

## A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES IN EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS IN EKITI STATE, NIGERIA

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines the correlation between Christian Religious Studies students' performance in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) in Ekiti State, Nigeria. A total number of 4,974 student result constituted the sample of the study. The purposive and stratified sampling techniques were employed at different stages to select 3,706 male candidate results and 1,268 female candidate results. The instrument used for the data collection was a proforma to collect data in CRS from the sampled schools. The instrument contained columns for gender of the students as well as their grades in the WAEC and NECO SSCEs results. The results covered five (5) years, from 2015 to 2019. The researcher personally visited the sampled schools and seek permission from the Principals with the assistance of the subject teachers to help in collection of desired results from 2015/2016 to 2018/2019 academic sessions. The data collected were analysed using the percentage to describe gender distribution of the students in WAEC and NECO SSCEs. Research Questions 1 and 2 were answered using the percentage, while Research Question 3 that has corresponding Hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance. The study findings revealed that CRS students 1,863 (58.80%) had passed grade in the WAEC that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic session, and the CRS students 1,138 (63.00%) had passed grade in the NECO that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic session, among others. Also, the findings showed that there was a positive significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCEs from 2015 – 2019. It was therefore recommended that government should employ qualified and competent teachers to teach Christian Religious Studies since both examinations are conducted for the same levels of educational levels so that the students would be able to score at least a credit pass (C4 – C6) in both external examinations (WAEC & NECO) among others.*

**Keywords:** Correlation, Examination, CRS, WAEC, NECO and Performance

### **Introduction**

Academic achievement and performance are used interchangeably in the educational sector, either of the two implies the extent to which students have mastered the content of instruction impacted by the teacher and their ability to effectively utilise the knowledge acquired for subsequent academic challenges. Ojo and Adeboye (2022) asserted that performance is very crucial thing in human life and

every individual in a society has its own goals and aspiration because it provides information about the learning abilities and capabilities of the learners. Academic performance or achievement is a pedagogical term used to determine students' success in a formal school setting (Abdullahi, 2011). Also, academic performance of students can be determined by conducting a test or exam on a student in order to determine how well or otherwise a

person performs in a given test. Similarly, teachers' effectiveness is also measured in terms of their students' academic performances. As noted by Ijaduola (2008), academic performance cannot be obtained in students if they are discouraged, so teachers are expected to meaningfully contribute to students' academic performance in both internal and external examination.

Examination is a generic name for written exercises, oral questions or practical tasks, set to test a candidate's knowledge and skill (Kpolovie, 2002). This examination may be in form of objectives or an essay, oral or written, internal or external. In Nigeria, an internal examination is a form of examination where students' continuous assessment tests, terminal, semester and annual or promotional examinations are evaluated by the teachers within the school. While external examinations, on the other hand, are known as public examinations, conducted by recognised examination bodies such as the West African Examinations Council (WAEC), the National Examinations Council (NECO), the National Business Technical and Examination Board (NABTEB), the Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) and other bodies authorised by statutes to conduct external examinations (Aburime, et al, 2016). Public examinations are taken by candidates in the terminal classes for certification, namely primary six, junior secondary school three and senior secondary school three. Also, external examination is used as qualification to move students from one educational level to another (Udofia & Udoh, 2012). The school certificate examinations, determine the placement of Nigeria students into higher learning and/or employment which are of particular concerned (Ololube, 2008).

The teaching of Religious Studies in Nigerian schools was necessitated based on the need to stimulate and assist the recipients in their quest for personal sense of meaning in life with a view to understanding the belief and the liking of others (Ajidagba, 2009). Religious Studies is unique to the Nigerian society because of its moral values among others (AraashiI, 2019). Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is one of the subjects that missionaries bequeathed to the Nigeria educational system through the establishment of schools in the 19th century (Lawal, 2010). He explained further that, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic discipline that is included in the Nigeria secondary school curriculum, aims at creating awareness in the learners' relationship with God as revealed in their personal experience, the African heritage, the biblical revelation as a whole and in Jesus Christ in particular. In addition, the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) recognised Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as part of the school curriculum at all levels of the Nigeria education system. At the secondary school level, the subject is meant to prepare learners for useful living through the inculcation of Christian attitudes and values, as well as higher education. Similarly, the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981) in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) stated that an education infused with religious instruction is believed to be capable of developing Nigerians who will be properly integrated into the mainstream of good citizen.

### **Status and Objectives of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria Secondary School Curriculum**

Religion is a system of faith and worship based on certain doctrine such as Christainity, Islam and other

traditional beliefs in Africa and generally in Nigeria (Ogunbodede and Ikotun, 2010). Religion denotes the influences and motives to human duty which are found in the character and will of God. More so, religion is another term that has been given different meanings and subjected to divergent interpretations by the religionists, religious scholars, exegesis and commentators. Lawal (2017) opined that religion is a fundamental set of beliefs and practices generally agreed upon by a group of people concerning the obedience and worship of the divine. Religious Studies, as a branch of knowledge, is made up of studies about a certain religion or comparative religious studies. In the Nigeria educational system, students are exposed to Christian Religious Studies (CRS) or Islamic Religious Studies (IRS) from primary to secondary school. In Christianity, religion is a guided belief and the acceptance of Jesus Christ as the saviour as illustrated in the Bible. In Islam, religion is all man's activities carried out to please his creator and his fellow human beings has taught by the Qur'an and prophet Muhammed (Oloyede, 2012). Therefore, religion has always been seen as a veritable tool for teaching and cultivation of moral values.

Monye (2010), noted that Christian education is a western type of education that was introduced into Nigeria by the Christian Missionaries around 19<sup>th</sup> century. They came to Nigeria from different western world; Portugal, Europe, Britain and America. The Catholic Missionaries were the first set of Christian mission that came to the coast of West Africa to evangelise and introduce commerce also as a means of spreading the gospel. They were sponsored by the church and Portuguese government. Actually, the purpose of all the Christian Missionaries was to evangelize and

convert "pagans" to Christianity. Many Scholars have actually agreed that the main objective of Christian missionaries in introducing Western education in the pre-colonial era was to convert people of other religions to Christianity. Fafunwa (1974) was of the opinion that the primary objective of the early Christian missionaries was to convert the "heathen" or benighted African to Christianity via western education. Omotoye (2010) opined that Christian Religious Education in Nigeria began with the advent of missionaries and mission agencies in mid 1800s. It was not in fact deliberate, it was introduced in the form of evangelism and as part of Western missionary enterprise. It was believed that the school was the major means of evangelization used by Bishop Samuel Ajayi Crowther. He introduced Christian mission into few places and made the elders and rulers to be interested in the idea of having schools of their own.

Also, Omotoye (2010) asserted that evangelism was a strategy adopted by the missionaries to win converts to their various missions. During the missionary administration, Christian Religious studies was given a priority in the school curriculum because of its moral values. Ikechukwu (2014) asserted that Christian Religious Studies has been one of the most important subjects being taught in the Secondary Schools in Nigeria. This is because the subject helps to streamline the thought, character, moral and aspiration of the students. It also offers hope for the future, integrate, discipline, harmonious and progressive society. Following the government take-over of schools, Nigeria secondary school curriculum was reviewed and more emphasis was placed on the studies of science and technical subjects which invariably affected the growth of the religious subjects (Njoku,

2012). Ojo (2016), observed that Christian Religious Studies is a subject which aims at developing and fostering in the lives of the students' attitudes and values such as respect for life, obedience to constituted authority, self-responsibility, selfless service to God and humanity.

Christian Religious Studies curriculum aims at producing students that will be God fearing, morally sound, highly disciplined, useful to themselves and the society. In Nigeria, Christian Religious Studies curriculum is considered to be fundamental in education as is expected to bring national unity and development. To achieve the desired goals of Christian Religious Studies curriculum, the new curriculum was non-denominational, Bible based, life centered and also began on the principle on which Christianity was found. Ojo and Adeboye (2022) noted that the Christian Religious Studies curriculum aims at producing students that will be God fearing, morally sound, highly disciplined and useful to themselves and the society. It is one the core subjects at the basic and upper basic levels of educational system and elective status at the senior secondary school level (NERDC, 2007). At the secondary school level, the subject is meant to prepare learners for useful living through the inculcation of Christian attitudes and values, and to prepare learners for higher education (FRN, 2013). In the then 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) was among the core subjects taught at both the junior and the senior secondary levels.

At the same time, in the current 9-3-4 system of education, Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is among the core subjects offered at the Upper Basic (Junior Secondary) level and an elective subject at the Senior Secondary

level (FRN, 2013). The senior secondary school curriculum contains all learning activities that take place right from the Senior Secondary School One up to the end of the Senior Secondary School Three. The National Curriculum Research and Development Council (NERDC, 2007) specified the following objectives for teaching Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria senior secondary schools which include:

- ❖ To provide more opportunity for the Nigeria youth to learn more about God and thereby develop their faith in God;
- ❖ To enable the youth to accept Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer;
- ❖ To enable the youth to recognise Jesus as founder and sustainer of the Christian Church;
- ❖ To enable the youth to accept the guidance of the Holy Spirit in their daily lives and activities;
- ❖ To help the youth to understand the basic teachings of Christ and to apply these to their daily life and work;
- ❖ To help develop in the youth Christian attitudes and moral values such as humility, respect, love, kindness, justice, fair play, spirit of forgiveness, obedience, orderly behaviour or discipline, hard work and devotion to duty, selfless service to God and humanity among others. Examining the above stated objectives of Christian Religious Studies in secondary school, it could be understood that there is deliberate and conscious attempt to inculcate spiritual and moral values into children through the teaching of CRS so that ethical and code of conduct can be achieved in the life of the people in the society.

## **Concept of Academic Performance**

Students' academic achievement or performance is a 'net result' of their cognitive and non-cognitive attributes as well as the sociocultural context in which the learning process takes place (Arief, 2019). Anthony (2018) stated that academic performance of students is a key feature in education. According to Abaidoo (2018) academic performance of students' determines by the success or failure of any academic institution. In addition, some scholars believed that student's academic performance serve as the bedrock for knowledge acquisition and the development of future skills. Similarly, some emphasized that the topmost priority of all educators is the academic performance of students. According to Abdullah (2021), in his opinion academic performance is the knowledge gained which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/ or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. He added that these goals are measured by using continuous assessment or examination results.

Examining, the above definition of academic performance from different researchers, one may say that academic performance or achievement is a pedagogical term being used by the teachers or any educational stakeholder to determine students' success or failure in a formal school setting. More so, Yusuf, Onifade and Bello (2016) opined that academic performance is a measurable and observable behaviour of a student within a specific period. They explained further that, it consist series of scores obtained by a student in an assessment such as class exercise, class test, mid-semester, mock examination, and end of semester examination. More so, academic performance varies accordingly to individual student's score such as high,

average or low. Students who place higher performance on education are activated to enhance development of their intellect and this foster better academic performance.

## **Concept of Examination**

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2012) defined examination as a formal test of a person's knowledge or proficiency in a particular subject or skill. Examinations occupy a unique position as a measure of quality within the educational system in Ekiti State and in Nigeria at large. Ndifon and Ndifon (2012) noted that examination is a process through which learners are evaluated in order to find out the quality of knowledge they have acquired within a specific time. This examination may be internal or public. Internal examinations are the examinations that are conducted by teachers within a school system. These could be in form of assignment, continuous assessment test and end of term or semester examinations. Public examination on the other hand, are regarded as external examinations which are conducted by recognized examining bodies. Public examination are designed and organized under specific terms, conditions and based on norms that were regarded as standards (Adeyemi, 2012). More so, examination bodies were set up to promote education, co-ordinate educational programmes, control and monitor the quality of education in the educational institutions. They are responsible to conduct examinations for all the junior secondary school three called (JSCE) and senior secondary school three known as (SSCE).

Abdullahi (2017) noted that public examinations are conducted by the bodies that are external to the school system using tests that have appropriate psychometric properties. Some of these examination bodies in

Nigeria includes; the West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO), Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB), National Business and Technical Educational Board (NABTEB), among others. The three examination bodies that are charged with the responsibility of conducting the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCEs) are WAEC, NECO and NABTEB. While Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) conducts examinations to gain admission into higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. The WAEC and NECO are two examination bodies that are relevant to this study, the reason is that, both conduct parallel and equivalent SSCEs in the country. They measure learners' level of academic performance, achievement and competence. Also, they provide useful, valid and reliable information not only on the extent to which the broad educational objectives are achieved. The following are some roles of WAEC and NECO:

- a. Conduct examination and award certificates.
- b. Set questions and conduct examinations to cover such areas as practical, oral and essay.
- c. Set a common standard through their syllabus and draw a uniform

time table for the conduct of examinations.

- d. Provide data or feedback on students' performance to schools, thus helping to fast-track improvement in teaching and learning in schools (Nsikak & Kenneth, 2017).

Furthermore, the two examining bodies (WAEC & NECO) conduct SSCE twice in a year between May/June and October/November. The May/June SSCE is for internal candidates which is school based and it has two components. The first is a school-based assessment. This is in form of test, project and examinations conducted differently by all subject teachers including the CRS teachers on the daily, weekly, monthly basis and at the end of the term. The score obtained in SSI, SSII and SSIII are computed and converted to 40% of the total obtainable scores for certification. The second component is the final examination conducted by the WAEC and the NECO. The scores obtained in the examinations are computed and converted to 60% of the total obtainable scores for certification (Abdullahi, 2017). In terms of grading and marking scheme both examination bodies, the letters A to F are used to indicate how good a result is. The WAEC and NECO grading system are shown thus:

**Table 1: Grading Criteria and Definition of the WAEC**

Grade	Definition	Interpretation	Equivalent
A1	Excellent	75%-100%	1
B2	Very good	70%-74%	2
B3	Good	65%-69%	3
C4	Credit	60%-64%	4
C5	Credit	55%-59%	5
C6	Credit	50%-54%	6
D7	Pass	45%-49%	7
E8	Pass	40%-44%	8
F9	Fail	0%-39%	9

**West African Examination Council:** The West African Examination Council (WAEC) was established in 1953 by five countries (The Gambia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone). The body is empowered to conduct such examinations and award certificates equivalent to those of examining authorities in the United Kingdom. The WAEC, being an international examination body, has been playing significant roles in the West Africa educational system. It has been responsible for the maintenance of international academic standard. Also, the council conducts different categories of examinations which includes National Examinations, International Examinations and Examinations conducted on behalf of other external examination bodies (WAEC, 2015).

**National Examination Council:** The National Examinations Council (NECO) on the other hand, was established in April, 1999. It was formally known as National Board for Educational Measurement (NBEM) but it was later changed to National Examinations Council which was established by Decree 69 of 1993 (NECO, 2007). The body was seen by many as an attempt to reduce the burden of WAEC and it was charged with the responsibility of conducting

the Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCE), the first of which was conducted by the body in May/June, 2000. The establishment of NECO was to work alongside with the WAEC and conducts test for both government and private institutions that may require its services (Nsikak, Udofia & Kenneth, 2017).

### Statement of the Study

Poor performance occurs yearly in Christian Religious Studies and more students are not showing interest in the subject and it has become a great concern to all the stakeholders in educational sectors. Over the years, majority of students that sat for the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and National Examinations Council (NECO) have been recording mass failure especially in core subjects such as English Language, Mathematics, Science and even in Religious Studies in the years back (Ojo, 2016). Reports have shown that students' performance in the subject (CRS) seems to be declining. Reports from WAEC and NECO showed that performance of students in CRS in Nigeria secondary schools is not consistent, due to negative attitude of students towards the subject, poor method of teaching used by the teachers, lack of qualified teachers teaching the subjects and some of the factors are said to be responsible for the

poor performance and low enrolment of students in the subject.

Also, there are several arguments among the researchers about the quality of the two main examination bodies conducting Senior School Certificate Examinations (SSCEs) in Nigeria, in the case of WAEC and NECO in which one is superior to the other. Some supported WAEC on the basis of being a World Wide recognised examination body, while NECO was just a Nation-Wide examination body in Nigeria. Many studies have been carried out in different fields that are closely related. For instance, Aburime, Jekayinfa and Saidu (2016) examined relationship between performance in Terminal Examination and West Africa Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) in Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in Ogbomosho South Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. Their findings showed that there was a positive relationship between students' performance in Terminal and WASSCE in Christian Religious Studies. In another study by Abdu-rafiu, Ajidagba and Rafiu (2020) investigated the correlation between continuous assessment scores and Islamic Studies examination in Ilorin, Nigeria. The instruments used were the copy of cumulative continuous assessment scores for three consecutive years (2011-2013) and the 2011-2013 Islamic Studies computerized result sheets sent to each school by WAEC and NECO. Their findings revealed that, there was a significant relationship between students' continuous assessment scores and their performance in Islamic Studies in WASSCE and NECO.

More so, Abdullahi (2021) worked on students' performance comparison in senior school certificate examination Arabic and Islamic Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. His

finding showed a significant correlation between students' performance in both examination bodies conducted by WAEC and Islamic Studies in Arabic and Islamic Studies. However, to the best of researcher's knowledge, none of the above mentioned researchers based their studies on "A Correlational Study of Students' Performance in Christian Religious Studies in WAEC and NECO Examination in Ekiti State, Nigeria from 2015 to 2019". This therefore, create research gap in the body of knowledge which the present study intends to fill.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to examine the correlation between students' performance in Christian Religious studies in the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) and National Examinations Council (NECO) in Ekiti State, Nigeria from 2015-2019. Specifically, the study investigated:

- a. general performance of CRS students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE) in Ekiti State, Nigeria from 2015 to 2019.
- b. general performance of CRS students in the National Examinations Council (NECO) in senior school certificate examinations (SSCEs), in Ekiti State, Nigeria from 2015 to 2019.
- c. correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCEs from 2015 to 2019.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered:

1. What is the general performance of CRS students in the WASSCE in Ekiti State, from 2015 to 2019?
2. What is the general performance of CRS students in the NECO

- SSCE, in Ekiti State, from 2015 to 2019?
3. Is there any correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCEs from 2015 to 2019?

**Research Hypothesis**

Based on the research questions raised, the null hypothesis were generated and tested:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCEs from 2015 to 2019.

**Methodology**

This study adopted correlational study of research design. A correlational study as defined by Strangor (2004), is a quantitative method of research in which two or more quantitative variables from the same group of subjects are determined to find out if there is a relationship between them. The population for this study comprised all the senior secondary school students offering CRS in Ekiti State, while the target population of this study consisted all candidates that sat for CRS in WAEC and NECO SSCEs in Ekiti State from 2015 to 2019. A total number of 4,974 candidate result constitute the study sampled. The purposive and stratified sampling techniques were employed at different stages to select 3,706 male candidate results and 1,268 female candidate results. The instrument used for the data collection was a proforma to collect data from the sampled schools. The instrument contained columns for gender of the students as well as their grades in the WAEC and NECO SSCEs results. The result covered five (5) years, from 2015 to 2019. The researcher personally visited the sampled schools and seek permission from the Principals with the assistance of the subject teachers to

help in collection of desired results in CRS from 2015/2016 to 2018/2019 academic sessions. The data collected were analysed using the percentage to describe gender distribution of CRS students in WAEC and NECO SSCEs. Research Questions 1 and 2 were answered using the percentage, while Research Question 3 that has corresponding Hypothesis 1 was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) at 0.05 level of significance.

**Data Analysis and Results**

Data collation analysis and interpretation of results (WAEC and NECO Examinations in Ekiti State from 2015 - 2019) collected from the sampled schools based on the purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses postulated

**Demographic Characteristics of the Students**

In this section, the percentage is used to describe demographic characteristics of the students and the result is presented in Tables 2 – 7

**Table 2: Gender Distribution of CRS Students in WAEC and NECO Examinations**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	3,706	74.51
Female	1,268	25.49
Total	4,974	100.00

Table 2 above shows the gender distribution of CRS students in WAEC and NECO SSCE. The table indicates that 4,974 CRS students' WAEC and NECO SSCE results were collated, out of which 3,706 (74.51%) were males CRS students and 1,268 (25.49%) were female CRS students that enrolled for Christian Religious Studies in WAEC and NECO SSCE. This shows that more male CRS students enrolled in WAEC

and NECO SSCE than their female counterparts.

**Table 3: Distributions of the CRS Students' WAEC Results by Years**

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2015 Academic Session	701	22.13
2016 Academic Session	555	17.52
2017 Academic Session	680	21.46
2018 Academic Session	649	20.49
2019 Academic Session	583	18.40
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,168</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 3 shows the distribution of CRS students' WAEC result in the under revered by years. The table indicates that in the year 2015 academic session, 701 (22.13%) students sat for CRS in WAEC, while 555 (17.52%) sat for the examination in the year 2016 academic session. In the year 2017 academic session, 680 (21.46%) students sat for CRS, while 649 (20.49%) students sat for the examination in 2108 academic session.

Lastly, in the 2019 academic session, 583 (18.40%) students sat for CRS in WAEC. This implies that the 2015 academic session recorded the highest number of students that sat for CRS in WAEC, while the 2016 academic session recorded the lowest number of students that sat for CRS in WAEC. In addition, there is a drop in the number of students that sat for CRS in WAEC from 2017 – 2019 academic session.

**Table 4: Distributions of the CRS Students' NECO Result by Years**

Years	Frequency	Percentage (%)
2015 Academic Session	503	27.85
2016 Academic Session	253	14.01
2017 Academic Session	476	26.36
2018 Academic Session	408	22.59
2019 Academic Session	166	9.19
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,806</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 4 shows the distribution of CRS students' NECO result in the covered years. The table indicates that in the year 2015 academic session, 503 (27.85%) students sat for CRS in NECO, while 253 (14.01%) sat for the examination in the year 2016 academic session. In the year 2017 academic session, 476 (26.36%) students sat for CRS, while 408 (22.59%) students sat for the examination in 2108 academic session. Lastly, in the 2019 academic session, 166 (9.19%) students sat for CRS in WAEC. This implies that the

2015 academic session recorded the highest number of students that sat for CRS in NECO, while the 2019 academic session recorded the lowest number of students that sat for CRS in NECO. In addition, there is a drop in the number of students that sat for CRS in NECO from 2017 – 2019 academic session.

### Answering of Research Questions

Three (3) research questions were raised. The percentage is used to answer research questions 1 and 2. Research Question 3 that has

corresponding hypothesis 1 is answered and tested using Pearson Product of Moment Correlation Co-efficient (PPMC) at 0.05 level of significance.

**Research Question 1:** *What is the general performance of CRS students*

*in the WASSCE in Ekiti State From 2015-2019?*

To answer the Research Question 1, WASSCE result of CRS students from 2015 – 2019 in Ekiti State are summed and subjected to percentage. The result is presented in table 5.

**Table 5: Performance of CRS students in the WAEC in Ekiti State from 2015 – 2019**

Years	A1 – B3 (%)	C4 – C6 (%)	D7 – E8 (%)	F9 (%)	Total %
2015	74 (10.5%)	264 (37.7%)	220 (31.4%)	143 (20.4%)	701 (100%)
2016	70 (12.6%)	251 (45.2%)	122 (22.0%)	112 (20.2%)	555 (100%)
2017	68 (10.0%)	211 (31.0%)	180 (26.5%)	221 (32.5%)	680 (100%)
2018	239 (36.8%)	293 (45.1%)	79 (12.2%)	38 (5.9%)	649 (100%)
2019	129 (22.1%)	262 (44.9%)	138 (23.7%)	54 (9.3%)	583 (100%)
Total	580 (18.3%)	1283 (40.5%)	739 (23.3%)	568 (17.9%)	3168 (100%)

Table 5 shows the performance of CRS students in the WAEC in Ekiti State from 2015 – 2019. The table indicates that out of 3,168 students that sat for CRS in the West African Examination Council (WAEC) between 2015 – 2019 academic session, 568 (17.9%) failed; 739 (23.3%) got, D7 – E8; 1,283 (40.5), got a credit level of C4 – C6; while 580 (18.3%) had A1 – B3. This implies that the CRS students 1,863 (58.80%) had pass grade in the

WAEC that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic session.

**Research Question 2:** *What is the general performance of CRS students in the NECO SSCE in Ekiti State from 2015 - 2019?*

To answer the Research Question 2, NECO SSCE result of CRS students from 2015 – 2019 in Ekiti State were summed and subjected to percentage. The result is presented in table 2

**Table 6: Performance of CRS students in the NECO SSCE in Ekiti State from 2015- 2019**

Year	A1 – B3 (%)	C4 – C6 (%)	D7 – E8 (%)	F9 (%)	Total %
2015	23 (4.6%)	343 (68.2%)	108 (21.5%)	29 (5.7%)	503 (100%)
2016	19 (7.5%)	123 (48.6%)	83 (32.8%)	28 (11.1%)	253 (100%)
2017	14 (2.9%)	272 (57.1%)	169 (35.5%)	21 (4.5%)	476 (100%)
2018	17 (4.2%)	228 (55.9%)	100 (24.5%)	63 (15.4%)	408 (100%)
2019	7 (4.2%)	92 (55.4%)	47 (28.3%)	20 (12.1%)	166 (100%)
Total	80 (4.4%)	1058 (58.6%)	507 (28.1%)	161 (8.9%)	1,806 (100%)

Table 6 shows the performance of CRS students in the NECO in Ekiti State from 2015 – 2019. The table indicates that out of 1,806 students that sat for CRS in the National Examination Council (NECO) between 2015 – 2019 academic session, 161 (8.9%) failed; 507 (28.1%), had D7 –

E8; 1058 (58.6%), got C4 – C6; and 80 (4.4%) had A1 – B3. This implies that the CRS students 1,138 (63.00%) had a pass grade in the NECO that is (A1 – C6) from 2105 – 2019 academic session.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient was used to test hypothesis 1 at 0.05 level of significance. Hypothesis 1 took care of Research Question 3.

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** *There is no significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE from 2015 – 2019.*

In order to test hypothesis 1, CRS students results' in WAEC and NECO SSCE were coded and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient. The result of the PPMCC were coded and analysed, while the result of the test is reported in table 7.

**Table 7: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient on CRS Students' Academic Performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE from 2015 – 2019**

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	r-cal	Sig
WASSCE	3,168	62.21	8.25	25	0.34	0.02
NECO	1,806	61.01	9.73			

Table 7 shows the result of the PPMCC on CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE from 2015 – 2019. The table shows an r-cal value of 0.34 and significant value of 0.02 which is less than 0.05 ( $0.02 < 0.05$ ). Since 0.02 is lesser than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is positive significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE from 2015 – 2019.

**Summary of the Findings**

Based on the data collected, analysed and interpreted, the following findings were obtained:

1. The CRS students' general performance showed that 1,863 (58.80%) had pass grades in the WAEC that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic session.
2. The CRS students' general performance indicated that 1,138 (63.00%) had pass grades in the NECO that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic session.
3. There was a positive significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance

in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE from 2015 – 2019.

**Discussion**

The finding of the study reveals that majority of CRS students 1,863 (58.80%) had credit pass in the WASSCE that is (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic sessions. This study implies that students' general performance of CRS WAEC was excellent, which was in agreement with the findings of Aburime, Jekayinfa and Saidu (2016) who found that majority of the students passed at credit level in SSCEs Christian Religious Studies for the year 2014 May/June WAEC. The finding of this study also revealed that the general performance of CRS students in the National Examination Council for Senior School Certificate Examinations (NECO SSCE) in Ekiti State was 1,138 (63.00%), which had pass grades of (A1 – C6) from 2015 – 2019 academic sessions. This study was similar to the finding of Abdullahi (2021) who found out that the majority of the students passed at credit level in NECO SSCE in both Arabic and Islamic Studies in Kwara State, Nigeria. Conversely, the finding

was not in line with Lawal's (2010) outcome that the overall academic performance of students in Christian Religious Studies in NECO SSCE was poor.

Finally, the hypothesis of this study showed that there was a positive significant correlation between CRS students' academic performance in the WASSCE and NECO SSCE in Ekiti State from 2015 – 2019. The finding corroborated with the finding of Abdu-rafiu, Ajidagba and Rafiu (2020) who found moderate positive relationship between the continuous assessment in both WASSCE and NECO SSCE Islamic Studies candidate's results from 2011-2013 academic sessions in Ilorin West Local Government Areas of Kwara State. Hassan and Abuh (2016) in their finding also indicated that there was a high positive relationship between WASSCE and NECO SSCE in Mathematics candidates' results between 2011- 2014 academic sessions. Conversely, this study was contradicted to the finding of Abosede (2018) who found a low significant and negative relationship between concurrent validity in the candidates' performance in WASSCE and NECO SSCE in CRS scores of the candidates for each year.

### Conclusions

This study examined the correlation between Christian Religious Studies students' performance in external examination conducted by WAEC and NECO SSCE in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study was concluded among others that students' general performance in Christian Religious Studies in both WAEC and NECO SSCE was excellent. More so, there was a significant positive correlation between CRS students' performance in both

WASSCE and NECO SSCE. This implies that both examination bodies have similarities in the structure, design, method of grading, syllabus content and overall standardisation of examination. Therefore, the study findings was concluded that both examination Bodies were found to be equivalent whereby students can register for any one of their choice.

### Recommendations

In line with the conclusion of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- ✚ Students should see this subject as one of academic discipline that will be useful for them in their career enhancement. Also, they should be aware that SSCE examination is not just for examination purpose, but it could also be used for further studies.
- ✚ Qualified and competent CRS teachers should be employ by the government in all levels of education, this thereby improving student's academic performance.
- ✚ Students should develop more interest in sitting for either of the two examinations since they were found to be the same or equivalent.
- ✚ Examination bodies such as WAEC and NECO should compare their test items in terms of strengths and weaknesses of their objectives and essay questions. Also, both examination bodies should always try to release students' weaknesses after examination and also provide possible remedies to their weaknesses.
- ✚ Stakeholders of education such as State Government, Ministry of Education, policy makers,

among others should organize regular sensitization programmes such as seminars, workshops, conferences and in-service training for senior secondary school teachers to improve their competence in Christian Religious Studies for better students' performance and to update their knowledge.

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