

Teaching Out-Of-Field, Qualifications and Students' Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria

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Abstract

In the modern age, the relevance of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in secondary schools extends beyond spiritual growth; it fosters moral development, ethical reasoning, and societal values in students. However, many students exhibit a negative attitude towards CRS, often perceiving it as outdated or irrelevant in a contemporary world. This shift underscores the urgent need to revitalise interest and engagement in CRS. This research aims to examine teaching out-of-field, qualifications and its influence on Senior Secondary School Two (SS2) students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Two hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 100 SS2 teachers and 343 SS2 students that constituted the sample. The instruments for data collection were Teaching Out-of-Field and Qualifications Questionnaire (TOFQQ) and Students' Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies Questionnaire (SATCRSQ). The reliability of the instrument was established using split-half method which yielded indices ranged from 0.73 and 0.87 respectively. Consequently, the instruments were found to be adequately reliable for use in the study. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the collected and prepared data for all the hypotheses; at 0.5 level of significance. The result revealed that teaching out-of-field and qualifications had significant influence on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies. It was recommended among others that educational institutions should prioritize hiring teachers with appropriate qualifications and expertise in Christian Religious Studies.

Keywords: Teaching out-of-field, Qualification, Christian Religious Studies, Students' attitude

Introduction

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) at the secondary school level is pivotal for fostering moral, spiritual, and social development among students. The subject equips learners with foundational values that are essential for individual growth and societal cohesion. CRS instills core values such as honesty, responsibility, justice, and care, which are critical for building character. The

curriculum provides a platform for discussing moral dilemmas and ethical decision-making, promoting good behaviour among students. It has been shown to help mold learners into individuals capable of positively influencing their communities (Chesaro, 2021). CRS equips students with a framework to address contemporary issues such as peer pressure, corruption, and social injustice. For instance, teaching methods like storytelling and discussions help students internalize these lessons effectively, fostering behavioural change and societal impact (Groenewegen, 2019). The subject complements other academic disciplines by focusing on values and attitudes, which are integral to holistic education. Research emphasizes emphasized that teacher commitment drives educators to invest more time and energy, fostering effective learning environments that enable students to achieve their goals. This commitment is crucial for student success, as it motivates teachers to enhance their teaching practices continually (Altun, 2017).

Students' attitudes toward CRS significantly influence their engagement, understanding, and overall performance in the subject. Students with a positive attitude toward CRS tend to perform better academically. A favorable perception encourages active participation in class discussions, completion of assignments, and better preparation for examinations. Adewale et al (2023) show that students who view CRS as relevant to their personal and societal development score higher in the subject compared to those who perceive it as unimportant. CRS aims to instill moral values such as honesty, compassion, and responsibility. Students with a receptive attitude are more likely to internalize these values. According to Obiora and Chukwu (2022), students who appreciate the moral teachings of CRS demonstrate improved behaviour both in school and in their communities, contributing to a reduction in disciplinary issues.

Teaching out-of-field is one of the variables that seem to have influence on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. Teaching out-of-field refers to a situation where educators are assigned to teach subjects or content areas that are outside their formal qualifications or specialized training (Hughes, 2021). This phenomenon has been increasingly observed in secondary schools globally, particularly in subjects such as Christian Religious Studies (CRS), where teachers may not have formal academic backgrounds or subject-specific training in theology or religious studies. The impact of teaching out-of-field on students'

attitudes toward CRS can be both direct and indirect, influencing their interest, motivation, and overall perception of the subject.

Several authors have explored how teaching out-of-field affects students' academic experiences, particularly in CRS. According to Johnson (2023), when teachers lack subject-specific expertise in CRS, students are more likely to perceive the subject as less relevant or engaging. This perception stems from the teachers' inability to effectively connect the content with the students' daily lives or spiritual development. Additionally, the lack of depth and understanding often associated with out-of-field teaching can lead to a decrease in students' interest in the subject, as they may sense the teacher's lack of confidence in delivering the content meaningfully (Owusu, 2022).

Furthermore, teaching out-of-field can negatively impact the teacher's pedagogical effectiveness. As noted by Adeyemi (2021), teachers who are not trained in CRS may struggle with the appropriate instructional strategies and classroom management techniques necessary to foster positive attitudes toward the subject. Students, in turn, might view CRS as a subject that is poorly taught, which can diminish their enthusiasm and intrinsic motivation to engage with the subject-matters. In contrast, when out-of-field teachers demonstrate a commitment to learning the subject-matters or utilise creative and effective teaching methods, students may still develop a positive attitude towards CRS. For example, Olayinka and Shittu (2022) highlighted how teachers who actively engage in professional development, even in subjects outside their area of specialization, can inspire students through their dedication and passion for teaching, despite lacking formal training in the concerned subject area.

The concept of teaching out-of-field also intersects with the broader issue of teacher preparation and professional development. According to Turner (2022), the continuous professional development of teachers in subjects like CRS is crucial in mitigating the negative effects of teaching out-of-field. Adequate training programmes can equip teachers with the necessary content knowledge and pedagogical strategies, fostering a more positive and engaging learning environment for students. Thus, while teaching out-of-field can influence students' attitudes

toward CRS in both positive and negative ways, the key factors determining these outcomes include the teacher's commitment to professional development, the relevance of the subject content, and the quality of instructional methods employed. Literature suggests that when teachers make efforts to bridge the gap between their knowledge and the subject-matter, students may still develop a positive attitude toward CRS, even in out-of-field teaching contexts.

Empirical studies have examined the impact of out-of-field teaching on students' attitudes toward Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. Out-of-field teaching occurs when educators teach subjects outside their area of expertise, potentially affecting student engagement and learning outcomes. For instance, a study by Aiyedogbon (2023) in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria, found that students exhibited negative attitudes toward studying CRS in higher institutions. Factors contributing to this included lack of interest, poor teaching methodologies, and parental influence on career choices.

Similarly, research by Kasomo (2012) in Machakos secondary schools, Kenya, explored the impact of teachers' and students' attitudes on the teaching of Christian Religious Education. The study revealed that both teachers and students held varying perceptions of CRE's utilitarian value, influencing its status in secondary schools. The findings suggested a need to clarify CRE objectives and integrate it into a comprehensive Religious Education programmes to improve its perception and uptake among students. These studies highlight that teaching methodologies and teacher expertise significantly influence students' attitudes toward CRS. Out-of-field teaching may contribute to negative perceptions, underscoring the importance of qualified educators in fostering positive student engagement with CRS.

Owusu and Mensah (2022) carried out a study titled “Out-of- Field Teaching: The Bane of Christian Religious Education in Senior High Schools”. This study assessed the problem of out-of-field teaching in the Berekum Municipality of Ghana. The convergent parallel design premised on the mixed method approach was employed to collect data from 20 teachers who hold different degrees instead of Bachelor of Education in Religious Education and are teaching Christian Religious Studies in Senior High Schools in the Berekum Municipality. Questionnaire and

observation protocols were used to gather data. The teachers were observed twice in their classrooms during delivery.

Data was analysed through the computation of frequencies and percentages and narrative reporting of the field notes. The findings revealed that out-of-field teaching have significant influence on Christian Religious Education outcomes. The relevance of this study to the present study lies in the fact that both studies focused on the influence of on out-of-field teaching on students' learning of Christian Religious Studies in schools. Differences exist in the location where both studies were carried out; whereas the reviewed study was carried out in Ghana, the present study was carried in Nigeria.

On the other hand, teacher qualification is another component that seems to have bearings with students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. The conceptual definition of teachers' qualifications encompasses the formal education, certifications, teaching experience, and professional competencies that educators possess. In the context of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in secondary schools, these qualifications significantly influence students' attitudes toward the subject. Various authors have explored this relationship, highlighting how teachers' academic backgrounds, personal competencies, and instructional methods impact student engagement and perception of CRE. Teachers' academic qualifications are pivotal in shaping students' attitudes toward CRE. A study by Muthoni et al. (2023) assessed gender differences in attitudes toward the five-stage lesson plan framework among CRE teachers in Meru County, Kenya. The findings indicated that teachers' academic qualifications were a significant determinant of their attitudes toward innovative teaching methods, which, in turn, affected student engagement with and perception of the subject.

Personal competence, including teachers' interpersonal skills, ethical conduct, and ability to motivate students, also plays a crucial role. Research by Simatupang (2021) in South Tangerang City demonstrated that the personal competence of CRE teachers positively influenced students' learning motivation. Teachers who exhibit strong personal competencies can foster a supportive learning environment, thereby enhancing students' attitudes toward CRE.

The instructional methods employed by teachers, influenced by their qualifications and training, are also critical. Innovative and student-centered teaching approaches have been shown to enhance student attitudes toward CRE. Muthoni et al. (2023) emphasized the importance of the five-stage lesson plan framework in promoting active learning and improving student perceptions of the subject. Thus, teacher qualifications - including academic credentials, personal competencies, and professional attitudes - significantly influences students' attitudes toward Christian Religious Education in secondary schools. Ensuring that CRE teachers possess the necessary qualifications and are committed to continuous professional development is essential for fostering positive student engagement and perception of the subject.

Empirical studies have examined how teacher qualification influences students' attitudes toward Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in secondary schools. Findings indicate that teachers' academic qualifications and teaching methodologies significantly impact students' engagement and perception of the subject. A study published in 2023 examined the relationship between teachers' qualifications and their attitudes toward teaching innovations in schools. The findings suggest that higher academic qualifications are associated with more positive attitudes toward implementing innovative teaching methods, which can, in turn, positively influence students' attitudes toward subjects like CRS (Saoke et al, 2023). Similarly, research conducted by Muriithi and Muriithi (2023) in Kenya found that teachers' qualifications are significant predictors of their attitudes toward teaching innovations, which in turn affect students' attitudes toward subjects like CRS. Teachers with higher academic qualifications and relevant training are more likely to adopt effective teaching practices, fostering a positive learning environment that enhances students' attitudes toward CRS.

Furthermore, Mbugua and Muthaa (2015) examined the determinants of secondary school learners' performance in Christian Religious Education in Kenya highlighted that teachers' attitudes toward CRE significantly influence students' attitudes and performance. Teachers with positive attitudes and higher qualifications tend to implement better teaching strategies, which positively affect students' engagement and achievement in the subject. Thus, these studies highlight the significant role of teacher qualifications and teaching methodologies in shaping students' attitudes toward

Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. Enhancing teachers' academic qualifications and encouraging the adoption of engaging teaching methods may foster more positive student attitudes toward CRS.

Musa et al (2020) carried out a study on the influence of teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies in Secondary Schools in Sokoto State. The study was limited to public senior secondary schools in Sokoto State. A total number of 369 teachers were selected through proportionate random sampling technique to participate in the study. Two research questions were raised and answered. One validated instrument titled Teacher Supply and Teacher Efficiency Questionnaire (TSTEQ) was used for data collection. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation was the major statistical tool employed for data analysis. Findings revealed that a positive relationship exists between teacher qualification, experiences and teacher efficiency. The relevance of this study to the present study lies in the fact that both studies focused on the influence of teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies. However, the differences exist in the location where both studies were carried out; whereas the reviewed study was carried out in Sokoto State, the present study was carried in Cross River State.

However, the researcher has observed the lukewarm attitude of students towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State and the country at-large. This is not unconnected with the dwindling level of performance in the Christian Religious Studies over time. The researcher has also observed that the performance of these students has continued to be below expectation year after year as their learning outcomes in Christian Religious Studies in public examinations, most especially those conducted by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), keeps dwindling. The worry expressed by WAEC Chief Examiners on the poor performance of students in Christian Religious Studies deserves some attention (Chief Examiner's reports of 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019 & 2020). WAEC Chief Examiners report revealed that the results of the Christian Religious Studies in West African Examination Council (WAEC) 2016- 2020 shows the percentage pass of 52.97%, 36.22%, 49.98%, 46.18% and 55.24% respectively. The improvement in some years is not much. One expects at least above average or excellence performance.

It is worrisome to note that some students' negative attitude towards the learning of the subject as observed by the researcher is characterized with low engagement in class activities, poor academic performance, high absenteeism rates, disruptive behaviour, negative peer perceptions, preference for other subjects, feedback and complaints and minimal effort in homework. This ugly situation may be attributed to the situation where teachers teach Christian Religious Studies outside their area of expertise and lack the basic qualifications to teach the subject. The Cross River State Government is said to have undertaken several initiatives such as restricting teachers to their areas of expertise, recruiting and employing qualified teachers, promoting a positive learning environment, regular supervision of schools among others to address the negative attitude of students toward Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. These efforts are rooted in ensuring quality education by aligning teaching with educators' areas of expertise and employing qualified teachers to handle the subject. Yet the attitude of students toward Christian Religious Studies has not improved. Thus, the aim of this study was to examine the influence out-of-field teaching and teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria.

This study addressed several gaps in the existing literature on the influence of out-of-field teaching and teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Nigeria. Despite the extensive research conducted by previous authors and scholars, such as Owusu and Mensah (2022), Simatupang (2021) and Musa et al (2020); critical gaps remain unaddressed that this study aimed to fill, particularly within the Calabar Municipality Local Government Area, Cross River State, Nigeria. These gaps provided the foundation and justification for the current study. Some of the potential gaps this study filled include limited contextual studies in Calabar Municipality, specific focus on Christian Religious Studies (CRS), sufficient analysis of out-of-field teaching impact, measurement of student' attitude towards CRS, cultural relevance and dynamic influence of qualifications and teaching practices.

Much of the existing research on out-of-field teaching and qualifications has been conducted in developed countries or other regions of Nigeria, with no particular focus on Calabar Municipality Local Government Area. This study has contributed to a deeper understanding of the complex

relationships between teaching out-of-field, teacher qualifications, and students' attitudes towards CRS in secondary schools in Calabar Municipality. It has also provided practical recommendations for stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and religious organisations, to enhance the teaching and learning of CRS. This study provides a deeper understanding of the prevalence and impact of out-of-field teaching in secondary schools, specifically within the context of Christian Religious Studies. It highlights how teachers' mismatched qualifications influence their instructional delivery and the overall quality of CRS education. By focusing on secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, the study contributes localised evidence to the broader discourse on teacher effectiveness and student attitudes. This context-specific analysis serves as a reference for stakeholders in similar educational settings. The research generated empirical data that can inform reforms in teacher recruitment, training, and professional development, ensuring that teachers are adequately equipped to handle their assigned subjects.

Some of the educational implications include that Teaching out-of-field, where teachers instruct subjects outside their area of expertise, may negatively impact the depth of understanding and enthusiasm a teacher brings to Christian Religious Studies. This can lead to shallow instruction and hinder the development of positive student attitudes. On the other hand, qualified teachers with subject expertise are more likely to use appropriate pedagogical approaches, fostering a more engaging learning environment that promotes a positive attitude toward the subject. Teachers with strong qualifications and expertise in Christian Religious Studies are more likely to relate the subject content to students' lives, values, and moral development. This relevance can enhance students' engagement and positive attitudes. Conversely, unqualified or out-of-field teachers may struggle to make the subject interesting and relatable, leading to disinterest and poor attitudes among students. The attitude of students toward Christian Religious Studies is often linked to their performance. Addressing the issues of teaching out-of-field and improving teacher qualifications can lead to improved student outcomes in assessments, reinforcing their positive attitudes and interest in the subject.

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of teaching out-of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies.
2. There is no significant influence of teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies.

Methodology

The study area is Calabar Municipality. Calabar Municipality is one of the eighteen Local Government Areas of Cross River State. It is situated in the south-south region of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It occupies a landmark area of about 142km² (Density) and an estimated population of 461,796 (NPC, 2016). Calabar Municipality lies between latitude 4°56' and 5°45' North of the equator and longitude 8°18' and 9°30' East of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bounded to the north by Akampka Local Government area, South by Calabar South Local Government Area, east by Akpabuyo Local Government Area and west by Odukpani Local Government Area. However, Calabar Municipality is made up of three indigenous ethnic communities namely Qua, Efut and Efik. It is also made up of ten (10) wards, fourteen (14) clans and one hundred and forty-seven (147) villages. There are sixteen (16) public secondary schools in the Local Government Area.

The participants of the study are Senior Secondary School two (SS2) teachers and their students in the public secondary schools in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. The design adopted for the study was descriptive survey research. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one hundred (100) SS2 teachers and three hundred and forty-three (343) SS2 students that constituted the sample. The researcher developed two instruments for the study from the knowledge of literature and was used to collect the required data. The instruments are Teaching Out-of-Field and Qualifications Questionnaire (TOFQQ) and Students' Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies Questionnaire (SATCRSQ). The first instrument, TOFQQ had two sections: A and B. Section A elicited information on sex and age of the respondents. Section B elicited information of the independent variables, (teaching out-of-field and qualifications); each of the scales has five items, with the response option of 4-point Likert- scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The second instrument SATCRSQ was

to measure students' attitude in learning CRS. SATCRSQ was designed to find out students' feelings, and values in CRS. It was constructed using a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD) coded 4, 3, 2, and 1; with twenty (25) items. The data collection instruments were scrutinized and validated by experts by Language Education and Measurement and Evaluation experts respectively from the Faculty of Education, University of Calabar. To determine the reliability of the instruments, split-half method was used. Fifty (50) copies of questionnaire were administered to fifty respondents who are not part of the study, nor in the selected schools. The instruments were administered once; after administration, the questionnaires were split into two and correlated using Pearson Product Moment correlation. A correlation coefficient of the half test was obtained and the Spearman Brown Prophecy formula was used to obtain the reliability of the full test. *After the administration, coefficient of internal consistency was obtained and the indices ranged from 0.73 and 0.87 respectively.* Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse the collected and prepared data for all the hypotheses; at 0.5 level of significance.

Null Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of teaching out-of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies.

To test this hypothesis, teaching out-of-field were classified into three groups based on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies (Low, Average and High). Based on the classification, their means and standard deviation were compared and analysed using One Way Analysis of Variance were used. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: One-Way Analysis of Variance on the Influence of Teaching Out-of-Field on Students' Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies

Teaching out-of-field	N	X	SD	Std Error	
High	111	64.6847	7.81023	.74131	
Average	172	59.3953	9.05897	.69074	
Low	60	59.0833	8.07442	1.04240	
Total	343	61.0525	8.84550	.47761	
Sources of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Between group	2169.392	2	1084.696	14.998	.000
Within group	24589.664	340	72.323		
Total	26759.055	342			
Teaching out-of-field	High	Average	Low		
High	64.6847 ^a	5.2893 ^b	5.6014		
Average	.000 ^c	59.3953	.3120		
Low	.000	.807	59.0833		

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$.31202

a= Group mean along the principal diagonal

b= Mean differences (MD) above the principal diagonal

c= p-values below the principal diagonal.

The result presented in Table 1 shows a significant influence of teaching out-of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($F=14.998$; $p=.000$) at .05 alpha level with 2 and 340 degrees of freedom (two-tailed test). With this result, the null hypothesis was retained while the alternative was rejected. The result also shows that high teaching out-of-field with the mean score of 64.6847 has highest influence on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies, followed by average teaching out-of-field with the mean score of 59.3953 and the least is low teaching out-of-field with the mean score of 59.0833. Based on the result of the analysis, a post hoc test-multiple comparison was used to examine the difference in students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies between the groups. The result is presented in Table 1.

The Post hoc test-multiple comparisons result presented in Table 1 show a significant difference between high and average teaching out-of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($MD=5.2893$; $p=.000$), a significant difference between high and low teaching out-

of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies(MD=5.6014;p=.000), and no significant difference between average and low teaching out-of-field on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies(MD=.3120;p=.807).

Null Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies.

To test this hypothesis, teaching out-of-field were classified into three groups based on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies (low, Average and high). Based on the classification, their means and standard deviation were compared and analyzed using One Way Analysis of Variance were used. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: One-Way Analysis of Variance on Influence of Teacher Qualification on Students' Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies

Attitude Towards Christian Religious Studies					
Qualification	N	X	SD	Std Error	
Ph,D	85	64.1529	8.72122	.94595	
ME,d/MSc	192	60.7031	8.47913	.61193	
BS.C/BE.D	66	58.0758	8.95512	1.10230	
Total	343	61.0525	8.84550	.47761	
Sources of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value
Between group	1425.344	2	712.672	9.565	.000
Within group	25333.711	340	74.511		
Total	26759.055	342			
Qualification	Ph.D	M.Ed		BS.c	
Ph.D	64.1529 ^a	3.44982 ^b		6.07718	
M.Ed	.002 ^c	60.7031		2.62737	
B.Sc	.000	.034		58.0758	

*Significant at .05 level, $P < .05$.31202

a= Group mean along the principal diagonal

b= Mean differences(MD) above the principal diagonal

c= p-values below the principal diagonal.

The result presented in Table 2 shows a significant influence of teacher qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($F=9.565$; $p=.000$) at .05 alpha level with 2 and 340 degrees of freedom (two-tailed test). With this result, the null hypothesis was retained while the alternative was rejected. The result also shows that high qualification (Ph.D) with the mean

score of 64.1529 has highest influence on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies, followed by average qualification (ME.d) with the mean score of 60.7031 and the least is low qualification (BS,c) with the mean score of 58.0758. Based on the result of the analysis, a post hoc test-multiple comparison was used to examine the difference in students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies between the groups. The result is presented in Table 2. The Post hoc test-multiple comparisons result presented in Table 2 show a significant difference between high and average qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($MD=3.44982^b$; $p=.002$), significant difference between high and low qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($MD=6.07718$; $p=.000$), and a significant difference between average and low qualification on students' attitude towards Christian Religious Studies ($MD=.2.62737$; $p=.034$).

Discussion of Findings

The discussion of findings is based on the variables examined in the study which are guided by the hypotheses.

The result revealed that there is a significant influence of teaching out-of-field on students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Studies. As shown in Table 1 indicates that when teachers who lack specialization or formal training in the subject teach it, students' perceptions, interest, and engagement with the subject are notably affected. This influence could be positive or negative, depending on factors such as the teacher's approach, confidence, and knowledge depth. If negative, it may lead to reduced student motivation, misconceptions, or disinterest in the subject. Conversely, if the influence is positive, it may enhance curiosity and critical thinking, though this is less common in out-of-field teaching scenarios. The implication of the result indicating a significant influence of teaching out-of-field on students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Studies can have several important implications for education policymakers, school administrators, teachers, and students. Since subject expertise influences effective instruction, students taught by out-of-field teachers may develop negative attitudes towards CRS due to ineffective teaching methods, lack of in-depth subject knowledge, or limited enthusiasm from the teacher. This could lead to a decline in students' interest and participation in CRS lessons. A negative attitude towards CRS may translate into poor academic performance. When students do

not see the subject as valuable or engaging, they may not put in the necessary effort to study or understand CRS concepts, leading to lower achievement levels.

The finding is in line with Johnson (2023) who found that when teachers lack subject-specific expertise in CRS, students are more likely to perceive the subject as less relevant or engaging. The finding is also agreement with Owusu (2022) who found that lack of depth and understanding often associated with out-of-field teaching can lead to a decrease in students' interest in the subject, as they may sense the teacher's lack of confidence in delivering the content meaningfully. The finding also agreed with the finding of Adeyemi (2021) who found that teachers who are not trained in CRS may struggle with the appropriate instructional strategies and classroom management techniques necessary to foster positive attitudes toward the subject.

The result revealed that there is a significant influence of teacher qualifications on students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Studies. As shown in Table 2 indicates that the level of a teacher's education, training, and professional experience has a measurable and meaningful impact on how students perceive, engage with, and develop interest in the subject. Well-qualified teachers may use more effective teaching methods, provide deeper insights, and create a more engaging learning environment, leading to more positive attitudes among students. Conversely, less-qualified teachers may struggle to inspire interest or foster a deep understanding of the subject. The implication of the result indicating a significant influence of teacher qualifications on students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Studies (CRS) can have several important implications for educational stakeholders, including policymakers, curriculum developers, school administrators, and educators.

The significant influence of teachers' qualifications on students' attitudes suggests a need for continuous professional development and specialised training for CRS teachers. Higher qualifications often reflect better subject mastery, pedagogical skills, and the ability to engage students effectively. Schools should invest in workshops, refresher courses, and in-service training programmes to enhance teachers' competency in delivering CRS. The results emphasize the importance of hiring qualified teachers for CRS instruction. Educational institutions and policymakers should prioritize employing teachers with at least a degree in Religious Studies,

Theology, or Education with a specialization in CRS. Ensuring that teachers have adequate academic and professional credentials will likely lead to improved student engagement and positive attitudes toward the subject. The finding is in line with Muriithi and Muriithi (2023) who found that teachers' qualifications are significant predictors of their attitudes toward teaching innovations, which in turn affect students' attitudes toward subjects like CRS. Teachers with higher academic qualifications and relevant training are more likely to adopt effective teaching practices, fostering a positive learning environment that enhances students' attitudes toward CRS. The finding also agreed with Musa et al (2020) who found that a positive relationship exists among teacher qualification, experiences and teacher efficiency. The finding is in line with Saoke et al (2023) who found that higher academic qualifications are associated with more positive attitudes toward implementing innovative teaching methods, which can, in turn, positively influence students' attitudes toward subjects like CRS.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, teaching out-of-field and teacher qualification have a significant influence on students' attitudes towards Christian Religious Studies in secondary schools. Teachers who taught CRS without specialized training or relevant qualifications tended to negatively affect students' engagement and perceptions of the subject. Conversely, qualified and field-specific teachers fostered a more positive attitude among students, underscoring the importance of matching teacher expertise with subject requirements to enhance the quality of instruction and student attitudes toward CRS. These results highlight the critical role of teacher qualifications in shaping educational outcomes and recommend policy interventions to ensure subject-specialised teaching in secondary education.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in the study, it was recommended that:

1. educational institutions should prioritize hiring teachers with appropriate qualifications and expertise in Christian Religious Studies. This ensures that students receive instruction from individuals with in-depth knowledge and passion for the subject, fostering positive attitudes and engagement.

2. schools and educational authorities should organise regular training workshops and certification programmes to equip out-of-field teachers with the requisite knowledge and skills to effectively teach Christian Religious Studies. This will help bridge the gap between their existing expertise and the subject's requirements.

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