

# **Effect of Covid-19 on the Implementation of the Christian Religious Studies Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Ogun State**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines the effect of Covid-19 on implementing the Christian Religious studies curriculum in secondary schools in Ogun State. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design, using the questionnaire to acquire necessary data for the research work. The population comprises all secondary schools Christian Religious teachers in Odeda Local Government Areas in Ogun State. A random sampling technique was used to select ten ( 10) secondary Schools in Odeda Local Government Area as a sample for the study. Ten teachers were selected from each school to make a total of one hundred (100) for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire. Three research questions were used for the study. The data collected were analyzed using frequency counts and simple percentages. Findings revealed that the cumulative data of "agreed" responses on the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced the member of the resident's area of the study, which was 396 (79.2%). In comparison, cumulative data for "disagreed" responses on the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced the member of the resident's area of the study was 104 (20.8%). The study revealed that the cumulative data of "agreed" responses on the measures taken by religious leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 441 (88.2%), while cumulative data for "disagreed" responses on the measures taken by the religious leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 59 (11.8%). The study recommended that Religious education teachers be allowed to open to new methods of teaching CRS to combat any ugly occurrences like the COVID-19 pandemic so that the school calendar will not be obstructed under the new normal in the educational system. The use of new digital tools should also be introduced for the use of the teachers in order to fit into any condition of the educational calendar if the needs arise.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Implementation, Curriculum, Combat, New normal

## **Introduction**

This study is therefore carried out to explore the rate at which covid-19 pandemic has affected Nigeria, the World at large. The educational system across the country was also affected to the extent that most schools' calendars were obstructed. This affected the teaching and learning processes of most subjects in secondary schools in particular. A few months ago, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on January 30 2020, a Public Health Emergency of

International Concern (PHEIC). In 2019, there was anxiety about the impact of a US-China trade war, the US presidential elections and Brexit on the World Economy. Because of these, the IMF predicted moderated global growth of 3.4 per cent. However, COVID-19, the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a novel strain of Coronavirus from the SARS species – changed the outlook unexpectedly. Due to fear and uncertainty and rational assessment that firms' profits are likely to be lower due to COVID-19, global stock markets erased about US\$6 trillion in wealth in one week from the 24th to the 28th of February. The S&P 500 index lost over \$5 trillion in value in the same week in the US, while the S&P 500's largest 10 companies experienced a combined loss of over \$1.4 trillion (<https://www.reuters.com>), although some of these were recovered in the subsequent week. Some of the loss in value was due to rational assessment by investors that firms' profits would decline due to the impact of the Coronavirus.

Based on the phenomena, this virus can be transmitted from human to human and has spread widely in China. On March 12, 2020, WHO announced COVID-19 as a pandemic. As of March 29, 2020, there were 634,835 cases and 33,106 deaths worldwide. While in Indonesia, there have been 1,528 positive COVID-19 cases and 136 death cases. The clinical signs and symptoms reported are mostly fever, with some cases having difficulty breathing, and X-rays show extensive pneumonia infiltrates in both lungs. According to the results of initial epidemiological investigations, the majority of cases in Wuhan have a history of working, handling, or visitors who frequently visit the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market (World Health Organization, 2019). Until now, the cause of transmission is still not known with certainty. Clinical manifestations usually appear within 2 days to 14 days after exposure. Common signs and symptoms of Coronavirus infection include symptoms of acute respiratory disorders such as fever, coughing and shortness of breath. Severe cases can cause pneumonia, acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure, and death. Extraordinary events caused by Coronavirus are not the first time. In 2002 severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) was caused by SARS-Corona-virus (SARS-CoV), and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS) in 2012 was caused by MERS-Corona-virus (MERS-CoV) with a total accumulative case of around 10,000 (1000s) of around 1000s MERS cases and 8000 SARS cases). Mortality due to SARS is around 10%, while MERS is higher at around 40% (World Health Organization, 2020). Pandemics or global epidemics indicate that COVID-19 infection is so fast that almost no country or region is absent from the Coronavirus. The increase in the number of cases occurred in such a short time that needed immediate

treatment. Until now, there has been no specific drug to handle Coronavirus infection or COVID-19 cases.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic that causes COVID-19, which has lasted since November 2019, has become a fundamental variable shaping various dimensions of human existence in the modern world. It clearly and significantly impacts all spheres of individual and social life, including underdeveloped and developed countries worldwide. Researchers recognize that education is one of the areas of social life that has been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic (Czetwertyńska 2020; Jankowiak and Jaskulska 2020). Organizing and conducting distance learning has been a new challenge for teachers. Research conducted by Centrum Cyfrowe has shown that before the outbreak of the pandemic, 85.4% of the teachers surveyed had no previous experience with remote teaching (online classes), yet 48% had no significant difficulties with using digital tools (Centrum Cyfrowe, 2020). The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are also observed in the area of systematic religious education of children and youth at schools, conducted by various churches and religious associations in Poland county (Szpet & Staniś-Rzepka, 2020).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the largest outbreak has been recorded in the Upper Silesia region. Taking into account the conditions enumerated above, research on religious education in Poland during the COVID-19 pandemic was undertaken from the perspective of teachers of religion in the Silesian Voivodeship. Following the terminology adopted, religious education is understood as various didactic and educational activities aimed at supporting students in the holistic development and formation of religious attitudes (Chałupniak 2012; Zellma et al. 2021). Religious education is carried out mainly in schools and is confessional. All churches and religious associations have the right to organize it. The organization of religious education and schools are regulated both by the documents of churches and religious associations, as well as state normative acts (Bałoniak, 2020).

The confessional nature of religious education is expressed in subordinating it to individual churches or religious associations in terms of the content of teaching and upbringing, didactic aids, and the selection and formation of religious teachers. It is not ecumenical, but it assumes ecumenical education, including shaping the attitude of dialogue, tolerance, and openness (Zellma et al. 2021). The church develops and approves curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials for religious education at school and submits them to educational authorities for information. The church also influences the employment and dismissal of religious teachers who must have confessional theological preparation. However, the confessional views of

religious education differ significantly. Individual churches and religious associations perform to various extents the functions of teaching, education, and initiation and correlate them with the school's didactic, educational, preventive, and caring activities. These differences are also related to the quality of evangelistic activities. In practice, religious education schools are mainly focused on conveying messages, developing skills, and shaping attitudes.

Religious education in Poland conducted by the Roman Catholic Church is carried out at the level of primary and secondary schools (MEN, 2014). Parents or students themselves (after reaching the age of majority) may choose (in the current legal state) religion, ethics, or neither of these subjects. Therefore, religious education is optional and is offered two hours a week as religious lessons. At the requests of the parents or legal guardians of the child (up to 18 years of age), all public and private Catholic schools must organize religious education. Religious education conducted by the Roman Catholic Church is correlated with catechesis, preparing for the sacraments in the parish (Zellma & Czupryński, 2020). It is unified in many respects. Religious education provided by the Roman Catholic Church in the school system is an ecclesial activity. It takes the form of educational processes aimed at achieving the goals of Christian teaching and upbringing. It is connected with all the activities of the church, especially the various forms of evangelization (Zellma et al., 2021). As far as possible, it is to be an intellectual deepening and preparation for initiation catechesis conducted in the parish. In religious education in schools, the tasks set by the church are implemented, as well as the selected goals and tasks of the school. The first focus is on Christian education and the teaching of faith. Their aim is also to assist students in human and religious formation. The second category of tasks carried out in religious education is related to the inclusion of religious teachers in the scope of responsibility for the implementation of the tasks set out in the school's statute and its educational and preventive programmes.

A teacher of religion is obliged to actively participate in educating children and young people following Christian values. Their tasks also include the correlation of the content of religious education with the content of general education. Religious lessons are subject to pedagogical supervision. In terms of methodology, teachers of religion are assessed by the school management and in terms of content by diocesan inspectors. Significantly, they are obliged to choose from the goals and tasks of the school those that carry fundamental ethical and moral values and to engage in the process of developing the student's critical and creative abilities

in order to take responsibility for them and prepare them for active involvement in the life of a democratic society.

In order to slow the spread of COVID-19 and "flatten the curve, governments across the globe implemented several social distancing and lockdown measures (John Hopkins University, 2020a). These social distancing measures meant the closure of businesses, schools, and other spaces of community and social life. Mass gatherings were prohibited, and many states implemented travel bans. Life, as we knew it, was severely disrupted, leading to yet unknown but potentially long-lasting effects for everyone. However, these effects are not universally distributed; young people, in particular, have been known to be particularly vulnerable to such pandemic shocks. Religious education is carried out mainly at school. It aims to make participants of religious lessons more mature and conscious of themselves as individuals, rooted in traditional culture, and capable of creative criticism and reflective affirmation of the social and cultural reality that surrounds them (Kostorz 2018; Łabendowicz 2019; Zellma 2017). Religious education in schools aims not only at acquiring new knowledge but also at developing skills and shaping participants' attitudes in religious lessons (Bałoniak, 2020). "Its task is to lead a person to an independent and rational interpretation of human existence and to help them understand themselves and the world in the context of the matter of their religion" (Konferencja Episkopatu Polski 2018).

Religious education teachers participating in the research appreciated the potential of educational platforms and the tools they propose, which they will undoubtedly also use in teaching religious education in schools after the pandemic has ended. The COVID-19 pandemic has shown that teachers of religious education are open to new information and communication technologies. Under the new educational conditions, they could fulfil their didactic and educational tasks. They used new digital tools and their possibilities and showed creativity. They proved that they could fulfil their due mission under all conditions, including those that are unfavourable to the educational process. An observation springs to mind that the remote teaching introduced without preparation (overnight) has put students and teachers in the position of facing an altogether "new" challenge. This experience may contribute to establishing in-depth relations between them. There is no doubt that the pandemic-time experience will be verified soon. Further in-depth research in this field or comparative research in various school subjects should be undertaken. A new look at the analyzed issues would also make it possible to assess religious education during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of returning to full-time education (Mendyk, 2007; Zellma, 2020).

The knowledge about the spread, symptoms, disease progression, risk factors, treatment and preventive measures against COVID-19 in this study was generally good. This can be attributable to our respondents' high level of education, as corroborated by a study among educated people in China which also revealed good knowledge about COVID-19 (World Health Organization, 2020).

Despite the general good knowledge displayed virtually, all the domains of knowledge assessed the responses to some specific knowledge questions are disturbed and need to be clarified by more public enlightenment. For example, the finding that some respondents either did not know or did not believe that asymptomatic individuals can transmit the virus is quite worrisome. Such persons may be tempted not to adhere to the prevention guidelines for COVID-19, where there are healthy individuals, which can undermine the preventive efforts of COVID-19 transmission from person to person. Also, quite a number of our study participants misconstrued sneezing as a symptom of COVID-19. Although unprotected sneezing is one of the effective ways of transmitting the novel Coronavirus from an infected individual, sneezing is not part of the community case definitions for COVID-19 according to NCDC guidelines.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of this research work is to examine the effect of Covid-19 on the implementation of the Christian Religious Studies curriculum in secondary schools in Ogun State.

### **Research Questions**

1. Does Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study?
2. What are the measures taken by religious leaders to support the schools for teaching and learning in the area of the study?
3. What is the effect of Covid-19 on the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the area of the study?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprises all secondary school teachers in Odeda Local Government Area, Ogun State. A random sampling technique was used to select ten secondary school teachers from five (10) secondary schools, randomly selected from each of the chosen schools to make a total of 100 as a sample for the study. A self-developed questionnaire was used as an instrument for data

collection. The instrument was moderated by experts who affirmed its validity. The instrument's reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha, and the result was 91%. Data collected was analyzed using a simple percentage statistical tool.

### Presentation of Data Analysis and Results

**Question 1:** Does Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study?

**Table 1:** Ratings percentage of the responses of respondents on the Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study

RQ1	ITEMS	SA+A		SD+D		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Corona-virus spreads mainly from person-to-person	91	91	9	9	100	100
2.	Corona spread mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneeze	87	87	13	13	100	100
3.	Consumption of food or water is not through to be a way the virus spread.	72	72	28	28	100	100
4.	When handling or preparing food, lands need to be clean to prevent contaminated.	72	72	28	28	100	100
5.	Washing your hands with soap and water id the best defense against spreading viruses.	74	74	26	26	100	100
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>396</b>	<b>79.2</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>20.8</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” response on the Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study was 396 (79.2%) while cumulative data for “disagreed” response on the Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study was 104 (20.8%). This showed that agreed responses were more than no response. However, it implies that the all the mentioned items are in line with **the** Covid-19 Pandemic influence the member of the residents of the area of the study.

**Question 2:** What are the measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study?

**Table 2:** Ratings percentage of the responses of respondents on the measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study

RQ2	ITEMS	SA+A		SD+D		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Washing your hands with soap and water is also effective against the spread of corona-virus.	89	89	11	11	100	100
2.	The use of sanitizer to clean hands before	80	80	20	20	100	100

	entering into the schools.						
3.	Provision of enough chairs and tables in schools to make the seating arrangement one students on chair.	87	87	13	13	100	100
4.	Wearing of nose mark before entering into the classroom	85	85	15	15	100	100
5.	Posting of different poster cards and caution poster and proper monitoring of the students in order to follow the rules and laws of the COVID-19.	100	100	-	-	100	100
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>88.2</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” response on the measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 441 (88.2%) while cumulative data for “disagreed” response on the measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 59 (11.8%). This showed that agreed responses were more than no response. However, it implies that the all the mentioned items are in line with **the** measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study.

**Question 3:** What is the effective of Covid-19 and how it affect the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the area of the study?

**Table 3:** Ratings percentage of the responses of respondents on the effective of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the area of the study

RQ3	ITEMS	SA+A		SD+D		TOTAL	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	Governments across the globe implemented several social distancing and lockdown measures	87	87	13	13	100	100
2.	Creative criticism and reflective affirmation of the social and cultural reality that surrounds them	85	85	15	15	100	100
3.	Religious education in schools is aimed not only at acquiring new knowledge	89	89	11	11	100	100
4.	Religious education in schools at developing skills and shaping the attitudes of participants in religious lessons	80	80	20	20	100	100
5.	The church develops and approves curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials for religious education at school, and submits them to educational authorities for	79	79	21	21	100	100



	information						
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>420</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the effectiveness of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the study area was 420 (84%). In comparison, cumulative data for “disagreed” responses on the effectiveness of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the area of the study was 80 (16%). This showed that agreed responses were more than no responses. However, it implies that all the mentioned items align with the effects of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the study area.

### **Discussion of Findings**

From Table one above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the residents of the area of study 396 (79.2%). In comparison, cumulative data for “disagreed” responses on the Covid-19 Pandemic affecting the member of the residents of the area of the study was 104 (20.8%). There was support for the statement that pandemics or global epidemics indicate that COVID-19 infection is so fast that almost no country or region is absent from the Coronavirus. Researchers recognize that education is one of the areas of social life that has been hit hardest by the COVID-19 pandemic (Czetwertyńska 2020; Jankowiak & Jaskulska 2020)

From Table two above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the measures taken by religious leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 441 (88.2%), while cumulative data for “disagreed” response on the measures taken the by religion leaders to support the schools for the teaching and learning in the area of the study was 59 (11.8%). There was support for the statement that, based on the phenomena that have occurred, this virus can be transmitted from human to human and has spread widely in China (World Health Organization, 2019).

From Table Three above, the study revealed that the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the effectiveness of Covid-19 and how it affected the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the study area was 420 (84%). In comparison, cumulative data for “disagreed” responses on the effectiveness of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the area of the study was 80 (16%). There was support for the statement that religious education is understood, following the terminology adopted, as various didactic and educational activities aimed at supporting

students in the holistic development and formation of religious attitudes (Chałupniak 2012; Zellma et al. 2021).

### **Conclusion**

The study revealed that the cumulative data of the “agreed” response to the Covid-19 Pandemic affected the member of the residents of the area of the study. This showed that agreed responses were more than no responses. However, it implies that all the mentioned items are in line with the Covid-19 Pandemic affecting the member of the residents of the area of the study. The study revealed the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the measures taken by religious leaders to support the schools for teaching and learning in the study area. This showed that agreed responses were more than no responses.

However, it implies that all the mentioned items align with the measures taken by religious leaders to support the schools for teaching and learning in the study area. The study revealed the cumulative data of “agreed” responses on the effectiveness of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the study area. This showed that agreed responses were more than no responses. However, it implies that all the mentioned items align with the effects of Covid-19 and how it affects the implementation of the Christian religious studies curriculum in the study area.

### **Recommendations**

1. The Government should urgently elicit the cooperation of all relevant stakeholders and set up policies to prevent the estimated output loss that could result if the disease prevalence is not controlled.
2. Also, the Government should provide more funds to build an isolation centre and equip all the community Clinic centres for effective intervention and implementation awareness programmes that will severely impact the public.
3. Furthermore, the study recommends enlightenment campaigns for awareness and stern the incidence of new viral cases.

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