



Storytelling Method of Instruction and Students' Gender in Christian Religious Studies in Ekiti State Public Secondary Schools

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Abstract

It is observed that gender issues have become a major focus and concern in the academic achievement of students over the years. The main focus of the study is to examine the difference in the performance of male and female students in Christian Religious Studies. The research adopted a quasi-experimental research design. The sample of the study was 159 senior secondary school students of Christian Religious Studies in Ekiti State. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation was used for research question while inferential statistical test of t-test was used for hypotheses testing. The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the performance mean scores of male and female students in Christian Religious Studies taught using storytelling method and those taught with lecture method. Based on the findings, it was recommended that there should be equal treatment for both gender; preferential treatment or differentiation should not be allowed in the way female and male students are taught.

Keywords: Christian Religious Studies, Storytelling, Gender, Performance

Introduction

Religious education mounts campaigns for better citizenship through her curriculum offerings containing lessons topics which seek to make righteousness prevail, to make justice reign, to spread beauty, gentleness, wisdom and peace, to widen opportunity of increasing goodwill, to foster industry and thrift, education and culture, reverence and obedience, purity and love, honesty, sobriety, and devotion to common good (Ocheoha (2005) in Ikechukwu and Ugwuozor, 2014). However, these lofty aims may be a mirage if appropriate teaching methods that can enhance and promote teaching learning are not utilized. In selecting the appropriate teaching methods, therefore, certain factors (such as age, class and gender) that can influence learning are put into consideration. In this case, storytelling methods of instruction appears relevant not because of its wide usage in teaching learning process, but because of its suitability in meeting the needs of all

learners.

Storytelling has been described as a powerful pedagogical tool capable of motivating and gaining learner's attention for positive learning outcomes. Miller and Pennycuff (2008) note that storytelling is an effective pedagogical strategy that can be woven into instruction to increase students' competencies in all areas. The areas may include comprehension, retention, remembering, and application of knowledge to life situation. In this case, McDrury and Alterio (2003) in Alkaaf (2017) believe that storytelling in education is a thoughtful learning activity equating to experiences in life, and that storytelling is itself a learning theory because of the deep thought it provokes and the new information it brings to the fore. This is quite possible because storytelling engages all the three domains of learning (cognitive, affective, and psycho-motor) in teaching-learning process. Besides, through the art of storytelling, the teacher and the students build relationships that encourage connection, involvement, and a desire for success (Reeder, 2009). Hence, Oyinloye (2017) advises that teachers should note that storytelling engages our thinking, emotion and imagination simultaneously.

As a pedagogical tool, storytelling draws on a range of techniques to engage, involve and inspire the listener, uses everyday language and employs narrative forms that most students find interesting and, at times, even entertaining (Greenness, 2016). These techniques bring about relational interaction between the teller (teacher) and the listeners (learners), which help the learners to participate actively in the teaching-learning activities. As a result of this, the learners are able to internalize cognitive contents, construct their own knowledge, as well as remember and apply cognitive knowledge to life situations.

It is worthy of note that gender issues in the last decades have been a focus of discussion and research all over the world, and Nigeria in particular. Oriakhi and Igbudu (2015) assert that concerns about academic achievement with respect to males and females have generated a considerable interest in the field of educational testing over the years. They further hold that differences in academic achievement of the two genders are likely to contribute disparities in the allocation of cognitive roles in the world of work. The differences in academic performances of males and females have been explained in two ways: learning style and biological make-ups.

With regard to learning style, it has been established that males and females learn differently. Marcus (1999) and Pizzo (2000) assert that males tend to be more Kinaesthetic, tactual, and visual, and they need more mobility in a more informal environment than females. Males are more nonconforming and peer motivated than female. Males tend to learn less by listening. Females, more than males tend to be auditory, authority oriented, need significantly more quiet while learning, they are more self-and authorities-motivated, and are more conforming than males. Arises (1996), Lect-Pellegrini (2000), and Fox (1999), as cited in Tatarinceva (2017) suggest that males feel more comfortable in a lecturing role, which is a demonstration of expertise and status, but females feel more

comfortable in a listening role, which show a desire to collaborate, bond and to be liked by products of a world of connection, not status. Females prefer to share their expertise with others, rather than rivalling with them.

Based on the biological reasons for gender differences in males and female's academic performance, however, Tatarinceva (2017) explain that parental hormones contribute much to the development of human brain and sensitise certain parts of brain, namely, the hypothalamus, which helps to regulate the activity level. Male and female get different amounts of parental hormones, which may lead to differences in males' and females' brains. Parental hormones significantly shape cognitive abilities. Colom and Lynn (2004) declare that males have larger average brain sizes than females and therefore, would be expected to have higher average IQs.

Some investigations suggest that a portion of bundle of nerve fibres towards the back of the brain (the splenium) is larger and more rounded in females than males. The function of this part of the corpus callosum links together parts of the left and right hemispheres that control speech and spatial perception. The larger splenium may account for females' advantage on some measures of speech production and comprehension. The organization of males' brains may give the advantages on visual-spatial tasks (Allen et al. 2000 in Tatarinceva, 2017). Further investigations suggest that males do worse than females on tasks associated with more left hemisphere activities and better on tasks associated with greater left hemisphere activities, whereas solving spatial tasks and some logical tasks are associated with greater right hemisphere activities, as a result, males do perform better on spatial and logical tasks, but females with tasks that are mostly connected with the humanities and music (Tatarinceve, 2017).

Several studies have been carried out on gender and storytelling method of teaching and their findings reveal that this method facilitates learning, participation and academic achievements. Dania (2014) investigated the effect of gender on students' academic achievement in secondary school Social Studies. The result revealed that gender (male/female) had no significant effect on students' achievement in Social Studies and that there was significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on students' academic performance in Social Studies. Owolabi and Etuk-iren (2014) examined the effect of gender, age and mathematics anxiety on college students' achievement in algebra. The result revealed that the t-test comparison showed a statistical difference which is not significant between the mean scores of male and female students in Algebra. Adigun et al. (2015) investigated the effect of gender on students' academic performance in Computer Studies. The results of the study showed that even though the male students had slightly better performance compared to the female students, it was not significant.

From the reviewed literature, there have been divergent views on gender difference as a key factor affecting students' performance across school subjects. It is therefore necessary to find out if gender would have any effect on students' performance in CRS

using storytelling method of teaching in Ekiti State public secondary schools. To achieve this, aim a research question was raised while one hypothesis was generated for the study:

Research Question

1. Is there any difference in the performance of male and female students in CRS in experimental group and those taught with the conventional lecture method?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in CRS in experimental group and those taught with the conventional lecture method.

Methodology

A pre-test, post-test and control groups quasi-experimental design was employed in the study. Six secondary schools were purposely selected from 3 senatorial districts in Ekiti State. From the 6 schools, 3 schools were assigned to experimental group and the other 3 schools to control group. A total number of 159 Senior Secondary School two students of CRS which consisted of 81 females and 78 males participated in the study. One instrument, an achievement test, which measured learners' academic performance in CRS before and after treatment was used. The instrument had objective questions and essay aspect. Thorough scrutiny of the instruments and necessary corrections were carried out by experts in CRS methodology and test, measurements and evaluation. Using test-retest, the reliability of the instrument was ascertained 0.91 was obtained. Research questions were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation while inferential statistical test of t-test was used for hypotheses testing.

Results

Research Question: Is there any difference in the performance of male and female students in CRS in experimental group and those taught with conventional lecture method?

Table 1: Performance mean scores of male and female students in CRS when taught with storytelling and lecture methods

Treatment	Gender	N	Mean	S.D
Storytelling method	Male	45	51.36	12.73
	Female	36	45.81	9.81
Lecture method	Male	28	33.89	10.27
	Female	50	34.72	12.58

Table 1 shows that male students in storytelling group had higher mean scores than their female counterparts. In the lecture method group, female students had higher mean scores than their male counterparts. The observation from the analysis implies that male students are likely to excel more in CRS with the use of storytelling method, while female students are likely to excel more with the use of lecture method.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the performance of male and female students in CRS taught with storytelling method and those taught with lecture method.

The post test data generated through Achievement test in Christian Religious Studies (ATCRS) was subjected to Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to determine if there is no significant difference between the performance of male and female students in CRS using storytelling and lecture methods. Summary of the analysis is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of difference in the performance of male and female students in CRS taught with storytelling and lecture methods

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	8943.442	3	2981.147	21.903	.000
Intercept	259955.486	1	259955.486	1909.924	.000
Group (Treatment)	7709.486	1	7709.486	56.643	.000
Gender	210.997	1	210.997	1.550	.215
Group(Treatment) * Gender	384.697	1	384.697	2.826	.095
Error	21096.709	155	136.108		
Total	307751.000	159			
Corrected Total	30040.151	158			

Not Significant at $P > 0.05$

Table 2 shows ($F=2.826$, $p=0.095$) at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypothesis was not rejected, indicated that the interaction effect of treatment and gender was not statistically significant. Similarly, the main effect of gender was not statistically significant ($F=1.550$, $p=.215$). However, the main effect of treatment was statistically significant ($F=56.643$, $p<0.05$). Therefore, there was no significant difference in the performance mean scores of male and female students in CRS taught using storytelling method and those taught with lecture method.

Discussion

From the post-test result on students' performance in CRS using storytelling method and conventional lecture method, the findings statistically show that there is no significant difference between the post-test mean score of male and female students in

CRS. Also, there is no gender influence in the performance of students taught with storytelling and conventional lecture methods.

This implies that the performance of students taught using storytelling method and those taught using conventional lecture method is relatively the same and that both storytelling and lecture methods are gender friendly. This finding is in line with the findings of Ugwu, Ogwu and Igbokwe (2017) who reported that gender does not matter as far as achievement in CRS is concerned using drama method. However, the finding is contrary to the findings of Okoro and Ekpo (2016) who revealed that the male students revealed higher level of achievement compared to the female students in CRS. But in contrary to this, Ntamu, Owulu and Monity (2016) established that female students performed better than male students in Christian Religious Studies.

Conclusion

The findings in this study provide empirical evidence that students' performance in CRS in senior secondary schools had no significant difference with gender but depend on the method of teaching. Storytelling method of instruction is not gender biased, as gender does not determine students' performance in CRS. Both male and female students have equal chances to perform well. The implication is that under the same condition, if both gender have proper orientation, opportunities and taught with a strategy such as storytelling method effectively, there is possibility that both would likely produce the same result.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. All students should be given equal opportunity and the same level of motivation without recourse to their gender.
2. There should be equal treatment for both gender; preferential treatment or differentiation should not be allowed in the way female and male students are taught.

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