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RESEARCH ARTICLE

AVAILABILITY AND USE OF AUDIOVISUAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHING CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN KIMILILI IN BUNGOMA COUNTRY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

One of the main objectives of the secondary school 8-4-4 system in Kenya is to prepare students for self-reliance, further training and further education. Christian Religious Education in secondary schools in Kenya occupies a key position in the curriculum. This is so because it enables the learners to integrate all subjects of the curriculum into a more mature view of themselves, their relationships with their environment, both physical and cultural, their fellow human beings and God. The purpose of the study was to establish factors that challenge use of audiovisual resources for teaching Christian Religious Education (CRE) in Kimilili Division, Bungoma County in Kenya. Based on the study, this paper examines the level of availability and use of audiovisual resources for teaching CRE in the schools selected for study in the area. The study adopted a survey research design. Simple random sampling was used to select both CRE teachers and students who participated in the study while stratified sampling was used to select the schools that participated in the study. The sample was drawn from secondary schools in Kimilili Division of Bungoma County in Kenya. The sample population was 266 subjects comprising 242 CRE students and 24 CRE teachers in the Division. The instruments used for data collection were questionnaires and observation schedules. The study used two sets of questionnaires; one for CRE teachers and another for students. Data collected was quantitatively analyzed by descriptive statistics and presented using tables and graphs. It was discovered that the greatest challenge to the teaching of CRE using audiovisual resources is the unavailability of audiovisual resources in schools in Kimilili Division. Consequently, it was recommended that curriculum planners and schools should endeavour to avail audiovisual resources to schools for teaching CRE.

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INTRODUCTION

Desiderius Erasmus, the Dutch humanist, theologian and writer (1466-1536), as cited in Aggarwal (1995), discourages memorization as a technique of learning and advocates that children should learn through the aid of pictures or other visuals. What Erasmus clearly indicates is that teaching children by use of audiovisual aids is more effective than teaching by use of verbal communication because excessive use of verbal communication encourages memorization rather than understanding. Whereas Erasmus underscores the importance of audiovisuals resources in teaching, he does not explain why many teachers still prefer to use verbal communication alone in teaching.

This paper attempts to examine the extent of availability of audiovisual aids for teaching Christian Religious Education (CRE) in schools in Kenya. John Amos Cornelius (1592-1670) in his book *Orbis senselium pictus* (The World of Sense Objects) (as cited in Aggarwal, 1995) asserts that children can best be taught by use of pictures or visual aids. This is not only true for younger children but also true for adolescents and adults. Our research sought to establish the secondary school students' attitude towards the use of modern audiovisual media for learning CRE in Kimilili division.

Cornelius' views also underscore how the use of audiovisual aids in teaching has been emphasized from as early as the 17th century. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and other educators in history have all stressed the importance of pictures and other play materials in teaching. Rousseau condemns the use of mere words by teachers and stresses that 'things' must be directed to the learners' natural curiosity.

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Pestalozzi (1756-1827) has also placed Rousseau's theory into action in his object method. Pestalozzi bases instruction on sense perception. Though Rousseau and Pestalozzi, as early educators, place a lot of emphasis on the use of audiovisual aids in making children understand teaching content, they do not try to explain why many teachers still fail to use audiovisual aids in their work.

The Use of Audiovisual Resources

Aggarwal (1995), citing Cobun (1968), observes that more is learnt and retained if audiovisual media is used during teaching. Like any other subject, CRE content can be made clearer and relevant to the lives of learners if the subject is taught by use of visual aids. Learners who taught by use of verbal communication simply memorize content for passing examinations. CRE is a subject that is designed to have a moral impact on the lives of young Kenyans. Therefore, it is crucial that the subject is taught in a way that this objective is maximally achieved. Bishop (1986), reporting on a research conducted in 1969 by Chiba Prefectural Education Centre in Japan, posits that there are considerable educational advantages and gains with the application of educational technology in primary and lower secondary schools. CRE teaching can also have great advantages if it is done using educational technology.

In traditional informal education on societal norms and values, especially in Africa, professional educators lived in a world of self-contained and self-verified notions where they tended to design and manage the education process as if the communication environment did not exist. They operated as if it had no basic impact on knowledge and attitudes did not profoundly influence the modes of expression and involvement of young and old. According to UNESCO (1975), failure to use modern media of communication within the educational system as tools of instruction is intimately related to lack of recognition of communication outside the system. To ignore communication media leads to the tendency to prepare students for the world of the past rather than for the capacity to live with and to dominate accelerated change today and in the future. CRE teachers cannot afford to ignore the use of communication media in teaching if the subject has to achieve its objectives.

According to Aggarwal (1995), verbalism promotes memorization. That is why the students can afford to pass the examinations but education seems to have moral impact on lives. According to Callahan and Clark (1990), audiovisual aids often serve to facilitate learning and eliminate some verbalism. The question is: why would CRE teachers fail to use modern audiovisual media to help enhance understanding and make the subject more relevant to the lives of learners?

Matiru *et al.* (1995) state that university lecturers are faced with the challenge of selecting the best and most appropriate teaching methods and instructional media to complement these methods. According to Matiru *et al.* (1995), the selection of instructional media is influenced by many factors, including economic and political constraints as well as cost, time availability, ease of use and maintenance of the media chosen. The selection of media for teaching is also influenced by

characteristics of the lecturer such as the personal skills, attitudes and preferences.

Commenting on the use of audiovisual for teaching in India, Aggarwal (1995) states that teachers in general are yet to be convinced that teaching with abstract words alone is very tedious, wasteful and ineffective. According to Aggarwal (1995), many teachers in India still think that the best way to teach is through verbal communication and have not realized that they can be more effective if they use audiovisual resources. Mukwa and Too (2002) state that the use of visual communication is highly recommended for teachers in all disciplines because proper use of these visual aids can enhance learning, improve comprehension and increase retention of information in the learners' mind. Just like other disciplines, CRE can achieve many of its objectives if the subject is taught by audiovisual aids. The question many teachers have asked is whether the subject can be taught by audiovisual aids. According to Mialaret (1966), audiovisual techniques play the role of catalyst; they prepare the way for acquiring something else, help develop aptitude which will be used later in apprenticeship and prepare favourable ground for new acquisition.

Brown (1986) opines that children easily understand and better remember information presented only in the illustrations. In fact, they remember picture content longer than they do verbal texts. When children are presented with a television, film or the same story in print they tend to believe themselves to be better able to learn from television version (Moss *et al.*, 1991). Commenting on the challenges of teaching using audiovisual resources, Moss *et al.* (1991) observe that among those who would like to use television or video more in schools, there are three main barriers to greater use: first, the need for more equipment or limited access to television/video hardware; second, the perceived lack of suitable or relevant programmes, and third, organizational problems and pressure of time on the teacher. Mialaret (1966) says that the effectiveness of audiovisual techniques can be appreciated in terms of intelligence, logic and clear distinct acquisition. The aim of teaching is to impart in pupils and students knowledge and understanding of the subject matter under consideration. It is also meant to impart in them the mastery of a technique through practice more than by rote learning. The teacher must respond to the practical needs of learners for teaching to be effective.

The techniques of teaching vary according to the subject, the level at which it is being taught, the kind of learners it is being taught to and the circumstance in which the teaching takes place (Hamlyn, 1978). Barta *et al.* (1995) state that with better access to audiovisual and curriculum resources material, the quality of classroom teaching will also improve. Kocchar (1991) observes that the use of audiovisual aids in teaching helps in development of proper concepts, improvement of attitudes and extensions of appreciations and interest. Kocchar (1991) feels that mere verbal descriptions do not bring the facts home to the pupils. The teacher must take the help of audiovisual aids to supplement and explain the spoken word. Similarly, Babin (1970) emphasizes on the importance of audiovisual by asserting that audiovisuals fosters personal

involvement, gets one involved and stirs an emotional response making one want to do something. Grambs *et al.* (1970), in a research on modern methods of teaching in secondary schools, state that the motion picture and television programmes provide similar learning experiences. Both have the ability to show the world in action through sight, sound and colour. To what extent do CRE teachers in Bungoma County use audiovisual aids in teaching? Callahan and Clark (1990) observe that moving pictures are among the most useful of teaching tools currently available. They can be used to arouse learners' interest, influence their attitudes towards subjects, clarify student's concepts, stimulate thinking, summarize, reinforce learning, demonstrate and bring into the classroom vividly much that could otherwise only be merely talked about in abstraction. They, therefore, make wonderful springboards for further learning.

Statement of the Problem

The effort of any teacher in instruction is to make the message clear, communicate the idea, capture the content and clarify the obscure for the learner. According to Nacico-Brown *et al.* (1982), teachers are often accused of "over-verbalization" because of their excessive use of words to convey meanings. Callahan and Clark (1990, p. 412) also observe that most of the teachers' day is filled with periods of explanation and discourse so much so that the teaching profession has been accused of perpetuating verbalism in the schools. CRE in secondary schools in Kenya occupies a key position in the 8-4-4 curriculum. With the removal of Social Education and Ethics (SEE) in secondary school curriculum, CRE remains the only subject that addresses moral concerns of learning in Kenya's secondary education.

One of the major objectives of CRE is to help learners acquire social, spiritual and moral insights to help them make ethical decisions in a rapidly changing society (Kenya Institute of Education [KIE], 2000). A cursory observation of CRE students' behaviour in secondary schools and the general feelings expressed by parents, teachers and the general public indicate that this objective is not being achieved because students – and many other people who have gone through secondary education system, including political leaders – do not seem able to make appropriate moral decisions. The Wangai Committee (2001), charged with investigating students' discipline and unrest in secondary schools in Kenya, reports that decay in moral values and norms to a great extent influence the behaviour and character of students. Groenewegen (1995) also observes that one of the reasons CRE lessons tend to be boring is that the subject teachers make almost exclusively use verbal communication in teaching.

The focus of the study, therefore, was to address the two problems by investigating the factors challenging the use of audiovisual media for teaching CRE in secondary schools in Kimilili Division Bungoma County. The thesis of the study was that audiovisual media can help CRE teachers to better achieve the subject's objective of making students understand the moral relevance of what is taught. It is also argued that audiovisual resources can help make the subject more

interesting. Therefore, the use of audiovisual media in teaching can improve the moral behaviour of those who are taught CRE. The present secondary school CRE syllabus in Kenya has many biblical topics, concepts and issues whose understanding can be enhanced as learning is made more interesting, effective and relevant to the learners by use of audiovisual media. These audiovisual media include motion picture films, video cassettes, slides and posters. According to Callahan and Clark (1990), often serve to facilitate learning and eliminate verbalism. Therefore, CRE teachers should use audiovisual media.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was carried out in Kimilili Division of Bungoma County in Western Province of Kenya. At the time of the study, Kimilili division had 16 secondary schools: six girls' schools, three boys' schools and seven mixed-gender schools. CRE was being offered in all the sixteen secondary schools in the Division. The research adopted a survey design. According to Nsubuga (2000, p. 79), a survey is an important method employed when trying to solve problems in educational sections. Survey research is regarded the best method available to social scientists and other educators who are interested in collecting original data for the purposes of describing a population which is too large to observe directly (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, p. 165). The study targeted all secondary schools in Kimilili Division. The sample population was drawn from nine of these secondary schools. The schools were selected on the basis of gender composition of students. The study involved all the CRE teachers who had taught the subject for the last three years.

These were regarded to have sufficient experience to express valid views on the use of audiovisual media in their schools. The study also involved CRE students from the nine secondary schools. Thirty percent of Forms Two and Three students were picked from each of the nine secondary schools. Only Forms Two and Three CRE students were involved because it was believed that they had covered much of the syllabus and were, therefore, in a better position to comment on the use of media for teaching and learning CRE. Form One students were left out because it was assumed they were still new in school and were yet to cover much in the CRE syllabus. Form Four students were also left out because they were busy preparing for the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) examination.

The schools that participated in the study were selected using stratified sampling method. This was done on the basis of students' gender, that is, boys-only, girls-only and mixed-gender schools. Simple random sampling was used to select the number of students to participate in this study. Forms Two and Three students were purposively selected for the study. The teachers who participated were also purposely selected. Data was collected from the sample population through the use of questionnaires and observation schedules. The data collected was analyzed quantitatively, using descriptive statistics such as percentages and presented using tables and graphs showing frequencies and percentages. The Statistical

Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer program was used to analyze data from questionnaires.

RESULTS

Availability of Audiovisual Resources for Teaching CRE

This research set out to establish the extent to which various audiovisual resources for teaching CRE were available in secondary schools in Kimilili Division Bungoma County in Kenya. The results were as shown in the graph below

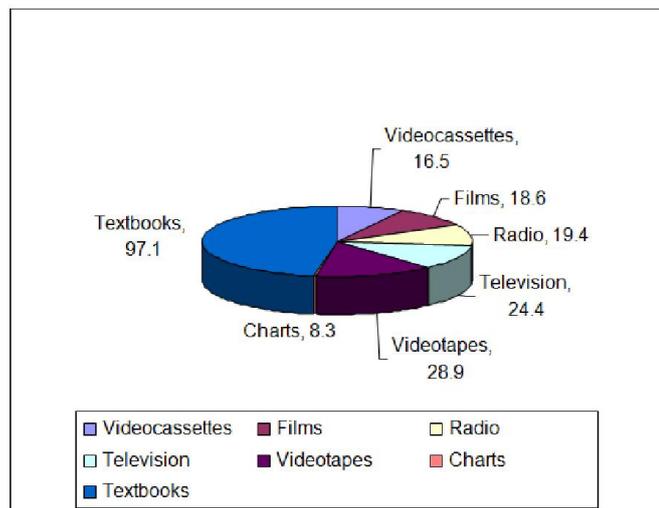


Figure 1. Availability of audiovisual Media

The results in Figure 1 indicate that apart from textbooks, most of the requisite audiovisual resources for teaching of CRE are not easily available in secondary schools in the study area. The findings indicate that textbooks are the most available resources (97.1%) for teaching CRE in secondary schools in Kenya. This was followed by videotapes (28.9%), television (24.4%), radio (19.4%), films (18.6%), video cassettes (16.5%), computers (12.8%) and charts (8.3%). These findings agree with those of Callahan and Clark (1990) who observe that of all materials of instruction the textbook has had the most influence on teaching content and method.

The above data clearly indicate that to a large extent the requisite audiovisual resources for teaching CRE in secondary schools in the study area are unavailable. It was established that because audiovisual resources are not easily available in many of the public schools, it is difficult for CRE teachers to utilize the scarce resources. This is a challenge to the teaching and learning of the subject. The observation checklist results on the availability of audiovisual media in schools for teaching CRE were as summarized Table 1.

The results in Table 1 on the availability of audiovisual media for teaching secondary schools in Kimilili Division, Bungoma County indicate that most of audiovisual resources were not easily available. The observation results indicated the availability levels as follows: charts (11%), video cassettes (22%), video tapes (33%), films (22%), television (22%), radio (22%) and computers (33%). According to the results in Table 1, textbooks were the most available resources for

teaching CRE. These results corroborated the findings from the teachers' questionnaire on availability of audiovisual media.

Table 1. Availability of Audiovisual Media in Secondary Schools

Audiovisual Media	Availability	Non-availability	Total
Charts	1(11%)	8(89%)	9(100%)
Textbooks	8(89%)	1(11%)	9(100%)
Video cassettes	2(22%)	7(78%)	9(100%)
Video tapes	3(33%)	6(67%)	9(100%)
Films	2(22%)	7(78%)	9(100%)
Televisions	2(22%)	7(78%)	9(100%)
Radio	2(22%)	7(78%)	9(100%)
Computers	3(33%)	6(67%)	9(100%)

The Use of Audiovisual Resources for Teaching CRE

Considering that the audiovisual resources for teaching CRE in the study area were hardly available, the study sought to establish whether or not teachers used those resources that were available. The results obtained were as shown in the table below.

Table 2. Use of Audiovisual Resources for Teaching CRE

Audiovisual Media	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Non-use	Total
Charts	15(6.2%)	227(93.8%)	242(100%)
Textbooks	229(94.6%)	13(5.4%)	242(100%)
Videocassettes	26(10.7%)	216(89.3%)	242(100%)
Videotapes	65(26.99%)	177(73.1%)	242(100%)
Films	33(13.6%)	209(86.4%)	242(100%)
Televisions	30(12.4%)	212(87.6%)	242(100%)
Radios	24(9.9%)	218(90.1%)	242(100%)
Computers	10(4.1)	232(95.9%)	242(100%)

The results in Table 2 above indicate that charts were hardly used for teaching CRE in secondary schools in Kimilili Division, Bungoma County. The usage score for charts was 6.2%. This was attributed to the fact that charts were less available in most schools.

Table 2 further shows that textbooks were the most used resources for the teaching of CRE in the study area. Their higher usage is shown by 94.6% against the non use which is only 5.4%. Apart from being the main teaching resource textbooks were also frequently used because they are easily available. These findings concur with those of Airasian (1994) that instructional resources available to a teacher influence the nature and method of instruction. The results in Table 2 also reveal that a great number of CRE students are taught without the use of video cassettes. This was indicated by 89.3% of the CRE students who responded that they were taught without video cassettes while only 10.3% said the resources were used. It was observed that videocassettes were rarely used because they were not easily available. These findings are in line with those of Moss *et al.* (1991) that for those who would like to use television or video, the first barrier is the limited access to the hardware.

Table 2 further indicates that videotapes were also less used for teaching CRE in secondary schools in Kimilili Division in Bungoma County. This was reflected by 73.1% of students who indicated there was no usage of the resource while only 26.9% said videotapes were used. Lack of videotapes was the main reason they are not used. It is possible that many schools

cannot afford to buy them. These findings agree with those of Moss *et al.* (1991) that limited access to video hardware is a barrier to their use in schools. It was also found that a majority of students were not taught CRE by use of films. This was shown by 86.4% of students who stated that they not taught by use of films compared to only 13.6% who said films were used. This unavailability could be attributed to the fact that some schools cannot afford films for teaching CRE.

The research findings also indicated that most of the students in secondary schools in the study area taught CRE without the use of television. This was shown by 87.6% of students who responded that the resource was not used while only 12.4% affirmed the use of television. It was observed that television sets were not available in most schools. In addition, most of the students in secondary schools studied were taught CRE without the use of a radio. Of the students, 90.1% said the resource was not used while only 9.9% said it was used. The non-use of the radio could be attributed to its unavailability and the fact that it did not run sufficient good programmes for teaching CRE. In some cases, CRE teachers may be lacking know-how on radio usage in teaching the subject. The findings in Table 2 further indicate that computers were the least used resources in teaching CRE in secondary schools studied. Only 4.1% of the students said computers were used while 95.9% said they were not used. It was noted that computers were largely unavailable in most public secondary schools in the area. The table below presents the results obtained from the observation checklist on the use of audiovisual resources in teaching CRE in the study area.

Table 3. Observation Results on the Use of Audiovisual Media for Teaching CRE

Audio Visual Method	Frequency of Use	Frequency of Non-use	Total
Charts	4 (22%)	14 (78%)	18 (100%)
Textbooks	16 (89%)	2 (11%)	18 (100%)
Video cassettes	2 (11%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)
Video tapes	2(11%)	16(89%)	18 (100%)
Films	1 (5.6%)	17 (94%)	18 (100%)
Television	4 (22%)	14 (78%)	18 (100%)
Radio	1 (5.6%)	17 (94.4%)	18 (100%)
Computers	2 (11%)	16 (89%)	18 (100%)

As indicated in Table 3 above, textbooks were more frequently (89%) used in teaching CRE. The observation results also indicate that most of the audiovisual resources such as films, radio, computers video tapes and video cassettes were not frequently used for teaching CRE. Moreover, the frequencies of non-use of audiovisual media were 78% for charts, 89% for video cassettes, 89% for video tapes, 94.4% for films, 78% for television, 94.4% for radio and 89% for computers. These findings confirmed the findings obtained from questionnaires on the extent of use of audiovisual media in teaching CRE in secondary schools. In summary, textbooks constituted the most available resources for teaching and learning CRE in secondary schools in Kimilili Division. Along with the use of CRE textbooks, there was excessive use of verbal communication for teaching the subject. This is likely to hinder the moral impact of CRE in the life of the learners. It was also observed that most of the audiovisual resources are not available in many of the secondary schools in Kimilili

Division. As a result, the requisite resources are not being used for teaching CRE. It was noted that teachers were willing to use the audiovisual resources provided they were availed by the school. However, it was also observed that some schools had the necessary audiovisual resources but the teachers were not using them to teach students. Some of the teachers preferred to use other teaching methods such as the lecture and discussion.

Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of the study and discussion in this paper, it is clear that the teaching of CRE in secondary schools using audiovisual resources is not being done. The use of audiovisual aids in teaching helps develop the attitudes and interests of students. However, the unavailability of audiovisual resources in schools poses the biggest challenge. It constitutes the main reason these resources are not being used for teaching CRE in secondary schools in Kimilili Division. It is also concluded that textbooks are the most available resources for teaching. This has encouraged many teachers to use verbal communication or the lecture method to teach the subject. As a result, students memorize content for the sake of passing examinations, meaning that CRE does not achieve its objective of imparting a sense of morality in the learners. At the same time, the use of the lecture method makes students feel the subject is boring. From the above conclusions, it is recommended that CRE curriculum planners should plan and prepare audiovisual resources for teaching the subject and avail the necessary audiovisual resources to the schools. Moreover, CRE curriculum planners should organize seminars to train teachers on how they can be able to teach the subject using audiovisual resources.

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