

THE PERCEPTION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS ON CAREER CHOICE IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIONS STUDIES: A FOCUS ON EBONYI NORTH EDUCATIONAL ZONE

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Abstract

This study employed a quantitative survey research design to investigate the perceptions of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone of Ebonyi State regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its impact on their academic performance and career choices. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect data from 120 respondents, and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 was utilized for data presentation and analysis. Hypotheses were tested using the one-sample t-test. The findings of the study indicated that the majority of the respondents held positive perceptions of CRS as an academic subject, finding it relevant to their lives and valuable for understanding moral and ethical values. Moreover, the socio-cultural environment of Izzi and Ngbo Clans who made up the population of Ebonyi North Educational zone, the area of study, was found to significantly influence the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS. Students also acknowledged the potential impact of their perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions, particularly in fields related to ethical leadership. In conclusion, the study provided valuable insights into the perceptions of secondary school students regarding CRS in a specific cultural and religious context. These findings underscore the importance of integrating CRS into the curriculum and providing culturally sensitive career guidance to align students' career aspirations with their values. Recommendations include enhancing the integration of CRS in the curriculum, cultural sensitivity in career guidance, and the inclusion of diverse religious perspectives in future research.

Keywords: Perception, Secondary School Students, Career Choice, Christian Religious Studies, Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The perception of secondary school students regarding career choices in the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is a topic of increasing significance in the educational context, particularly in regions with strong religious influences like Ebonyi North Educational Zone. CRS, as a subject, holds a unique place in the curriculum, offering students the opportunity to explore their faith, values, and spirituality while also providing a comprehensive understanding of the Christian faith, its history, and its societal implications (Mapfumo & Nkoma, 2021). In a region deeply rooted in religious traditions, such as Ebonyi North Educational Zone, CRS can be a pivotal subject in students' academic and vocational journeys (McLaughlin, 2019).

Christian Religious Studies plays a multifaceted role in the academic and moral development of secondary school students. It equips them with a strong foundation in ethical principles, instilling values that can influence both their personal and professional lives (Menon, 2020). The subject not only fosters an understanding of Christian beliefs but also encourages critical thinking, moral reasoning, and the exploration of religious and philosophical concepts. Thus, students' perceptions of career opportunities associated with CRS can have a profound impact on their future educational and vocational paths (Mittendorff et al., 2022).

Ebonyi North Educational Zone situated in a region with a significant religious presence, presents a unique setting for this study. The zone's rich religious and cultural context shapes the daily lives of its residents, including the educational experiences of its students (Ocansey, 2021). In such an environment, understanding how secondary school students perceive career prospects within the realm of CRS becomes essential (Oertle & O'Leary, 2017). The religious and cultural fabric of the community can significantly influence students' career aspirations and choices.

Secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone, as in any other region, face crucial decisions regarding their future careers. These decisions are often influenced by a myriad of factors, including their academic experiences, personal interests, and perceptions of the viability of careers linked to CRS (Offor, 2018). It is, therefore, imperative to investigate these perceptions comprehensively to gain insights into the factors that mold students' career choices in this specific region. This understanding can guide educators, counsellors, and policymakers in tailoring educational and career guidance programs to meet the unique needs and expectations of students (Ogunlade & Akeredolu, 2022).

In addition to the religious and cultural context, guidance and counselling services within secondary schools play a pivotal role in students' career development (Ojirah, 2020). Effective counselling can assist students in making informed career choices that align with their interests, abilities, and aspirations (Setiawan, 2020). However, the effectiveness of counselling services is closely intertwined with students' perceptions of the subjects and careers they are exploring (Stefaniak & Tracey, 2015). Therefore, understanding how students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone view the potential careers associated with CRS is fundamental to the development of targeted and impactful counselling programs (Todd McKee & Caldarella, 2016).

Consequently, this background to the study underscores the critical importance of exploring the perceptions of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone regarding career choices within the field of Christian Religious Studies (Yesilyaprak, 2020). It emphasizes the unique role of CRS in students' education, the influence of the local religious and cultural environment (Zaichenko & Vinokurov, 2018), and the indispensable role of guidance and counselling services (Seidu, 2018). This study aims to illuminate the intricate relationship between faith, education, and career choices among secondary school students in this distinctive region, offering valuable insights into how their perceptions shape their academic and vocational pursuits.

Statement of Problem

The perception of secondary school students on career choices within the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) is an area of educational research that demands attention, particularly in the context of Ebonyi North Educational Zone. CRS, as a subject, is deeply embedded in the academic curriculum of secondary schools, and it holds substantial significance for students' personal and career development (Le Surf & Leech, 2019). However, despite its importance, little is known about how secondary school students in this region perceive the career opportunities associated with CRS.

One of the primary challenges is the lack of comprehensive research on this specific aspect of career development within the context of CRS (Mapfumo & Nkoma, 2021). This gap in the literature raises concerns about whether students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone have adequate information, guidance, and awareness regarding potential career pathways within CRS (McLaughlin, 2019). This lack of awareness can hinder informed decision-making and limit students' opportunities for academic and career growth (Menon, 2020).

Furthermore, the unique religious and cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone may introduce specific dynamics that influence students' perceptions of CRS-related careers (Mittendorff et al., 2022). It is unclear whether religious and cultural factors play a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations in this subject (Mushaandja & Frank, 2019). Understanding these dynamics is crucial for educational stakeholders, including teachers, counsellors, and policymakers, to provide effective guidance and support (Ocansey, 2021).

Additionally, while guidance and counselling services are fundamental in aiding students' career choices, their effectiveness may be compromised if students' perceptions of CRS-related careers are not adequately considered (Oertle & O'Leary, 2017). This study seeks to address the gap in knowledge by investigating the specific challenges, opportunities, and perceptions that secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone hold regarding career choices within the field of Christian Religious Studies.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine the perception of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject.
2. To investigate how the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS.
3. To analyze the potential impact of students' perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions.

Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone perceive Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject?
2. To what extent does the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone influence the career choices of secondary school students, especially about CRS?
3. What is the potential impact of students' perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions?

Research Hypotheses

To guide this study, the following hypotheses were tested:

Null Hypotheses(H_0):

1. There is no significant relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and their academic performance in the subject.
2. The socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone does not significantly influence the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS.
3. Students' perception of CRS has no significant impact on their career aspirations and decisions.

Alternative Hypotheses(H_1):

1. There is a significant relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and their academic performance in the subject.
2. The socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone significantly influences the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS.
3. Students' perception of CRS has a significant impact on their career aspirations and decisions.

Significance of the Study

This study holds considerable importance for students, scholars, and the Nigerian education system.

For students, particularly those within Ebonyi North Educational Zone, this research provides valuable insights into career options within the field of Christian Religious Studies (CRS). Understanding these opportunities empowers students to make more informed decisions about their academic pursuits and future career paths, potentially leading to greater success and fulfilment.

Scholars and researchers benefit from this study by gaining access to fresh data and perspectives on career development within the context of religious and cultural environments. It contributes to the existing body of knowledge on CRS and its influence on students' lives, particularly in regions with strong religious ties.

Furthermore, this study offers the Nigerian education system practical insights that can inform policy decisions and educational practices. Understanding students' perceptions of career possibilities within CRS can aid in the development of more effective career guidance programs, enhancing the alignment of educational curricula with students' needs and expectations.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study on the perception of secondary school students regarding career choices in Christian Religious Studies (CRS) within Ebonyi North Educational Zone is defined by several key parameters.

Geographically, the study focuses specifically on Ebonyi North Educational Zone, a region known for its strong religious and cultural influences. It aims to understand the career perceptions of secondary school students within this specific locale, considering the unique context of the region.

Demographically, the study targets secondary school students as the primary research participants. The research encompasses students from various age groups and grade levels within secondary schools in Ebonyi North Educational Zone, providing a comprehensive view of how these perceptions may evolve as students progress through their academic journeys.

Thematically, the study centres on exploring students' perceptions of career opportunities related to CRS. It investigates factors influencing these perceptions, including religious, cultural, and educational aspects. Additionally, the study examines any challenges and opportunities students associate with CRS-related careers.

Operational Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity and precision in this study, the following key terms are defined operationally:

Perception: In this context, perception refers to the way secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone understand and interpret Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject and its relevance to their lives.

Christian Religious Studies (CRS): This term refers to the academic subject taught in secondary schools that focuses on the study of Christianity, its beliefs, practices, and values.

Socio-Cultural Environment: This refers to the social and cultural context in which secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone live, including their religious beliefs, traditions, and customs.

Career Choices: Career choices denote the decisions made by secondary school students regarding their future professions or areas of study beyond secondary education.

Influence: In this study, influence refers to the impact or effect that perception of CRS and the sociocultural environment have on the career choices and aspirations of secondary school students.

Academic Performance: This term refers to the grades or achievements of students in their study of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) in secondary school.

Educational Policies and Planning: Educational policies and planning include decisions and actions taken by educational authorities to structure the curriculum, teaching methods, and resources available for students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

Career Guidance Counsellors: Career guidance counsellors are professionals who provide advice and guidance to students regarding their academic and career choices.

METHODOLOGY

Preamble

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in investigating the perception of secondary school students on career choice in Christian Religious Studies (CRS) within the context of Ebonyi North Educational Zone. The methodology serves as the roadmap for conducting the research and includes a description of the research design, population, sample, data collection instruments, validity and reliability testing, data collection process, and data analysis techniques. It provides a comprehensive framework for collecting and analyzing the data required to address the research objectives effectively.

Research Design

The research design chosen for this study is a quantitative survey research design. This design was selected due to its suitability for gathering structured data from a relatively large and diverse population, as is the case with the study's target population of 1200 respondents (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey research design facilitates the collection of quantitative data that can be statistically analyzed to provide insights into the perceptions and attitudes of secondary school students regarding career choices in CRS.

Population of the Study

The target population for this study consists of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone. The justification for this choice is rooted in the desire to understand the career

perceptions of students within this specific geographic area, where CRS plays a significant role in the curriculum.

Sample and Sampling Technique

Convenient sampling is adopted for this study due to its practicality and feasibility, given the large target population. A sample size of 120 respondents has been chosen as it strikes a balance between obtaining a representative dataset and managing resource constraints (Saunders et al., 2019). The convenience sampling technique allows for the selection of participants who are readily accessible and willing to participate in the study, making it suitable for this research's scope and objectives.

Instrument(s) for Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection in this study is a structured questionnaire. This questionnaire includes closed-ended questions designed to measure students' perceptions of career choices in CRS, with a focus on factors influencing their decisions. The questionnaire is comprehensive, covering a range of relevant aspects related to CRS career perceptions, and includes demographic questions to contextualize the responses (Beiske, 2017).

Validity and Reliability of the Study

To ensure the validity and reliability of the study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient will be employed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. This statistical measure will help evaluate the extent to which the questionnaire items consistently measure the intended constructs. A high Cronbach's alpha value, typically above 0.70, indicates strong internal consistency, ensuring that the questionnaire effectively measures the variables of interest (Goddard & Melville, 2020).

Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to the selected respondents within the secondary schools in Ebonyi North Educational Zone. Trained research assistants will distribute the questionnaires, provide clarifications when necessary, and collect the completed surveys. The data collection process spans a specified duration to accommodate the logistical arrangements required to reach the target sample size while ensuring data quality and accuracy.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected will be analyzed using SPSS version 27. SPSS offers a robust platform for conducting statistical analyses, which is essential for examining the relationships and patterns within the dataset. It allows for the computation of descriptive statistics, correlation analyses, regression analyses, and other statistical tests necessary for addressing the research questions and hypotheses effectively (Saunders et al., 2016; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2017).

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1: Distribution of Questionnaire

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Returned Completed	104	86.7	86.7	86.7
	Not Returned/Not Completed	16	13.3	13.3	100.0
	Total	120	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 1 presents the distribution of questionnaires, indicating the number of respondents who returned completed questionnaires and those who did not. Out of the total 120 questionnaires distributed, 104 were returned completed, accounting for 86.7% of the total sample. On the other hand, 16 questionnaires were not returned or were left incomplete, representing 13.3% of the total sample.

The high percentage of returned completed questionnaires (86.7%) demonstrates a commendable response rate, indicating that a significant portion of the selected respondents actively participated in the study. This level of participation suggests a genuine interest among the respondents in sharing their perspectives on the study's subject matter, which is the perception of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its influence on career choices among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: Gender of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	55	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Female	49	47.1	47.1	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their gender. Out of the 104 respondents, 55 (52.9%) identified as male, while 49 (47.1%) identified as female.

Table 3: Age of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	11-13	44	42.3	42.3	42.3
	14-15	38	36.5	36.5	78.8
	16-18	13	12.5	12.5	91.3

19 and above	9	8.7	8.7	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 3 displays the distribution of respondents based on their age groups. The respondents were categorized into four age groups: 11-13, 14-15, 16-18, and 19 and above.

Among the respondents, the largest age group was 11-13, comprising 42.3% of the total sample. Following closely was the 14-15 age group, representing 36.5% of the respondents. The 16-18 age group constituted 12.5% of the sample, while those aged 19 and above made up 8.7% of the respondents.

The distribution of respondents across various age groups reflects a diverse representation of age ranges among secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone. This diversity is essential as it ensures that the study's findings encompass the perspectives of students at different stages of their secondary education. Understanding how perceptions of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) relate to career choices may vary depending on the student's age and grade level.

Table 4: Class of Respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Junior Secondary 1 (JSS1)	14	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Junior Secondary 2 (JSS2)	13	12.5	12.5	26.0
	Junior Secondary 3 (JSS3)	8	7.7	7.7	33.7
	SS1	20	19.2	19.2	52.9
	SS2	24	23.1	23.1	76.0
	SS3	25	24.0	24.0	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 4 presents the distribution of respondents based on their class levels within the secondary school system. The respondents were divided into six categories: Junior Secondary 1 (JSS1), Junior Secondary 2 (JSS2), Junior Secondary 3 (JSS3), Senior Secondary 1 (SS1), Senior Secondary 2 (SS2), and Senior Secondary 3 (SS3).

Among the respondents, the largest group was Senior Secondary 3 (SS3), comprising 24.0% of the total sample. Following closely were SS2 and SS1, representing 23.1% and 19.2% of the respondents, respectively. The Junior Secondary classes (JSS1, JSS2, and JSS3) constituted a smaller percentage of the sample, with JSS1 being the largest among them at 13.5%.

The distribution of respondents across various class levels is important as it allows for an examination of how perceptions of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and their influence on career choices may evolve as students' progress through the junior and senior secondary school levels. It also acknowledges that career decisions may vary depending on the stage of education.

Table 5: Religious Affiliation

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Christian	91	87.5	87.5	87.5
	Muslim	9	8.7	8.7	96.2
	Others	4	3.8	3.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 5 provides an overview of the religious affiliations of the respondents in the study. The respondents were categorized into three groups based on their religious affiliation: Christian, Muslim, and Others.

The overwhelming majority of respondents identified as Christians, constituting 87.5% of the total sample. In contrast, the Muslim respondents represented a smaller percentage, at 8.7%. A small portion of respondents fell into the "Others" category, making up 3.8% of the sample.

The distribution of respondents across various religious affiliations reflects the religious diversity within the context of the study. The dominant Christian representation is consistent with the general religious composition in the region. It is worth noting that this diversity in religious affiliations provides an opportunity to explore potential variations in how students from different religious backgrounds perceive Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its influence on their career choices.

Table 6: Ethnic Background

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Igbo	55	52.9	52.9	52.9
	Yoruba	33	31.7	31.7	84.6
	Hausa	11	10.6	10.6	95.2
	Others	5	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 6 illustrates the distribution of respondents based on their ethnic backgrounds. The respondents were categorized into four ethnic groups: Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, and Others.

Among the respondents, the largest ethnic group was Igbo comprising 52.9% of the total sample. Following closely were the Yoruba, respondents, representing 31.7% of the sample. The Hausa ethnic group constituted 10.6% of the respondents, while the "Others" category accounted for 4.8%.

The distribution of respondents across various ethnic backgrounds reflects the ethnic diversity within the region of Ebonyi North Educational Zone. This diversity is important as it allows for an exploration of potential variations in how students from different ethnic backgrounds perceive Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its impact on their career choices. Different ethnic backgrounds may have distinct cultural perspectives and influences on career decisions.

In conclusion, Table 4.6 demonstrates a diverse representation of ethnic backgrounds among the respondents, with the majority being of Igbo ethnicity. This diversity enhances the study's ability to examine how CRS perceptions relate to career choices among students from various ethnic backgrounds, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic within the specific cultural context of Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

Table 7: Parent's Education Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No Formal Education	15	14.4	14.4	14.4
	Primary Education	12	11.5	11.5	26.0
	Secondary Education	21	20.2	20.2	46.2
	Tertiary Education	37	35.6	35.6	81.7
	Others	19	18.3	18.3	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 7 presents the distribution of respondents based on their parents' education levels. The respondents' parents' education was categorized into five groups: No Formal Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Tertiary Education, and Others.

Among the respondents, the largest group was those whose parents had attained tertiary education, representing 35.6% of the total sample. Secondary education was the next most common educational level among parents, constituting 20.2% of the respondents. A significant portion of parents had received no formal education (14.4%), while others had completed primary education (11.5%). The "Others" category accounted for 18.3% of the sample.

The distribution of respondents' parents' education levels provides insights into the educational backgrounds of families in the study area. It is essential to consider this factor as parents' education can influence students' career choices and perceptions of Christian Religious Studies (CRS).

Table 8: How would you describe your family's overall financial situation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Average	87	83.7	83.7	83.7
	Comfortable	5	4.8	4.8	88.5
	Well-off	12	11.5	11.5	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 8 illustrates respondents' descriptions of their family's overall financial situation. The respondents were categorized into three groups: Average, Comfortable, and Well-off, based on their perceptions of their family's financial status.

The majority of respondents perceived their family's financial situation as "Average," constituting 83.7% of the total sample. A smaller proportion of respondents described their family's financial status as "Well-off," representing 11.5% of the sample. Only a few respondents indicated that their family's financial situation was "Comfortable," accounting for 4.8% of the respondents.

The distribution of responses regarding family financial situations provides valuable context for understanding the socioeconomic backgrounds of the respondents. Family financial status can impact students' career aspirations and choices, as it may influence the availability of resources for education and career development.

Data Analysis and Answers to Research Questions

1 How do secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone perceive Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject?

Table 9: CRS provides valuable insights into moral and ethical values.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	74	71.2	71.2	71.2
	Uncertain	22	21.2	21.2	92.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 9 presents respondents' perceptions of whether Christian Religious Studies (CRS) provides valuable insights into moral and ethical values. This question aimed to gauge the extent to which students agree or disagree with this statement.

The majority of respondents, accounting for 71.2%, agreed that CRS provides valuable insights into moral and ethical values. A significant portion of respondents, 21.2%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement. A smaller percentage, 7.7%, disagreed with the assertion.

These responses reflect the varying perspectives of students regarding the role of CRS in shaping moral and ethical values. The majority of students acknowledge the significance of CRS in this regard, which aligns with the subject's primary focus on religious and ethical teachings. However, the presence of uncertainty and disagreement highlights the diversity of opinions within the student population.

Table 10: I find CRS interesting and relevant to my life.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	80	76.9	76.9	76.9
	Uncertain	16	15.4	15.4	92.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 10 displays respondents' perceptions of whether they find Christian Religious Studies (CRS) interesting and relevant to their lives. This question aimed to assess the degree to which students agree or disagree with this statement.

The majority of respondents, constituting 76.9%, agreed that they find CRS interesting and relevant to their lives. A notable portion, 15.4%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement, while a smaller percentage, 7.7%, disagreed.

These responses highlight that a significant proportion of students have a positive view of CRS, finding it both interesting and relevant to their lives. However, the presence of uncertainty and disagreement indicates that not all students share this perspective. Exploring the factors that contribute to students' varying perceptions of CRS is essential for gaining a deeper understanding of the subject's impact on their career choices and aspirations.

Table 11: CRS helps me develop a better understanding of my religious beliefs.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	78	75.0	75.0	75.0

Uncertain	18	17.3	17.3	92.3
Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 11 presents respondents' perceptions of whether Christian Religious Studies (CRS) helps them develop a better understanding of their religious beliefs. This question aimed to explore the extent to which students agree or disagree with this statement.

The majority of respondents, comprising 75.0%, agreed that CRS helps them develop a better understanding of their religious beliefs. A significant proportion, 17.3%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement, while a smaller percentage, 7.7%, disagreed.

These responses indicate that a substantial portion of students acknowledge the role of CRS in enhancing their understanding of their religious beliefs. However, the presence of uncertainty and disagreement suggests that not all students share this perspective. This diversity in perceptions may be influenced by various factors, including individual religious backgrounds and personal experiences.

Table 12: CRS should be included in the curriculum of all secondary schools.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Agree	87	83.7	83.7	83.7
Uncertain	9	8.7	8.7	92.3
Disagree'	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 12 displays respondents' opinions on whether Christian Religious Studies (CRS) should be included in the curriculum of all secondary schools. This question aimed to assess the extent to which students agree or disagree with this proposition.

A significant majority of respondents, constituting 83.7%, agreed that CRS should be included in the curriculum of all secondary schools. A smaller percentage, 8.7%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement, while 7.7% disagreed.

These responses reflect that most students support the inclusion of CRS in the curriculum of secondary schools. The strong agreement with this proposition suggests that students perceive value in having CRS as part of their educational experience. However, the presence of uncertainty and disagreement implies that there are varying viewpoints on this matter, which could be influenced by factors such as personal beliefs and experiences.

To what extent does the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone influence the career choices of secondary school students, especially about CRS?

Table 13: My socio-cultural background plays a significant role in shaping my career aspirations.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	81	77.9	77.9	77.9
	Uncertain	15	14.4	14.4	92.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 13 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the role of their socio-cultural background in shaping their career aspirations. This question aimed to investigate the extent to which students agree or disagree with this notion.

A substantial majority of respondents, constituting 77.9%, agreed that their socio-cultural background plays a significant role in shaping their career aspirations. A notable portion, 14.4%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement, while a smaller percentage, 7.7%, disagreed.

These responses highlight that a significant proportion of students recognize the influence of their sociocultural background on their career aspirations. The presence of uncertainty and disagreement suggests that there is some variation in how students perceive this influence, which may be related to their unique experiences and backgrounds.

Table 14: I feel uncertain about the impact of my socio-cultural environment on my career decisions related to CRS.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	81	77.9	77.9	77.9
	Uncertain	15	14.4	14.4	92.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 14 displays respondents' feelings of uncertainty about the impact of their sociocultural environment on their career decisions related to Christian Religious Studies (CRS). This question aimed to gauge the extent to which students feel uncertain about this influence.

The majority of respondents, constituting 77.9%, agreed that they feel uncertain about the impact of their socio-cultural environment on their career decisions related to CRS. A smaller portion, 14.4%, expressed uncertainty regarding this statement, while 7.7% disagreed.

These responses indicate that a significant proportion of students experience uncertainty regarding how their sociocultural environment influences their career decisions in the context of CRS. The presence of uncertainty suggests that students may not have a clear understanding of the dynamics at play in this regard, which may warrant further exploration in the study.

Table 15: The cultural values and traditions in Akoko North West Arigidi have influenced my career choices.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	91	87.5	87.5	87.5
	Uncertain	10	9.6	9.6	97.1
	Disagree'	3	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 15 presents respondents' perceptions regarding the influence of cultural values and traditions in Ebonyi North Educational Zone on their career choices. This question aimed to explore the extent to which students agree or disagree with this influence.

The overwhelming majority of respondents, comprising 87.5%, agreed that the cultural values and traditions in Ebonyi North Educational Zone have influenced their career choices. A small percentage, 9.6%, expressed uncertainty about this statement, while an even smaller percentage, 2.9%, disagreed.

These responses emphasize that a significant majority of students acknowledge the impact of cultural values and traditions in their locality on their career choices. The presence of uncertainty and disagreement suggests that there are variations in how students perceive this influence, which may be related to individual experiences and perspectives.

Table 16: My socio-cultural environment has an influence on my career aspirations within CRS.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	89	85.6	85.6	85.6
	Uncertain	10	9.6	9.6	95.2
	Disagree	5	4.8	4.8	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 16 illustrates the responses of the respondents regarding the influence of their socio-cultural environment on their career aspirations within Christian Religious Studies (CRS). This question sought to gauge the extent to which students agree or disagree with the notion that their socio-cultural environment plays a role in shaping their career aspirations within CRS.

The majority of respondents, constituting 85.6%, agreed that their socio-cultural environment has an influence on their career aspirations within CRS. A smaller proportion, 9.6%, expressed uncertainty about this influence, while 4.8% disagreed with the statement.

These findings highlight that a significant portion of the students perceive their socio-cultural environment as a factor that shapes their career aspirations within CRS. The presence of uncertainty and disagreement indicates that there is variability in how students view this influence, possibly influenced by individual experiences and interpretations.

What is the potential impact of students' perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions?

Table 17: My perception of CRS motivates me to consider career paths related to religion or spirituality.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	79	76.0	76.0	76.0
	Uncertain	17	16.3	16.3	92.3
	Disagree	8	7.7	7.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 17 presents the responses of the respondents regarding the influence of their perception of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on their motivation to consider career paths related to religion or spirituality. This question aimed to assess the extent to which students feel motivated to pursue careers in the field of religion or spirituality based on their perception of CRS.

The results indicate that a significant proportion of the respondents, accounting for 76.0%, agreed that their perception of CRS motivates them to consider career paths related to religion or spirituality. A smaller percentage, 16.3%, expressed uncertainty about this motivation, while 7.7% disagreed with the statement.

These findings suggest that for a majority of students, CRS serves as a source of motivation to explore career opportunities in fields associated with religion or spirituality. The presence of uncertainty and disagreement implies that there may be varying levels of influence or motivation among students, possibly due to individual differences and experiences.

In summary, Table 17 underscores the role of perception in motivating students to consider careers related to religion or spirituality within CRS. The variation in responses indicates the need for further investigation to better understand the diverse influences on students' career motivations in this context.

Table 18: My perception of CRS can impact my future career choices.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	90	86.5	86.5	86.5
	Uncertain	12	11.5	11.5	98.1
	Disagree	2	1.9	1.9	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 18 presents the responses of the respondents regarding the impact of their perception of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on their future career choices. This question aimed to assess whether students believe that their perception of CRS can influence their career decisions.

The results indicate that a substantial majority of the respondents, constituting 86.5%, agreed that their perception of CRS can impact their future career choices. A smaller percentage, 11.5%, expressed uncertainty about this impact, while only 1.9% disagreed with the statement.

These findings highlight that most students recognize the potential influence of their perception of CRS on their career decisions. The presence of uncertainty among some respondents suggests that there may be complexities and nuances in the relationship between CRS perception and career choices, which warrant further exploration.

In summary, Table 18 underscores the perceived importance of CRS in shaping students' future career choices. It emphasizes the need to investigate the specific mechanisms through which CRS perception can impact career decision-making among students.

Table 19: CRS has positively influenced my career aspirations, making me consider options related to ethical leadership.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	85	81.7	81.7	81.7
	Uncertain	12	11.5	11.5	93.3
	Disagree	7	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table 19 presents the responses of the respondents regarding the influence of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on their career aspirations, specifically in terms of considering options related to ethical leadership. This question aimed to explore whether students believe that CRS has a positive impact on their career aspirations in this context.

The results reveal that a significant majority of the respondents, comprising 81.7%, agreed that CRS has positively influenced their career aspirations, making them consider options related to ethical leadership. A smaller percentage, 11.5%, expressed uncertainty about this influence, while 6.7% disagreed with the statement.

These findings emphasize the role of CRS in shaping students' career aspirations, particularly in the context of ethical leadership. The presence of uncertainty and disagreement among some respondents suggests that there may be variations in how CRS impacts individual students, which could be influenced by various factors.

In summary, Table 19 underscores the perceived positive influence of CRS on career aspirations related to ethical leadership among a significant proportion of students. Further exploration is needed to understand the mechanisms through which CRS achieves this impact and to address variations in perception among students.

Table 20: My perception of CRS has no relevance to my future career decisions.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Agree	94	90.4	90.4	90.4
	Uncertain	10	9.6	9.6	100.0
	Total	104	100.0	100.0	

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

Table.20 presents the responses of the respondents concerning the relevance of their perception of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) to their future career decisions. This question aimed to explore whether students believe that their perception of CRS plays a significant role in shaping their future career choices.

The results show that a substantial majority of the respondents, comprising 90.4%, agreed that their perception of CRS has no relevance to their future career decisions. In contrast, 9.6% expressed uncertainty about the relevance of their CRS perception in this context.

These findings indicate that most students in the study do not perceive CRS as a significant factor influencing their future career choices. The presence of uncertainty among a smaller percentage of respondents suggests that some students may have mixed feelings or varying degrees of certainty regarding the relevance of CRS perception to their career decisions.

In summary, Table 20 highlights that, for the majority of students, their perception of CRS is not considered a major factor in shaping their future career choices. Further research could delve into the reasons behind this perception and its potential implications for career development.

Test of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance with the aid of the t-test:

1. There is no significant relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and their academic performance in the subject.
2. The socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone does not significantly influence the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS.
3. Students' perception of CRS has no significant impact on their career aspirations and decisions.

4.3.1 Test of Hypothesis 1

Table 21: One-Sample Statistics 1

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The perception of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject.	4	87.75	5.439	2.720

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

To test the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and their academic performance in the subject, a one-sample t-test was conducted. An assumed mean of 0 was used, and the critical table value was set at 2.353 at a 5% level of significance.

From Table .21, the following statistics were obtained:

Sample size (N) = 4

Mean (M) = 87.75

Standard Deviation (Std. Deviation) = 5.439

Standard Error Mean (Std. Error Mean) = 2.720

The t-statistic was computed using the formula:

$$t = \frac{M - \text{Assumed Mean}}{\text{Std. Error Mean}}$$

Substituting the values:

$$t = \frac{87.75 - 0}{2.720} = 32.27$$

The computed t-statistic (32.27) was then compared with the critical table value (2.353).

Given that the computed t-statistic (32.27) significantly exceeds the critical table value (2.353), the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it can be concluded that there is indeed a significant relationship between the perception of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject and their academic performance in the subject. This suggests that students' perceptions of CRS are linked to their performance in CRS.

Table 22: One-Sample Statistics 2

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone influences the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS.	4	91.50	2.887	1.443

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

To test the hypothesis that the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone does not significantly influence the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS, a one-sample t-test was conducted. An assumed mean of 0 was used, and the critical table value was set at 2.353 at a 5% level of significance.

From Table 4.22, the following statistics were obtained:

Sample size (N) = 4

Mean (M) = 91.50

Standard Deviation (Std. Deviation) = 2.887

Standard Error Mean (Std. Error Mean) = 1.443

The t-statistic was computed using the formula:

$$t = \frac{M - \text{Assumed Mean}}{\text{Std. Error Mean}}$$

Substituting the values:

$$t=91.50-01.443=91.501.443\approx63.45$$

The computed t-statistic (63.45) was then compared with the critical table value (2.353).

Given that the computed t-statistic (63.45) significantly exceeds the critical table value (2.353), the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it can be concluded that the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone significantly influences the career choices of secondary school students, particularly about CRS. This suggests that students' career choices in CRS are indeed influenced by their socio-cultural environment in Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

Table 23: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
The potential impact of students' perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions	4	91.25	2.986	1.493

Source: SPSS27 Output, 2023

To test the hypothesis concerning the potential impact of students' perception of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions, a one-sample t-test was performed. An assumed mean of 0 was utilized, with a critical table value set at 2.353 for a 5% level of significance.

Here are the statistics obtained from Table 23:

Sample size (N) = 4

Mean (M) = 91.25

Standard Deviation (Std. Deviation) = 2.986

Standard Error Mean (Std. Error Mean) = 1.493

The t-statistic was computed using the formula:

$$t = \frac{M - \text{Assumed Mean}}{\text{Std. Error Mean}}$$

Plugging in the values:

$$t = 91.25 - 01.493 = 91.251.493 \approx 61.10$$

Comparing the computed t-statistic (61.10) to the critical table value (2.353), it is evident that the computed t-statistic significantly exceeds the critical table value.

As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. It can be concluded that the student's perception of CRS has a significant potential impact on their career aspirations and decisions. This suggests that how students perceive CRS plays a substantial role in shaping their career aspirations and decisions related to this subject.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Discussion of Findings

Objective 1 of this study aimed to explore how secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone perceive Christian Religious Studies (CRS) as an academic subject. The findings from Tables 9 to 12 shed light on this objective.

Table 9 shows that a significant majority of respondents (71.2%) agreed that CRS provides valuable insights into moral and ethical values. This suggests that students recognize the ethical and moral dimensions of CRS, indicating a positive perception of the subject's academic value. However, a notable portion (21.2%) expressed uncertainty, and a minority (7.7%) disagreed. This may imply that while many students find moral and ethical insights in CRS, some remain unsure about this aspect.

In Table 10, 76.9% of respondents agreed that they find CRS interesting and relevant to their lives. This is a substantial majority, indicating that students generally see CRS as an engaging and personally meaningful academic subject. However, 15.4% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed. This could mean that while most students find CRS interesting, some still have reservations or uncertainties about its relevance to their lives.

Table 11 indicates that 75.0% of respondents agreed that CRS helps them develop a better understanding of their religious beliefs. This suggests that many students perceive CRS as instrumental in enhancing their understanding of their faith. However, 17.3% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed. This implies that some students may not feel that CRS significantly contributes to their understanding of their religious beliefs.

Lastly, Table 12 reveals that 83.7% of respondents agreed that CRS should be included in the curriculum of all secondary schools. This overwhelming majority indicates strong support for the inclusion of CRS in secondary school education. However, 8.7% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed. This suggests that while most students advocate for the inclusion of CRS, a small portion remains uncertain or opposed to this idea.

In summary, the findings related to Objective 1 highlight that the majority of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone perceive CRS as a subject that provides valuable insights into moral and ethical values, find it interesting and relevant to their lives and believe it helps them better understand their religious beliefs. Additionally, there is substantial support for

the inclusion of CRS in the secondary school curriculum. However, there are varying degrees of uncertainty and disagreement among some students, indicating a diversity of perspectives regarding the subject's academic value and relevance. These findings provide valuable insights into how students perceive CRS as an academic subject.

Objective 2 of this study aimed to investigate the extent to which the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone influences the career choices of secondary school students, particularly in Christian Religious Studies (CRS). The findings from Tables 3 to 16 provide detailed insights into this objective.

Table 13 shows that 77.9% of respondents agreed that their socio-cultural background plays a significant role in shaping their career aspirations, indicating that many students acknowledge the influence of their cultural environment on their career choices. However, 14.4% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed, suggesting that some students may not be fully aware of this influence or may perceive it differently.

In Table 14, 77.9% of respondents agreed that they feel uncertain about the impact of their socio-cultural environment on their career decisions related to CRS. This suggests that while students recognize the influence of their cultural environment, they may not always feel certain about how it affects their specific career choices within CRS. Additionally, 14.4% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed.

Table 15 indicates that 87.5% of respondents agreed that the cultural values and traditions in Ebonyi North Educational Zone have influenced their career choices. This substantial majority implies that students believe their cultural background plays a significant role in shaping their career decisions. However, 9.6% expressed uncertainty, and 2.9% disagreed, indicating some variations in the degree of influence perceived.

Lastly, Table 16 reveals that 85.6% of respondents agreed that their socio-cultural environment has an influence on their career aspirations within CRS. This suggests that students recognize the impact of their cultural environment on their career aspirations related to CRS. However, 9.6% expressed uncertainty, and 4.8% disagreed, indicating that some students may not feel this influence strongly.

In summary, the findings related to Objective 2 suggest that the socio-cultural environment of Ebonyi North Educational Zone plays a significant role in shaping the career aspirations and choices of secondary school students, particularly within the context of CRS. The majority of students recognize this influence, but there are variations in the degree of certainty and agreement among respondents. These findings highlight the complex interplay between sociocultural factors and career choices and provide valuable insights into how students perceive the influence of their cultural environment on their career decisions within CRS.

Objective 3 of this study aimed to investigate the potential impact of students' perception of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on their career aspirations and decisions. The findings from Tables 17 to 20 provide insights into this objective.

Table 17 indicates that 76.0% of respondents agreed that their perception of CRS motivates them to consider career paths related to religion or spirituality. This suggests that many students believe that their perception of CRS has a positive influence on their career aspirations, particularly in ethical or spiritual fields. However, 16.3% expressed uncertainty, and 7.7% disagreed, indicating variations in how students perceive this impact.

In Table 18, 86.5% of respondents agreed that their perception of CRS can impact their future career choices. This finding suggests that students generally believe that their perception of CRS has the potential to influence their career decisions positively. However, 11.5% expressed uncertainty, and 1.9% disagreed, indicating some variations in the degree of perceived impact.

Table 19 reveals that 81.7% of respondents agreed that CRS has positively influenced their career aspirations, making them consider options related to ethical leadership. This indicates that a significant portion of students attribute a positive impact to CRS on their career aspirations, particularly in the context of ethical leadership roles. However, 11.5% expressed uncertainty, and 6.7% disagreed, suggesting variations in how students perceive this influence.

Lastly, Table 20 shows that 90.4% of respondents agreed that their perception of CRS has no relevance to their future career decisions. This finding suggests that the majority of students do not believe that their perception of CRS plays a role in their future career choices. However, 9.6% expressed uncertainty, indicating that some students may be unsure about the relevance of CRS to their career decisions.

In summary, the findings related to Objective 3 indicate that students have diverse perceptions of the potential impact of CRS on their career aspirations and decisions. While some students believe that CRS positively influences their career choices, others do not see a significant relevance. These findings highlight the complexity of the relationship between students' perceptions of CRS and their career aspirations, emphasizing the need for further investigation and support for students in making informed career decisions within the context of religious studies.

Implication of the Study

The implications of this study are significant and extend to various stakeholders in the field of education, particularly within the context of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and career development for secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone.

Firstly, for secondary school students, the study's findings emphasize the importance of understanding how their perceptions of CRS can influence their career aspirations and choices. Recognizing that some students perceive a positive impact on their career decisions related to ethics, spirituality, or leadership, while others do not, highlights the need for tailored career

guidance and counselling services. Schools should consider integrating career counselling within CRS classes to help students explore and align their career goals with their religious and ethical values. This could lead to more informed career decisions and potentially greater satisfaction in their chosen paths.

Secondly, for educators and curriculum developers, the study underscores the value of CRS as an academic subject. The finding that a majority of students find CRS interesting and relevant to their lives suggests that educators should continue to promote engaging and meaningful instruction in CRS. Additionally, educators can draw on these findings to create connections between CRS and various career paths, highlighting the subject's applicability beyond the classroom. This can motivate students to see CRS as a foundation for ethical and spiritually oriented-careers.

Thirdly, policymakers and educational authorities can use the study's results to refine the curriculum and educational policies. Recognizing that students come from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds, the curriculum can be adapted to include elements that address these variations and connect them with career development. Moreover, considering the students' perception that CRS should be included in the curriculum of all secondary schools, policymakers might explore ways to strengthen the presence and role of CRS in the overall educational system.

Fourthly, for parents and guardians, the study highlights the importance of supporting students in their career choices, especially within the context of CRS. Parents can engage in conversations with their children about how their religious and cultural backgrounds shape their career aspirations. By understanding their children's perspectives, parents can provide guidance and support tailored to their unique needs and beliefs.

Lastly, the study contributes to the broader discourse on the relationship between religious studies and career development. It provides insights into how religious subjects like CRS can influence students' career choices and aspirations, shedding light on the potential synergy between faith-based education and ethical career paths. Researchers and scholars in the field of education can use these findings as a foundation for further exploration and investigation into the intersections of religion, education, and career development.

Limitations of the Study

The study on the perceptions of secondary school students regarding Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its impact on their career choices in Ebonyi North Educational Zone encountered several limitations that warrant acknowledgement. These limitations pertain to various aspects of the research, including methods, location, and situational constraints.

Firstly, one notable limitation of this study is the use of a convenient sampling technique. While this method was chosen for practical reasons and to facilitate data collection within the available timeframe, it may introduce some bias in the results. The sample may not be fully representative

of the entire population of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone, which could affect the generalizability of the findings. Future research in this area could benefit from a more rigorous sampling approach, such as stratified sampling, to enhance the study's external validity.

Secondly, the study's reliance on a quantitative survey instrument, while efficient for collecting data from a relatively large sample, limited the depth of understanding that could be gained from the participants. The survey format may not have allowed students to fully express the nuances of their perceptions and experiences. A complementary qualitative approach, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide richer insights into the students' views and the reasons behind their perceptions.

Thirdly, the research was conducted in a specific geographical location, Ebonyi North Educational Zone, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other regions or cultural contexts. The socio-cultural environment, religious practices, and educational system in this area may differ significantly from other parts of Nigeria or the world. Researchers should exercise caution when applying these findings to different contexts and consider conducting similar studies in diverse settings for a more comprehensive understanding of the topic.

Lastly, the study's cross-sectional design captured a snapshot of students' perceptions at a specific point in time. Career aspirations and perceptions can be dynamic and subject to change over time due to various factors, including personal experiences and evolving socio-cultural influences. A longitudinal study that follows students over an extended period could provide a more nuanced perspective on the evolution of their perceptions and career choices.

Summary

In this study, the examination of secondary school students' perceptions concerning Christian Religious Studies (CRS) and its potential influence on their career choices was carried out. The research revolved around three primary objectives: exploring how students perceive CRS as an academic subject, investigating the role of the socio-cultural environment in shaping their career choices and examining the potential impact of CRS perceptions on their career aspirations. To address these objectives, a quantitative survey was conducted, and data were collected from 104 students.

Conclusion

This study reveals the significant role CRS plays in the lives of secondary school students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone. Their positive perception of CRS, coupled with the influence of the socio-cultural environment, has implications for their career choices and aspirations. These findings emphasize the need for educational institutions to recognize and harness the potential of CRS in guiding students toward ethical and morally grounded career paths. Additionally, the study highlights the importance of considering cultural and religious factors in career counselling to ensure that students' aspirations align with their values and beliefs.

Recommendations

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

Educational authorities should consider enhancing the integration of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) into the curriculum of secondary schools. The overwhelmingly positive perception of CRS among students suggests that it can play a pivotal role in their academic and moral development. A well-structured CRS curriculum can further promote ethical and moral values among students.

Career guidance and counselling services in secondary schools should be culturally sensitive and acknowledge the influence of the socio-cultural environment on students' career choices. Counsellors should be trained to address the unique cultural and religious backgrounds of students in Ebonyi North Educational Zone and provide guidance that aligns with their values and beliefs.

Schools should explore opportunities to integrate ethical and moral education into their career development programs. The positive impact of CRS on students' career aspirations related to ethical leadership highlights the potential for incorporating moral and ethical values into career guidance initiatives.

Further research is needed to continuously assess the evolving perceptions of CRS among secondary school students. Longitudinal studies can provide insights into how these perceptions change over time and their implications for career choices. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of specific interventions, such as culturally sensitive career counselling, should be conducted to inform educational practices.

Educational institutions should provide ongoing training and support for career guidance professionals to equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to address the career development needs of students effectively. This includes training in culturally sensitive counselling techniques and strategies.

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