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Students Attitude and Views on CRE Teachers' Role Modeling Practices in Secondary Schools in Makueni County

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Abstract

This study attempted to identify attitudes and views on Christian Religious Education Teachers' Role in Modeling Practices in Secondary Schools in Makueni County, Kenya. The sample consisted 183 form three students enrolled in CRE and in geography /history in the selected schools. Descriptive data were collected through self-constructed questionnaires. Probability sampling was used, which ensured likelihood of each student in form three was selected for the sample which was obtained using a systematic sampling technique. Students enrolled for Christian religious education had a somewhat positive attitude towards the subject. Students enrolled in history and geography had a feeling that CRE was somehow important. Students were somewhat positive that CRE helps one to acquire knowledge for further studies after the four year course even though the respondents in CRE group were more positive which could indicate one of the reasons why students did not enroll in CRE. This study also suggested that teachers inform students the reasons for learning CRE as derived from the syllabus objectives. The study has further established that students value the course and that teachers should encourage them to register for it. Students believe that the subject helps them to develop a sense of self- worth and identity for themselves and others. The subject teaches students to appreciate and tolerate other people and their ways of life and encourages them to live in love, peace and harmony. Further investigations could look at students' perception if they took CRE as a compulsory subject.

Keywords: Student, Attitude, Christian Religious Education, Role Modeling, Secondary School.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish students' attitude and views towards Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers' role modeling practices in selected schools of Makueni District. CRE is one of the academic subjects in the secondary school curriculum prepared by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) of the Ministry of Education. The subject, as

part of the secondary school syllabus in Kenya, traces its origin in the coming of the European missionaries who taught the subject with an intention of converting students to Christianity (Sifuna & Otiende, 1994).

The missionary approach to the subject was confessional in nature which was aimed at converting school children to the Christian faith. The syllabus at that time required a careful textual study of the Bible from which students were required to relate what they studied to the contemporary life in society. At that time, different religious organizations had different syllabi to address specific teachings of a particular church organization.

Soon after independence, between 1963 and 1965, the new government appointed a curriculum review commission which was referred to as the Ominde commission. One of the reasons for the appointment of the commission, according to Sifuna and Otiende (1994), was to minimize on racial and religious segregation, which was reflected in schools through the curriculum and medium of instruction intended for Whites, Asians, and Africans. The Ominde commission began to survey the existing syllabus and in 1964, Christian Religious Education was approved as one of the academic subjects in the Kenyan education curriculum under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. In 1968, the subject was elevated by the Education Act as an examinable subject, which also emphasized the significance of teaching Christian religious education in all schools, under the guidance of various churches.

A joint church panel was set up in 1968 to work out a syllabus which could move away the teaching of CRE from the missionary aspect to the Kenyan national context to make it more relevant and to enable the students grow towards responsive Christian maturity in a wider and new perspective (Sifuna and Otiende, 1994). The second CRE panel was set up in 1980 to review the syllabus developed after independence. The panel reviewed the syllabi from primary level up to university and recommended that the aims of teaching CRE were Biblical and pointed towards the confessional aspects of CRE. This indicated that the syllabi for CRE needed some review to make them learner centered.

The recommendations of the syllabus review report were in progress when the Kenyan government decided to overhaul the entire education system and restructure it to meet the national needs of the country. The government adopted the 8-4-4 system, which emphasized practical and technical education and in regard to CRE it was reorganized to make it learner centered.

In Kenya, majority of the people are Christians, hence Christian religious education in schools is not considered just as an academic subject, but as a subject that helps students to create awareness in their relationship with God through their personal experience. According to the KIE CRE syllabus guide (2005), Christian religious education is one of the academic subjects in the secondary school curriculum that aims at creating awareness in the learners' relationship with God as revealed in their personal experience, the Biblical revelation and the Christian community, past and present. The subject helps the learners to integrate other subjects of the curriculum into

a more mature view of themselves, their relationship to the environment, their fellow human beings and God. The subject also provides a powerful motivation for rightful behavior and inculcates in the learner spiritual, moral and social values, and helps in character development.

Although Christian religious education is one of the examinable subjects in Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), the current practice at secondary schools is that the subject is offered on compulsory basis to the form one and two students and then becomes optional in form three, whereby students may choose to enroll for it or to drop it in favor of history or geography. Christian religious education, as a body of knowledge to be learned in Kenya, is aimed at leading learners to deeper commitment in their religious faiths. However, since it became optional under the syllabus adopted in 1985, the low enrolment of the subject in form three has continued to persist. This has made the public (teachers, parents and the clergy) to question the role of secondary schools and by extension, the CRE teachers in encouraging students to study CRE up to form four.

Attitude of Students towards CRE

Attitude is one of the most difficult developmental tasks in the learning process. For a teacher to help students develop the correct attitude he /she should seek to understand how students feel towards other subjects or teachers and should understand why they do what they do. Students should be taught alternative behaviors as they move to constructive worthwhile judgments and finally counsel them towards seeking a solution to the problem in order to fulfill the needs of a student to make him feel adequate and useful (Lutomia, 2009).

Teachers should encourage confidence and strengthen the sense of honor in their students by letting each student strive for a chance and be treated with confidence and respect. The teacher should work with the learners to arrive at a pleasant attitude towards learning of some subjects regardless of the difficulties they encounter.

In most cases, students' attitude towards a particular subject comes as a result of them seeking attention from the teacher and the classmates and in search of power and appreciation. In this case, students try to fight the teachers' popularity and authority by showing that they are more powerful than him by running away from his subject (Wolcott, 1999). Students' attitude depends on their personal image because when they are treated as important by the teacher, they tend to feel and behave in an acceptable manner.

However, Best (2008) indicates that a student is either personally adjusted or personally maladjusted. This depends on the personal needs and values in the life of an individual, the ideas, beliefs, and assumptions that an individual has either on ideas, generated in him or from his models. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to help students change their attitude towards the positive. The teacher needs to work with his own self and develop his inner self so that he can understand himself and the students who behave and react to situations in accordance with how the teacher relates to their ego.

The attitude of the students' toward Christian religious education greatly determines the performance of the individual as it leads to social and academic problems. This is brought about by students realizing that the teacher has failed to pass on relevant information to the class, which in turn encourages misconception of ideas. Largely, this has made most schools fail to meet the expectations of most students by not passing a warm, caring and appropriate learning experience to the students. This in turn makes students to pursue their own goals (Lutomia, 2009).

In the height of helping students achieve their best, teachers need to challenge the students by telling them that attitude is closely related to learning and the two depend on them because they are the prime determiners of the climate in the classroom though the teacher plays a great role in giving positive encouragement to the learners.

In order to change the students' attitude, the teacher should consider the following behaviors in teaching: First, the teacher should strive to clarify and simplify the subject matter in an intelligible and audible manner by taking into account the oral presentation in class and other related gestures and mannerisms (Were, 2003). The second is the ability to employ a variety of teaching methods and various strategies used in the delivering of the subject matter and use of the art of questioning that stimulates the learners.

Student engagement in the leaning process is very important whereby the teacher has to get students to work, think and investigate into the subject content by engaging the students both mentally and emotionally. The teacher should consider the success rate of the students' and students have to understand and know that what they are learning and doing in school contributes much in raising their esteem.

Lutomia (2009) suggests that in any school, people need to change; either the teacher or the student needs to change in order to achieve the desired goals. However, the change should start from the teacher because the teacher is the prime determiner of the learning process.

Most of the researchers on the issue of attitude on learning have concluded that students' attitude is an integral part of learning. Malusu (1985) investigated problems affecting the implementation of the new Christian Religious Education syllabus in secondary schools in Nairobi. Findings indicated that teachers were scared of introducing the new syllabus as the students could have thought that the subject has been complicated. The study also revealed that students' attitude to Christian Religious Education was related to the factors which are both internal and external, whereby external factors include one's religious background and internal includes the student himself and also the teachers' influence in his or her teaching method. He recommended that schools should routinely have career forums to enlighten the students on the importance of all academic subjects.

Teachers as Role Models

A role model is a person whose behavior, example, or success is or can be emulated by others, especially by younger people. As observed by Calhoun (2010), the term "role model" is credited to sociologist Robert K. Merton, who coined the phrase during his career. Merton hypothesized that individuals compare themselves with reference groups of people who occupy the social role to which the individual aspires.

Teachers are viewed as instruments in the transmission of values because their pedagogical choices and their modeling behaviors are of necessity moral educators regardless of the subject matter they teach as they transmit and determine the learners' values through their considerations on issues arising in class. Teachers transform students under their instruction through their actions and mode of behavioral life into the most useful one.

Michael and Sally (2008) state that students learn by copying the behavior of the person they like most or who give them support in life and they feel fully identified with and seek to have his way as theirs, too. Therefore, students respond to the situation according to the meaning they themselves attach to it and the results of the situation as observed in their own experience or in the experience of their friends.

On a larger perspective, the issue of role modeling may not be merely one man's business because young people need models to compare with, since most values are learned not by direct instruction but through contact with people who provide inspiration with the example of their lives.

In this case, the desired behaviors should be clearly defined and made plain to both the teachers and the students. Teachers should not just take for granted that students will express even the simplest values if they, the teachers, do not model because if the teacher expects courtesy from his/her students, he himself should be courteous to them (Printchard, 1996). In role modeling and in the teaching of Christian religious education, the teachers should talk to their students in the simplest possible language and in a manner that is well understood by all, expressing the same thought and meaning to both teachers and students should mind their behaviors and be able to instil trust in the lives of the students. The students need to see the teacher live his words as this will enable them to trust him (Moss, 2005; Otiende, 1982).

Therefore, teacher's failure to let his students trust him, and him to trust his students is an important factor in instilling delinquency claims that although this tendency has its origin in the home; it is also accelerated by the teacher in class.

Method

Research Design

The study was descriptive in nature which tried to establish students' attitude and views towards CRE teachers' role modeling practices in selected schools of Makueni District. Descriptive data were collected through self constructed questionnaires. Probability sampling was used, which ensured likelihood of each student in form three was selected for the sample which was obtained

using a systematic sampling technique. The sample was drawn from the records of enrolment in the choice of subject using odd numbers. The sample consisted 183 form three students (48 enrolled in CRE and 135 enrolled in geography /history) in the selected schools.

Questionnaires were used in this study. Reliability refers to the extent to which an item triggers the same response every time it is administered (Creswell, 2008). In order to ensure that the questionnaires constructed were reliable enough the researchers conducted a pilot study in two schools in Kajiado District namely: Mbagathi view secondary school and Magnet secondary school. A total of fifty two (52) respondents participated. The Cronbach's Alpha was used to establish the internal consistency of the items which was done using Statistical Package for Social Science and a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.855 was found for the students' questionnaire.

Table 1: *Reliability Results for the Students Questionnaire*

Subscales of questionnaires	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitude	9	.700
Teachers as role models	10	.826
Total no of items	19	.855

Data Gathering Procedures

Upon the establishment of the validity and reliability of the research instrument through the experts' judgment, the researchers obtained research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, to collect data. An introduction letter was given by the Makueni District Officer to introduce the researchers and facilitate collection of data in the selected secondary schools. Data for the study were collected between June and July 2010. The researchers sought permission from the school principals and explained the purpose of the visit and requested to meet the respondents.

The administration of the questionnaires was done by the researchers. This ensured maximum return rate of the questionnaires. The CRE teachers helped the researchers locate the form three class and introduced the researchers to the students. From each selected school, 10-12 students responded. The researchers obtained records of enrolment in the CRE, history and geography which were used for sampling. The respondents were assured strict confidence that the information given was for the purpose of the research.

Results and Discussion

This study intended to realize students' attitude and views towards CRE on CRE teachers' role modeling practices in selected secondary Schools of Makueni District. In answering this concern, the total mean scores for students' attitude towards CRE and the total mean scores for students views about the role modeling practices of their CRE teachers were calculated. The interpretation of the mean scores followed the scale below.

<u>Mean score</u>	<u>Interpretation/evaluation</u>
3.50-4.00	Agree/positive
2.50-3.49	Tend to agree/ somewhat positive
1.50-2.49	Tend to disagree/somewhat negative
1.00-1.49	Disagree/negative

Students' Attitude towards Christian Religious Education

Table 2 indicates that students enrolled for Christian religious education had a mean score of ($\mu=3.0463$) on attitude which means that they had a somewhat positive attitude towards the subject.

Table 2: Comparison of Means on Students' Attitude towards CRE by Choice of Subject

Subject Choice	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	SE.Mean
Attitude His /Geo	135	2.7045	.47026	.04047
CRE	48	3.0463	.47075	.06795

The students in the Geography/History group had mean score ($\mu=2.7045$) on attitude towards CRE which indicates that they were somewhat positive in their attitude towards Christian religious education even if they were not enrolled. This revealed that even students enrolled in history and geography had a feeling that CRE is somehow important.

Item number 1 which states: "*I like learning CRE*" had a mean of ($\mu=2.3111$) for the history/geography group which implied that the respondents were somewhat negative in their attitude towards CRE and that is why they did not enroll. The CRE group had a mean ($\mu=3.4853$) on the same item, which meant that their attitude towards CRE was positive and that is why they enrolled for the subject. The statement whether CRE "helps students acquire knowledge for further studies" had a mean score ($\mu=2.5929$) for the geography / history group and a mean score of ($\mu= 3.2083$) for the CRE group which implied both groups were somewhat positive that CRE helps one to acquire knowledge for further studies after the four year course even though the respondents in CRE group was more positive and this could be one of the reasons why students did not enroll in CRE.

Table 3 shows the description of the items students' attitude towards CRE. Item number three stating that *CRE is for those who wanted to become pastors after school* had a higher mean score $\mu= 1.6519$ for the geography/history group while the CRE group had a mean $\mu= 1.5625$. This indicated that the two groups tended to disagree that CRE is for those who would like to become pastors after school. This implied that teachers inform students the reasons for learning CRE as derived from the syllabus objectives. This finding was contrary to the common belief that CRE is for pastors, apparently, students believe that one can take CRE as a subject whether he /she wants to become a pastor or not.

Item five stating CRE *teaches values* was rated high by the two groups as geography/history students had a mean ($\mu=3.6074$) while CRE students had a mean $\mu=3.7917$). This implied that the students' attitude was positive on the statement that CRE teaches values. This finding conforms to the course objectives which states that it is through the learning of CRE that students are taught values like love, honesty, reliability, humility, patience among others which help them in their day today life. CRE teachers should always remind students that CRE is a unique subject in the school curriculum because it has a contribution to make in their lives.

Table 3: Descriptive of the Students' Attitude towards CRE as Grouped by the Choice of Subject

Attitude	Subject	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. I like learning CRE	his/geo	2.3111	1.14909
	CRE	3.4583	.94437
2. CRE helps acquire knowledge for further studies	his/geo	2.5926	1.16732
	CRE	3.2083	.96664
3. CRE is for those who want to become pastors	his/geo	1.6519	1.04609
	CRE	1.5625	1.00861
4. CRE is easy to handle	his/geo	2.5333	1.11167
	CRE	3.1875	.89100
5. CRE teaches values	his/geo	3.6074	.86370
	CRE	3.7917	.54415
6. CRE helps me relate well with others	his/geo	3.4741	.99873
	CRE	3.6458	.72902
7. CRE change ones beliefs and practices	his/geo	2.5630	1.25548
	CRE	2.5375	1.33538
8. When you learn CRE you must live by the Chr .principles	his/geo	2.2889	1.22088
	CRE	2.6042	1.30040
ATTITUDE	his/geo	2.7045	.47026
	CRE	3.0463	.47075

Item six stating that *CRE helps students relate well with others* had a mean $\mu=3.4741$ meaning that they were in agreement with this statement which is true because when students study CRE they learn Christian values that enhance the creation of a just society, which requires them to practice the Christian moral values as they relate with others in society. The study of the subject helps students to develop a sense of self- worth and identity for themselves and others. The

subject teaches students to appreciate and tolerate other people and their ways of life and encourages students to live in love, peace and harmony (Rodger, 1982).

Item number seven stating: “CRE changes one’s beliefs and practices” had a mean score of ($\mu=2.5630$) for Geo/Hist group while the CRE group had a mean score ($\mu=2.5773$). This finding implied that the two groups were somewhat in agreement that CRE changes positively a student’s belief and practices because it ultimately contributes positively to the transformation of the student and the society. Item 8 stating: “when you learn CRE you must live by Christian principle” was rated somewhat negative by the geography/history students with a mean score of ($\mu=2.2889$). This implied that students disagreed with the statement that “when you learn CRE you must live by the Christian principles”. However, the CRE group was somewhat positive with a mean score of ($\mu=2.6042$) which implied that they tended to agree that studying CRE requires them to live by the Christian principles. The overall attitude towards CRE for the two groups of students was somewhat positive even though the CRE group was more positive.

Students’ Views on CRE Teachers’ Role Modeling Practices

Table 4: Comparison of means on students views on CRE teachers’ role modeling practices

	Subject	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Modeling	Hist/Geo	135	2.7044	.53166
	CRE	48	3.0104	.59331

Table 4 indicates that students enrolled for Christian religious education had a mean score of $\mu=3.0104$ on views about role modeling practices of the teachers of CRE in their schools while the geography / history group had a mean score of $\mu 2.7044$. This implies that students in both groups were somewhat positive about their CRE teachers’ role modeling practices.

Table 5 shows the students responses on the items of CRE teachers modeling practices. The item on whether “the teachers demonstrate the desired behavior” had a mean score of ($\mu=2.4444$) for the geography/history respondents. This meant that the history/geography group tended to disagree that CRE teachers demonstrate desired behavior. The CRE group had a mean score $\mu=2.5833$ on the teachers modeling practices which implied that they were somewhat positive in their views about the teachers’ role modeling practices and viewed them as role models.

Provision of career guidance in schools was ranked at tend to agree scale by the two groups with the geography / history students having a mean of ($\mu=2.6889$) while the CRE group had a mean ($\mu=2.8333$). This finding implied that career guidance is given to students at the end of form two as the plan to select subjects in form three. The item on “CRE teachers love their students and care about each of them” had a mean score of $\mu =1.9185$ for the geography/history group which was interpreted to mean the teachers did not show love and concern to their students. This finding serves as a reminder to teachers to be mindful of all the students in the classroom and strive to understand their needs which can be done through the selection of teaching methods that are all inclusive and sensitive to their needs (Balyage, 1992).

Table 5: Description of the Students' Views on CRE Teachers' Role Modeling Practices

Modeling	SC	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Demonstrate desired behavior	his/geo	2.2444	1.07528
	CRE	2.5833	1.123484
2. Provide Career guidance	his/geo	2.6889	1.99992
	CRE	2.8333	1.11724
3. Provide good Christian Models for students	his/geo	2.9482	1.2846
	CRE	3.3333	.99645
4. Love their student and care about each of them in class	his/geo	1.9185	1.17478
	CRE	2.4167	1.1068
5. Behave the way they wish their students to behave	his/geo	2.4889	.093707
	CRE	2.7292	1.25195
6. Show the connectedness of all subjects	his/geo	3.0000	1.18992
	CRE	3.3958	1.19822
7. Simplify the content to enhance understanding	his/geo	3.3259	1.11302
	CRE	3.5833	.93943
8. Encourage the students to apply what they learn in life	his/geo	2.8444	1.06385
	CRE	3.0000	.87113
9. Give us homework at the end of each topic	his/geo	2.8444	1.20859
	CRE	3.0000	1.22039
10. Involve students in teaching	his/geo	2.8963	1.17989
	CRE	3.0833	
Modeling	his/geo	2.7044	.53166
	CRE	3.0104	.59331

According to Lutomia (2007), teachers should show concern to students and strive to help them achieve their highest potentials. It is the responsibility of the teachers to look at each learner differently and treat them with honor and respect. Teachers should carry out their responsibilities in their respective workplace with diligence, integrity and loyalty and uphold the virtue of humility and teach students without reservation. Item number five 5 stating that “*CRE teachers behave the way they wish their students to behave*” had a mean score ($\mu=2.4899$) for the geography/history group and a mean (2.7292) for the CRE group. This finding implied that students felt that CRE teachers did not practice what they teach. There is need for CRE teachers to imitate Christ and live according to the values they teach (White, 1952).

Item six on “CRE shows the connectedness of all subjects” was ranked in tend to agree scale by both groups whereby CRE helps students understand other subjects in the light of what God can enable them to achieve. The table indicates that learners tended to agree that teachers simplify the content to enhance understanding with a mean score of $\mu=3.3259$ for the geography /history group and 3.5833 for the CRE group. The ninth item on teachers give homework at the end of each topic was rated in tend to agree scale with a mean $\mu=2.8444$ for the history /geography group and $\mu=3.000$ for the CRE group. This implied that teachers give learners activities to do after the class session. When students are given activities to do after class, they understand the topic better. It is therefore important that CRE teachers give homework for each lesson covered. The item on teachers involve students in teaching had a mean score $\mu=2.8963$ for the history /geography group and 3.0833 for the CRE group which was rated somewhat positive. This finding implies that teachers use teacher centered methods that are not interactive and do not allow student express their views. According to Gichaga (2003), CRE teachers should use learner centered methods which create an opportunity for the learners to share their experiences in class.

Recommendation and Conclusions

Students enrolled for Christian religious education had a somewhat positive attitude towards the subject. Students enrolled in history and geography had a feeling that CRE is somehow important. Students were somewhat positive that CRE helps one to acquire knowledge for further studies after the four year course even though the respondents in CRE group was more positive and this could be one of the reasons why students did not enroll in CRE. This study also suggested that teachers inform students the reasons for learning CRE as derived from the syllabus objectives. This finding was contrary to the common belief that CRE is for pastors, apparently, students believe that one can take CRE as a subject whether he /she wants to become a pastor or not.

The course objectives which states that it is through the learning of CRE that students are taught values like love, honesty, reliability, humility, patience among others which help them in their day today life. This is another point that this study has established that students value the course and that teachers should encourage them to register for it. The students believe that the subject helps them to develop a sense of self- worth and identity for themselves and others. The subject teaches students to appreciate and tolerate other people and their ways of life and encourages students to live in love, peace and harmony.

The study also established that CRE teachers did not practice what they taught. There is need for CRE teachers to imitate Christ and live according to the values they teach. On methods, teachers are encouraged to use different ways in teaching this subject instead of using lecture method.

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