

SEXUALITY EDUCATION AS BASIS FOR PARENTAL PREFERENCE FOR CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN BENIN CITY, NIGERIA

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Abstract - The study assessed the parental preference for the quality and quantity of the Catholic Policy on Education (CPE) for the secondary education of their children and wards, focusing on its impact on moral and sexuality education as a basis of their preference. It particularly examined the role of sexuality education within the curriculum of Catholic Secondary School Education (CSSE). Hence, the study is about the empirical examination of the effects of the contents of educational policies, especially the secondary schools in the country, in relation to the attainment of Integral Human Development (IHD). It is centred on the consideration of the elements of relevance of CPE, regarding the child formation whose parents or guardians considered CSSE as a platform or avenue of such achievement. The purpose of the study is hinged on the relevance of the CSSE in terms of valued contents of its curricula to educate their children or wards. The researchers have considered the Archdiocese of Benin City, as a case study to analysis the parental preference and rejection of the contents of CSSE, especially as the content lays more emphasis on sexuality and religious education; as against public secondary schools and other private and religious schools. Chi-square analysis tool was used. The sample for the study was composed of Catholic parents selected from some selected parishes of the archdiocese. The sample population is 70, which is made-up of 35 men and 35 women (parishioners) that was designed to obtain gender equilibrium in the whole assessment. Following the two designed hypotheses to assess the research questions, the result appeared to support the reference of CSSE especially in the Archdiocese over the Public Secondary education based on the applicable relevance of sexuality education in CSSE for IHD. The study concludes with recommendation for the Church constancy and faithful in maintaining and sustaining the contents of the CPE in realising IHD.

Keywords: Catholic Policy on Education (CPE), Sexuality Education, Nigerian Policy on Education (NPE), Catholic Secondary School Education (CSSE), Integral Human Development (IHD)

Introduction

The National Policy on Education (NPE) as a pedagogical tool of development and specified education, is a tool utilised for the integration of the individual into the society. This recognition is hinged on the fact that the individual as a learner can achieve self-realization, develop national consciousness, promote unity, and then, he or she can strive for social, economic, political, scientific, cultural and technological progresses in developing sound

minds for the realization of Integral Human Development (IHD) (Isanbor, 2015b). It is on this concern for the development of sound minds that the Catholic Policy on Education (CPE) has been observed and adjudged to be in consonance with NPE (Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). CPE is with the emphasis on the development of wholeness of the human person as a subject of lived experience and as a true agent of development (Obanor & Omoera, 2017). With these expectations, it becomes the responsibility of every entity that has interest of development, never to take the contents, objectives, policies and principles as pinches of salt, wasteful deserts (Kanu & Ejikemeuwa, 2017). In most classification, the church is one of such entities, and historically, she has been evaluated as to have been investing heavily on education of the human persons, as her mission engagement for the salvation of souls. Through education, her evangelic mission is made easy and flexible.

Sexuality education which is the basis of the wholeness of the human person is the hallmark of CPE. It is not merely sex education as being taught in public and secular government schools in most societies, but, it is sexuality education which sees the understanding of the human person beyond the effectual influences of sex as a choice or as an action (Obanor & Omoera, 2007). For the studies of the curriculum's contents of sex education, it has been adjudged to be limitedly sectional and particular on the understanding, model employment and engagement in sex as a commodity or as an object of emotional gratification or as an action of reproduction associated with human nature and growth (Kanu & Ejikemeuwa, 2017). The study of sex education is mainly on the objectification of the individual, whether as a female or male individual (Gotan, 2010). On the other hand, sexuality education is the teaching and learning of the knowledge of human spirituality, morality, anatomy, physiology and general biological growth and development in reference to the respect and employment of natural law in the management and utilization of human relationships and affairs.

Sexuality education is one of the perspectives and philosophies that informed the formulation of CPE. It is an aspect in taking education as a meaningful and missionary tool for human and societal change and development (SSCE, 2006). This is on the consideration of the Catholic Church as an institution and organisation that is situated in the human community, as the Church is considered, a teacher and a mother (Isanbor & Osawaru, 2024). For the need for better human development, every human organization needs to be

studied alongside its purposes and aspirations (Kanu & Ejikemeuwa, 2017). In return, such organization has to study humanity to better its operations, and aiming on the placement of education for the realization of IHD (CCMS, 2022). The Catholic Church with CPE is seen as an “institution” due to her role in the cultural, religious and moral formation of the human conscience and for the constant formation and reformation of the society. On a second note, the church is seen as an “organisation”, especially on her hierarchical structure and administrative prowess. These two classifications substantiate her placements in the society for the realization of IHD (Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). With these characters, the Catholic educational system has been humane and integral enterprise, for it to be in harmony with Nigeria national goals, education has to be geared towards self-realisation, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, balanced citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress.

For these goals to be achieved, every individual, institution or organisation needs to be involved. The Church is concerned about the development of the society, because what happens to the society; indispensably happens to the Church (Gotip & Dungrit, 2023). With these responsibilities for nation building, the Church has right to own and control the means of imparting learning and teaching. This is the one of the super-eminently functions of the Church (Afarogun, 2014). The church adopted education as one of the modes of evangelisation by trying to develop the moral restiveness of the human person. This is on the ground that morality cannot be separated from religion, especially Christianity (CCMS, 2022). Morality is on the value of the human person, and no one develops adequately without the sense of morality. Morality superimposes itself upon and overshadows the meaningfulness of any cultural and social ethics that are based on particular human communal conventions (Onwudinjo & Isanbor, 2024).

Education houses the means to transmit the meanings and/or relevance of both ethics and morality. This is because, the school endeavours to answer the needs of a society that are characterised by depersonalisation of interests and values and for a mass production of mentality that guarantees social justice, equality and order, which do not so easily result from scientific and technological developments. The society demands that this function of the Church must

develop into authentically formational schools, which will help in reducing risks of having a world of relativistic and emotivist values (Kanu & Ejikemeuwa 2017). It must develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their consciences that are informed by the dictates of the natural law (Kasjak, Bahago & Gotip, 2023). This is simply another way of saying that the school is an institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is, and to create for themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be (Ohazuruike, 2023).

Hence, every organization or policy formulation has a directional purpose(s). The purpose of education as enshrined in CPE is directed towards dignifying the human personhood (CCMS, 2022). It thrusts on the moral and spiritual developments within the academic and social engagements of the individual as a subject of lived experience and as a true agent of development (SSCE, 2006). It could be noted; according to Ebeigbe (1997), that various research efforts have been conducted that have identified certain elements that make a school distinctively Catholic. There are ten (10) specific areas of difference or uniqueness believed necessary for a school to have distinctively Catholic characters. These are: Catholic leadership, Religious Education/Message, Worship (liturgy and prayers), Faith Development, Witness/Service Community, Faith Community, Integral Personality Development, Philosophy of Actions, Tradition, and Parental Involvement/Partnership.

With these characters in education, the Church interest is on the fulfillment of missionary mandate of Christ in the life of the Church. Since the “Catholic” means “universal”, it follows that wherever any catholic institution is present in the various parts of the world, those marks which are the distinctive characteristics of its school should be observed. The policy directed that the statement of the school’s philosophy should contain the four-fold dimensions of education as specified in CPE, namely: *message, service, worship, and community* (SSCE, 2006). Then, the purposes of Christian education should be: the formation of the human person in view of his final end and the good of that society to which he or she belongs and in the duties of which, he or she will have a share as an adult, a mature subject of lived experience; the creation of harmonious learning environments for human physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual development; the building of more perfect sense of responsibility in achieving IHD through constant efforts in the pursuit of liberty, overcoming obstacles with unwavering

courage and perseverance and the development of the consciousness in cooperating with divine grace for the formation of the true and perfect Christian life and living.

In nutshell, it is generally recognised that secondary education is the intermediary level of education between primary and tertiary education. For NPE (2013), secondary education is that which children received after primary education and before the tertiary stage. It is the age range of children of 10-17 years, mainly adolescents. Hence, the deliberations and efforts of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in response to Government policies on education were influential in maintaining CPE (Ohazuruike, 2023). The educational goals and objectives of the Bishops were analysed, especially their published policies dealing with Catholic education in Nigeria as it shares in the educational mission of the universal Church (SSCE, 2006). From the philosophy and goals of education in Nigeria as expressed in NPE (2013), the objectives of every educational establishment are specified in keeping to standard, quality and quantity of educational interest and desires of the nation.

It is on these clauses of instruction that the Church specifies her interest in developing the morality of the child, with special emphasis on the secondary education. The senior secondary, which is a three-year programme, completes the secondary level of education (Ohazuruike, 2023). It prepares the students for the entry into tertiary institutions like the universities and the polytechnics, etc. (CBCN, 2005). For the purpose of implementation, with the first Catholic Education Summit in Nigeria, organised by the CBCN, held on the 7-9th February, 2006, in Abuja, with the theme: Catholic education in Nigeria within the 21st Century, one item of the communiqué reached is that the Catholic Church has remained faithful to the missionary mandate given by the Lord to the apostles to go and teach, "to make disciples among all nations" and has over the years worked hard to meet its obligation to promote the welfare of the whole life of the human person through the part played in the development and extension of education, by the exposition of the child to all areas of learning and moral instructions (SSCE, 2006)

Then some of the clauses of the statement of CBCN at the end of the summit, by this declaration: we, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria, (CBCN) through our Education Committee, met from the 7th to the 9th February 2006, at the National Centre for Women Development (NCWD), Abuja, with our

Catholic education experts and practitioners, priests, religious and laity, involved at various levels of education and in various parts of the country to comprehensively review the state of Catholic education in Nigeria in the light of the updated CPE in Nigeria (SSCE, 2006). At the end this very well attended Summit we issued the following statements (two of the clauses for the purpose of this paper): the Church gratefully declare that Catholic education is the integral and optimal formation, training and development of human person in the wisdom discipline inspired by Divine Christian Revelation drawing freely into the process ideals, values, subject-disciplines, skills, techniques and equipment that serve humanity and the common good; the Church urge all educators at all levels of our Catholic Education system pre-nursery, nursery, primary, secondary, and tertiary, including seminaries and novitiates, to closely implement the guidelines of the updated CPE especially the integration of religious and moral education into the knowledge and professional curriculum as healthy spirituality and healthy morality are essential to healthy nation building.

To this end, CPE is about the passing on of traditions for the common good and solidarity in the integral avenue of morals and faith (SSCE 2006). This tradition for the sustenance of the principle of common good forms the basis of her policy on education and to foster certain dispositions from one generation to another generation; entailing enculturation, acculturation and socialisation. Catholic education considers the thrust of her spirituality in formation of the wholeness of the human person, who in turn, manages the affairs of the church in the name of Christ, the Founder.

Statement of the Problem

The research is motivated by the need to analyze parental and guardian interests in choosing Catholic Secondary School Education (CSSE) for their children, particularly in relation to policy implementation on Moral and Religious Instruction, with an emphasis on sexuality or moral education (Ohazuruike, 2023). This investigation is essential given the current challenges in the courses of IHD. Key questions arise from this context: How authentic is Catholic education in the present day, and what relevance does it have compared to other competitive religious and secular educational institutions? Additionally, what is the relationship between morality and the quality or quantity of education provided? To what extent do parents and guardians prioritize moral instruction or sexuality education when selecting a secondary school for their children? Finally,

does CSSE meet the standards specified in its educational policy regarding moral instruction, and is the quality of its education consistent with these policy requirements? Addressing these questions will provide insights into the effectiveness and alignment of CSSE with its educational and moral objectives.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine how sexuality education influenced parental preferences for Catholic Secondary School Education (CSSE) of some selected Catholic secondary schools in Benin City for the education and development of children and wards.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. Does CSSE policy influence children's academic achievement and moral development?
2. Is there any difference between the level of discipline and indiscipline in Catholic and Public Secondary schools?

Research Hypotheses

1. CSSE policy does not influence children academic achievement and moral development.
2. There is no significant difference between the level of discipline and indiscipline in Catholic and public secondary schools.

Methods

This study is descriptive survey research, and the researchers strictly focused on the possibility for ascertaining the nature and the acceptance of CSSE Policy amongst some parents and guardians for the education of their children and wards in Catholic Archdiocese of Benin City. The sample of the study was survey comprised of some parents, who are mainly members of Catholic Men Organisation (CMO) and Catholic Women Organisation (CWO) of the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin City. It is a population sampling of 70 parents (35 men and 35 women). This balance of population is to limit the issues of gender discrimination in matters of parenting, consideration of morality of children and wards, and decision making process amongst parents in terms of education, because the research is faith and educationally based. A simple random sampling was done in the parishes within the 3 Major Local Government Areas (LGAs)

which make up Benin City as a metropolis, and there are: Oredo, Ikpoba-Okha, Egor. These LGAs are part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin City. A structured questionnaire is of 2 major items and of 2 sub-items. Each is in one cluster that was used for the study, in conformity with the research questions. The questionnaire has the total of 6 questions in relation with the 2 research hypotheses raised. Chi-square analysis tool is used, with a critical value of 0.05 and 6 as calculated degree of freedom is used for each analysis of research question and its corresponding research hypothesis. In the course of this study, face and content validity were used to carry out this research. It was subjected to the approval by the parish priests of the selected parishes in accordance with pastoral regulations and policy as it relates to religious education and administration. The questionnaires were administered to the targeted population by the researchers with the directions and assistance of the parish priests of the selected parishes in the Catholic Archdiocese of Benin City, to authenticate the validity of the research. It took the span of one month for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires across the selected parishes. The researchers with the directions and assistance of parish priests of the selected parishes visited the parishes to meet the target population and administered the questionnaire. The instruments used in collection of data for the purpose of this study were through primary and secondary data collection. The primary data of the distributed questionnaire with the format of the questions is designed with *Likert* Statistical Scale. Seventy copies of the questionnaire were distributed and they were all duly completed and returned. On the other hand, the secondary source of obtaining data for this research work consists of data collected through the work of previous researches and publications. Chi-square was used for the analyses to determine the differences of the items of the research hypotheses.

Results

The data collected as shown in Tables 1 and 2 revealed some issues concerning the relationships between the values of moral or sexuality education and the preference of the CSSE in Benin City

Table 1: Difference on the Influence of CSSE policy on the children’s academic achievement and moral development

Responses	F	%	DF	X ² Cal	X ² Tab	SL
Strongly Agree	35	50				

Agree	21	30				
Disagree	11	16	6	14.24	12.59	0.05
Strongly Disagree	02	04				
Total	70	100				

Research Questions 1: Does CSSE policy influence children’s academic achievement and moral development?

The result in table 1 shows that chi- square calculated of 14.24 is greater than the chi- square tabulated of 12.59 at 0.05 level of significant and 6 as degree of freedom. Since the x^2 calculated is greater than x^2 tabulated, and in line with the research question, therefore, this rejects the null hypothesis that CSSE policy does not influence children academic achievement and moral development. According to the consideration, the reference of CSSE for the development of children and wards is in relations with their academic achievement and moral development. The consideration of religious-based education, especially Catholic Faith-Based education, is long being associated with the development of human persons in moral and religious prowess and disposition, and in extension, for the development of the society.

Table 2: Difference between the level of discipline and indiscipline in Catholic and in public secondary schools

Responses	F	%	DF	X ² Cal	X ² Tab	SL
Strongly Agree	30	43				
Agree	30	43				
Disagree	08	11	6	16.18	12.59	0.05
Strongly Disagree	02	03				
Total	70	100				

Research Questions 2: Is there any difference between the level of discipline and indiscipline in Catholic and Public Secondary schools?

The result in table 2 shows that chi- square calculated of 16.18 is greater than the chi- square tabulated of 12.59 at 0.05 level of significant and 6 as degree of freedom. Since the x^2 calculated is less than x^2 tabulated. And in line with the research question, therefore, this accepts the null hypothesis that; is there any difference between the level of discipline and indiscipline in Catholic and public secondary schools? Then, there is a significant difference on the rating of the

level of discipline and indiscipline between the Catholic and Public secondary schools; and this is in favour of the catholic secondary education.

Discussion

The results are indicative of the reference, acceptability, consideration and favourable conception of CSSE, especially with the regards with the organizational policy of the institutions, and according to the common or naïve consideration of the goals and objectives of institutions (Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). From the projection of the analysis and on the religious interpretation of their consideration of these institutions for the education of their children and wards, is as result of religious conviction and moral indoctrination which the Church has made them to believe and which they are convinced of (Rotshak, 2023). Though, the questionnaire was structured to analysis the resultant effects of the inclusion of sexuality education and religious instruction, just with the examination of the morality of the students, teachers and that which is associated with the administration, evidently showed in the results of achieving IHD (CCMS, 2023). This is on the regard of the relevance of healthy morality towards the courses of healthy society (Ohazuruike, 2023).

Since the Church is situated and housed in a general society which is governed by political principles by the leaders of government, it behoves on them to develop the individuals as they plan to develop their societies correspondingly, especially along with and according to the dictates and values of morality and the working of natural law which invested rights and dignity on the individuals as subjects of lived experiences (Kasjak, Bahago & Gotip, 2023). It takes proper moral formation of the human person for the realization and valuation of IHD pedagogically (Rotshak, 2023). More factually, it should be noted that, across the parishes where this research was conducted, which were mostly located in the urban, and the parents are associated with the growths and demands of civilisation, globalization and socialization are centred on the values of education (Gotan, 2019). It showed the noticeable awareness of the importance of qualitative education associated with contemporary developmental demands (Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). With the Catholic mission, the parents repose some confidants on the disciplines which are visible in CSSE. They translate it in their demands for the nature and contents of such education of their children and wards, as it regards to the full development of the human person and the salvation of the human soul (CCMS, 2022).

In most cases, the consideration of intellectual development of the human society is on the educational development of the human person and the society as a whole (Gotip & Dungrit, 2023). The concept of intellectual development centres on the consideration of the mental and educational advancement, maturity or growth of the human person and the society at large (Kasjak, Bahago & Gotip, 2023). The intellectual development and social competence are in order to acquire the skill of adaptability independently and responsibly, scholastic and subsequently vocational qualifications with the purpose of taking up job and other social responsibilities (Gotan, 2010). This is about the development of the economic and material strength of the state. It is about the understanding of fullness of being by the development of human intellect, freedom and reasoning.

Fuller development is first required in the human aspect of integral educational formation, both formal and informal (Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). Through his or her daily contact with people, his or her sharing ills in their daily lives, the individual needs to develop and sharpen his or her human sensitivity so as to understand more clearly their needs, respond to their demands, and perceive their unvoiced questions on the values of reality including himself or herself and share the hopes and expectations, the joys and burdens which are part of his or her life. Thus, he or she will be able to meet and enter into dialogue with all people (Omolade, 2011). In particular, through coming to know and share, through making his or her own experience or suffering in its many different manifestations, from poverty to illness, from rejection to ignorance, loneliness and material or moral poverty, the individual learn to cultivate his or her own humanity and make it all the more genuine and clearly apparent by his or her increasingly ardent love for his or her fellow men and women (Gotan, 2019).

Somehow, the human person as a subject of lived experience has managed to be fruitful and multiply without benefit of formal instruction and endless organ recitals. Indeed, men and women throughout the centuries have managed this task so happily and so well that we now are told that there must be compulsory population control Hausiku, Piliyesi & Anyona, 2020). The fact that this war against propagation is brought to us by the very same people campaigning for compulsory sexuality education should be a signal even to the most addled brain that something is amiss (Gotip, & Dungrit, 2023). Philosophically, considering the placement of ethical and moral living for the realization of IHD, the culture of proper discipline of children and wards has

been judged as an indispensable factor for it, by the parents (Gotan 2019). Many of them regard the catholic education as a solution to many societal ills, by recognising that Catholic schools are viable and sustainable vehicles for delivering quality education in Nigeria government, and to pledge some obligation to promote the welfare of the whole human life through the part played in the development and extension of education.

Conclusion

From the foregoing, the study has focused on the parental preference of catholic education on the basis of the values of sexuality education in CSSE curriculum. This was in the courses to champion the values for the retention, consideration and improvement of the quality and quantity of the CSSE in consonant with elements of its policy that has emphatic differential factors of moral and religious instructions. This is aimed at meeting the contemporary challenges that are associated with the education of children and wards for the attainment of IHD. Furthermore, the study has been able to establish the relevance of the acceptance of the quality and quantity of CPE on secondary education by the parents who considered the element of character and intellectual formations of their children and wards on the moral and religious development. The study projected and recognised that the child should be holistically educated, as he or she is an important tool in the family and a dream comes true in a country's endeavours towards developmental process. A child is therefore a source of joy to the home, a helpful hand in successfully running the domestic affairs and a contributor in no small measure to the general growth and development of the family. The child of today is an adult of tomorrow. The future of the human families that form the human society lies in the quality and quantity of the child of today. Though, the analysis of the questionnaire also showed some level of rejection or denial of these elements of factors for the consideration of CSSE by some parents, but this is of great insignificance to the rate of acceptance of the policy.

Recommendations

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

1. Parents with good and balanced religious mindsets should strive to subscribe for education of the children and wards with CSSE in order to

possibly have the children and wards grow up with good moral and sexual consciousness and orientation

2. The faith-based educational institutions should be faithful in maintaining standards, and characters that make these schools distinct in the society, especially on the moral and religious formations.
3. The governments should learn from the faith-based institutions, especially the Catholic schools, the imports of Sexuality that are from sex education, and then integrate it into the public school curricula, in order to the wide range effects of IHD.
4. The individual as a learner should endeavour to understand the intricacies of sex and religious values and development in order to foster a healthy and academic development and advancement.

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