	68	51	6	5	3.4	1.78	Accepted
Grand Mean \bar{X}/SD						3.30	1.92	

Table 1 shows **the extent of** the use of drama enhance the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in junior secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja. All the four (4) items have mean mark above 3.00. It has the grand mean rating of 3.30 and standard deviation of 1.92. This indicates that all the items were accepted that, dramatic activities help students develop self-confidence,

motivate them to learn CRS, enable teachers to introduce material in an unconventional way and improve cooperation and decision-making skills among students.

Research Question Two: How does the drama method impact students engagement and understanding of Christian Religious Studies classrooms?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Impact of Drama Method on Students Engagement and Understanding of Christian Religious Studies **N-130**

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Drama has positive impact on how Christian Religious Studies students communicate.	83	41	4	2	3.57	1.86	Accepted
2	Participation in drama allows Christian Religious Studies teachers assess students educational outcomes.	64	39	16	11	3.02	1.82	Accepted
3	Drama help Christian Religious Studies students organize ideas, solve problems and work in a group.	62	53	8	7	3.30	1.76	Accepted
4	It also help students analyse Christian Religious Studies lesson been taught.	65	47	20	8	3.07	1.75	Accepted
Grand Mean \bar{X}/SD						3.46	1.79	

Table 2 shows the impact of drama method on students engagement and understanding of Christian Religious Studies classrooms in Junior Secondary schools. Grand mean (\bar{x}) = 3.46 and Standard Deviation of 1.79 shows that drama method has positive impact on JSS students organize ideas, solve problems and

participation in Christian Religious Studies lesson in the area.

Research Question Three: What are the academic outcomes of students taught Christian Religious Studies through the drama method in junior secondary schools?

Table3: Mean and Standard Deviation Responses on the Academic Outcomes of Students Taught Christian Religious Studies Students Through Drama Method in JSS N-130

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Christian Religious Studies Students educational outcome is high when taught with drama method.	91	31	4	4	3.60	1.86	Accepted
2	Drama hinders educational outcomes of JSS students learning Christian Religious Studies.	22	28	42	38	2.55	1.43	Rejected
3	Students who are taught with drama method perform better than does who do not.	61	59	6	4	3.36	1.82	Accepted
4	Drama build positive attitude of Christian Religious Studies Students towards learning.	77	48	3	2	3.53	1.84	Accepted
Grand Mean \bar{X}/SD						3.56	1.91	

Table 3 shows the educational outcomes of Christian Religious Studies students taught with drama method in Junior Secondary schools. Thus, item 1,3 and 4 positively indicate the grand mean score (\bar{X}) of 3.56 and standard deviation of 1.91 and item 4 was rejected negatively. This shows that students academic outcome is positive when taught

CRS through drama method.

Research Question Four: What challenges do teachers face when implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies classrooms in junior secondary schools?

Table 4: Mean and Standard Deviation of the Respondents on Challenges Teachers Faced When Implementing Drama as a Teaching Method in Christian Religious Studies Classrooms in Junior Secondary Schools.
N=130

S/N	Statement Items	SA	A	SD	D	\bar{X}	SD	Remark
1	Christian Religious Studies teacher reluctance to incorporate drama techniques in their teaching.	72	40	14	3.41	1.98	72	Accepted
2	Lack of teacher expertise on the use of drama in learning Christian Religious Studies.	64	39	16	3.02	1.82	64	Accepted
3	Inexperience of Christian Religious Studies teacher to conduct drama activities.	62	53	8	3.30	1.76	62	Accepted
4	Lack of time is a problem to Christian Religious Studies teacher preparation towards drama activities in classroom.	88	39	2	1	3.60	1.90	Accepted
Grand Mean \bar{X}/SD						3.34	1.88	

Table 4 shows the challenges teachers faced when implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies classrooms in junior secondary schools. All the items have mean mark above 3.00. It has the grand mean rating of 3.34 and standard deviation of 1.88. This indicates that teachers faced many challenges when implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies classrooms in Junior Secondary Schools.

Findings

The findings in Table 1 indicated that all the four (4) items in research question one have grand mean rating of 3.30 and standard deviation of 1.92 which positively shows dramatic activities help students develop self-confidence, motivate them to learn CRS, enable teachers to introduce material in an unconventional way and improve cooperation

and decision-making skills among students. The findings is in line with the study of Furman, (2017) that drama in Christian Religious Studies helps JSS students to socialize and increase their self-confidence. Table 2 shows that drama method has positive impact on JSS students organize ideas, solve problems and participation in Christian Religious Studies lesson in the area with grand mean rating of 3.46 and Standard Deviation of 1.79. This study concurred with the findings of Ajah & Asadu (2017) that drama as an educational method allows Christian Religious Studies students to reflect, discuss, make connections with real life, and look at the events from different angles. The finding in table 3 confirmed that students academic outcome is positive when taught CRS through drama method in the study area. The grand mean score of 3.56 and standard

deviation of 1.91 answered the research question three. No wonder, No wonder, Alembi, (2013) affirmed that drama is a mirror for us to examine ourselves, deepening our understanding of human motivation and behaviour. Therefore, drama method when properly used in Christian Religious Studies classroom would assist students gain a better academic outcomes in junior secondary schools in FCT Abuja and schools in Nigeria. Also, the finding in table 4 shows that teachers faced many challenges when implementing drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies classrooms in junior secondary schools. The grand mean rating of 3.34 and standard deviation of 1.88 answered the research question four. This study is in conjunction with the findings of Ozdemir and Cakmak, (2018) that many CRS teachers are unfamiliar with drama techniques and have not received adequate training to incorporate them into their teaching practices. As a result, teachers may be reluctant to use drama as a teaching tool, even when they recognize its potential benefits.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that the use of drama as a teaching method in Christian Religious Studies (CRS) has a positive impact on junior secondary school students. Drama activities help students develop self-confidence, enhance their motivation to learn, foster cooperation, and improve decision-making skills. It also encourages active participation, problem-solving and the ability to organize ideas during lessons, leading to improved academic outcomes. However, the study also reveals that teachers face significant challenges in implementing drama in CRS classrooms. Many teachers lack the necessary training and familiarity with drama techniques which limits their ability to fully utilize this method in their teaching. Therefore, the need for professional development programmes to equip teachers with the skills and confidence required to

incorporate drama into their teaching practices becomes crucial. With proper training and support, drama can become a powerful tool in enhancing both the learning experience and academic performance of students in CRS, making the method more widely adopted and effective in junior secondary schools.

Recommendations

In view of the above, the following recommendations are therefore put forward:

1. Untrained Christian Religious Studies teachers who are teaching the subject should be encouraged to go for training in CRS. This will guarantee the level of competency expected of teachers within the field.
2. Christian Religious Studies teachers should be encouraged to attend workshops, seminars to broaden their knowledge in the subject.
3. Drama should be promoted by school administrators not just as a teaching method for CRS but as a holistic tool that can enhance students' overall development. Teachers should be encouraged to use drama to build other essential life skills, such as teamwork, leadership, and empathy, which align with the core values of Christian education.
4. Schools should invest in resources that can support the use of drama in CRS teaching, such as drama books, props, and spaces conducive to role-play and performances. These resources can help teachers create engaging and effective drama-based lessons.
5. To make drama-based lessons even more impactful, schools should encourage students to take an active role in creating and performing drama activities. Allowing students to take ownership of their learning through drama can boost their engagement, confidence, and understanding of the CRS topics being covered.

6. Schools and educational authorities should regularly assess the effectiveness of drama in CRS teaching. This could be done through surveys, feedback from both students and teachers, and academic performance reviews. The information gathered will help in refining the methods and strategies used in teaching CRS through drama.
7. Government on its part should provide all instructional materials' equipment lacking in Junior Secondary Schools for the teaching of CRS in schools.
8. Policymakers should consider incorporating drama as a key pedagogical tool in the broader education policy. This could include funding for teacher training, school resources, and the development of educational programs that emphasize creative teaching methods like drama.

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