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*Full Length Research*

# **Influence of Christian Religious Studies on Student's Wellbeing in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools in Lagos State, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

The study determined the influence of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on the wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examined the influence of CRS on physical wellbeing, psychological wellbeing, and spiritual wellbeing. It also determined gender differences in the impact of CRS on students' wellbeing. A descriptive survey design was adopted. A structured questionnaire based on a four-point Likert scale was used to collect data from 300 students, comprising 230 students offering CRS and 70 students not offering the subject. Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentages, mean, and standard deviation) were used for research questions, and inferential statistics (t-tests) were used to analyse the data. Findings revealed that students offering CRS recorded significantly higher scores in all domains of wellbeing – physical, psychological, and spiritual – compared to those who did not offer the subject. The study also found no significant gender difference in the overall wellbeing of CRS students. These results suggest that CRS plays a critical role in promoting holistic development and resilience among senior secondary school students. Based on the findings, the study recommends the educational policymakers should reinforce the position of CRS as a compulsory subject in private and public senior secondary schools, and school administrators should create opportunities for faith-based discussions and mentorship programmes that integrate CRS teachings with student wellbeing practices and others.

**Keywords:** Christian Religious Studies, Wellbeing, Depression, Psychological, Holistic Development

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Well-being has been defined as a multidimensional construct including morale, satisfaction with life, congruence with expected and achieved life goals, positive and negative affect, mood, and symptoms related to distress. Borgonovi and Pal (2016) described it as a dynamic state characterised by students experiencing the ability and opportunity to fulfil their personal and social goals. It encompasses multiple dimensions of students'

lives, including cognitive, psychological, physical, social and material. It can be measured through subjective and objective indicators of competencies, perceptions, expectations and life conditions. Wellbeing can be described in four dimensions: physical, cognitive, psychological, and spiritual, which are considered in this study.

The concept of wellbeing addressed five key

dimensions of health: physical, psychological, cognitive, social, and economic well-being. The physical dimension refers to health and physical habits; the psychological to emotions and mental health (often operationalised by the “absence” of negative indicators); the cognitive to intellectual and school-related elements; the social to relationships with others, support, and interpersonal or communicative skills; and the economic to economic resources of the family.

An international survey, in its addition of 2015, adopted a comprehensive model in the evaluation of well-being, which incorporates, in addition to the habitual evaluation of performance, items and scales aimed at measuring well-being. The PISA 2015 assessment formulates a model including indicators of five dimensions of well-being: psychological, social, physical, material, and cognitive (Borgonovi & Pal, 2016).

The cognitive wellbeing comprises students' self-beliefs about their acquisition of subject-specific skills. It measured science self-efficacy, broad interest in science, interest in broad science topics, and instrumental motivation to learn science. The psychological wellbeing encompassed psychological functioning in relation to educational aspects such as students' career and educational expectations, measured in terms of the expected job and the highest level of education each student aspired to, achievement motivation, and test and learning anxiety, along with the overall satisfaction with life (Hossain, O'Neill & Strnadova, 2022). Physical wellbeing is measured by two aspects of students' lifestyles: the amount and frequency of physical activity and eating habits. Specifically, students who did any sport before or after going to school, how many days per week they had physical education classes in school, and how often they were engaged in moderate or vigorous physical activities outside school. The social well-being encompassing interpersonal relations within and outside the individual dimension was particularly important, as the quality of 15-year-olds' relationships with teachers and peers is strongly linked to subjective well-being perception. PISA (2015) assessed five aspects of social well-being: students' sense of belonging at school; social learning experiences, assessed through the value given to and enjoyment of cooperative learning; the relationship with their teachers, assessed through the perception of teachers' unfair treatment of students; the relationship with their peers, as measured by the constructs 'engagement with peers' and 'bullying'; and the relationship with their parents, assessed through the scales 'parental support' and 'engagement with parents' (Kiambi, 2020).

Spiritual wellbeing is connected to religiosity. Wellbeing of individuals can be affected by religiosity or religiousness. Most studies investigating religious involvement and wellbeing have uncovered a strong association between the two constructs (Santi & Santi, 2017), though there are studies that have shown either a negative association or no significantly clear positive or

negative association (Maiyo, 2015; Santi & Santi, 2017; Kiambi, 2020).

A study using the Santa Clara Strength of Religious Faith Questionnaire, for example, found that college students with high strength of religious faith had higher self-esteem, hope, and adaptive coping and less interpersonal sensitivity. Positive associations with well-being may be due to the impact of faith on both positive and negative emotions, such as increased forgiveness and reduced guilt, respectively, which may enhance the individual's development (Maiyo, 2015). Kiambi (2020) found that ritualistic religious behaviour may likewise promote well-being through such behaviour as cathartic worship services. Evidence suggests that socialisation through religious participation in a congregational setting may also promote prosocial and adaptive qualities, elevating mood and decreasing levels of distress.

Much research on students and wellbeing has shown risky behaviour and problems and a high prevalence of such conditions (Azubuike, Bosah & Okafor, 2018). The World Health Organization [WHO] (2020) stated that students between 10 and 22 years of age are marked by the need to try out new things such as sex and experiment with injectable drugs as well as other drug types. Azubuike, Bosah and Okafor (2018) observed that changing lifestyles, the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV/AIDS, unintended pregnancy, sexual abuse, depression, suicide and other mental health problems are very common among males and females of this age bracket. However, this study will deal with secondary school students' mental health, and Christian religious studies seem to be a panacea to this problem.

Christian Religious Studies (CRS) can have both positive and negative impacts on students' mental health and wellbeing in private senior secondary schools. Positively, CRS can provide a sense of community, belonging, and purpose for students who identify with the faith, fostering emotional support and spiritual growth. It can also promote values such as compassion, forgiveness, and empathy, which are beneficial for mental health. However, negative impacts may arise if the curriculum is taught in a rigid or dogmatic manner, leading to feelings of guilt, shame, or anxiety for students who may struggle to adhere to strict religious doctrines. Additionally, if students feel pressured to conform to religious beliefs that conflict with their own identities or values, it can cause distress and cognitive dissonance. It is essential for educators and religious leaders to approach CRS with sensitivity, providing a supportive and inclusive environment that respects students' diverse beliefs and encourages critical thinking and open dialogue. This approach can help mitigate potential negative effects and promote holistic wellbeing among students.

Religious institutions can provide emotional social support by creating a feeling of connectedness for individuals in the congregational community (Moore et al., 2018).

Some of the positive effects of religious faith on well-being include increased self-esteem and positive life outlooks, as well as social support networks that may lessen the detrimental effects of stressful life events through religious beliefs, expressions, and support (Deighton et al., 2019; Iasiello, van Agteren, & Cochrane, 2020).

A number of studies have focused on the influence of religious education on the well-being of specific populations, such as the elderly, adolescents, and various ethnic groups. These studies have coincided with Bamford et al.'s (2023) view that the relationship between religion and well-being can be accurately estimated only after taking into account such determinants as health, socioeconomic status, age, ethnicity, and spirituality.

Spirituality has been found to be an integral factor in the African American community. In a recent study, the well-being components of life purpose and satisfaction were directly related to either or both the individual's relationship with God and an active religious life (Chen & VanderWeele, 2018).

In research with adolescents, Adewuyi (2021) noted that although maternal education, race, type of religion, and frequency of the adolescent's church attendance were not significantly associated with well-being, the social support provided by a mother who attends church at least once a week may be a strong contributor to adolescent well-being. In other investigations among adolescents, religiosity has been found to be a strong inhibitor of maladaptive behaviours that negatively influence well-being (e.g., smoking, alcohol consumption) (Willis, Wallston, & Johnson, 2020).

Another study by Adams et al., as cited in Oteri (2018), studied conceptualisation and measurement of spiritual and psychological dimensions of wellness in a college population. Spirituality had a positive effect on perceived wellness in college students. The study found college students who partake in religious practices report (1) higher satisfaction of social life, (2) more positive interaction with others on campus, (3) greater satisfaction of one's college career, and (4) higher grade point averages (GPAs).

Oteri (2018) conducted a study to assess the influence religiosity has on psychological wellbeing among students of Delta State Polytechnic, Ozoro. The research findings revealed a significant relationship between religiosity and anxiety and loneliness. It is therefore concluded that people who are religious have a high risk for being anxious and lonely and that certain aspects of religious rituals and activities tend to increase anxiety and loneliness. Escuadra (2019) examined the well-being and perceived well-being factors among freshmen students from the University of Santo Tomas - College of Rehabilitation Sciences (UST CRS) of the first term of the academic year 2019-2020. Data may serve as a baseline for future assessment and programme development of a supportive wellbeing curriculum for students' holistic growth and advancement.

Alexandra (2020) investigated the relationship between acculturative stress, religious coping, resilience and psychological well-being among 176 international students in Hungary. Results indicate that, as predicted, resilience contributed to higher psychological well-being, and negative religious coping negatively correlated with psychological well-being. The relationship between positive religious coping and psychological well-being, however, was not found to be statistically significant. The implications of these findings are critically discussed and are suggested to contribute to the work of university counsellors, student affairs officers, and student organisations, such as the Erasmus Student Network, through providing a better understanding of acculturative stress and different coping processes among international students.

From the various studies, it has been proved that CRS teaching can mould holistic and well-rounded students with very sound health. Teachers need to be well grounded in CRS for the effective teaching of the subject. The CRS teacher needs to let his or her students realise that they are responsible for their character and wellbeing and development by presenting them with different anecdotes or examples that will inspire and teach them to be morally responsible with their own actions (Oteri, 2018).

Furthermore, teachers need to teach CRS using different methods or techniques of teaching, which, among others, include discussion, forums, debates and stories as part of his or her instructional techniques. For example, when an indiscipline case occurs in the class or the school compound, the CRS teacher has it as a duty to ask his or her students to discuss the issue among themselves, identify how it affects people, and how to make amends. Moreover, the CRS teacher needs also to teach CRS to the students using games and activities that anchor on character formation.

CRS has therefore been one of the core subjects in secondary schools. However, there have been questions on the efficacy of the CRS programme in instilling discipline and moulding the character of the learner as well as mental wellbeing. Judging from the state of the moral behaviour of students, it seems that the subject is not achieving its major goal, which is developing in learners the ability to attain intellectual and moral perfection and disciplining them both mentally and morally so as to face their daily and future challenges as good citizens. The above observations seem to suggest that CRS is taught in schools without much impact on the lives of the people, that is, without achieving its set objectives in students' lives. The study therefore sought to examine the impact of Christian religious studies (CRS) on students' wellbeing in selected private senior secondary schools.

### Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to:

1. Ascertain the impact of CRS on the physical wellbeing

of students in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

2. Assess the impact of CRS on the psychological wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

3. Determine the impact of CRS on the spiritual wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

### Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the impact of CRS on the physical wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

2. What is the impact of CRS on the psychological wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

3. What is the impact of CRS on the spiritual wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on physical wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

2. There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on psychological wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

3. There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on spiritual wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

### METHODOLOGY

The design This study is a descriptive research

design. Lagos State is one of the states in the southwest geopolitical zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Lagos State has many private schools, including international and low-cost schools and the oldest secondary school in Nigeria. Some of these offer CRS, while others do not. This study focuses on those that have CRS as a course in their schools but also includes those with no CRS. The population of the study consisted of 3536 students from private senior secondary schools that offer CRS in Lagos State. The study considered students from diverse religious backgrounds, including Christian denominations and non-Christian faiths. The sample of the study comprised 300 students of selected private schools at the senior level. The multistage sampling technique was involved in sampling. In the first stage, a convenient sampling technique will be adopted to select the sample for the study. The purpose of using convenient sampling is to make sure that only the school or students who gave their consent participated in the study. In the second stage, stratified random sampling is used to select those from Christian denominations and those from non-Christian denominations. At the third stage, the simple random sampling technique of balloting without replacement was used to get the sample for the study.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Impact of Christian Religious Studies on Wellbeing of Secondary School Students' Questionnaire". The instrument is a 15-item questionnaire divided into three clusters. The response format is a 4-point Likert scale of strongly agreed (SA)=4; agreed (A)=3; disagreed (D)=2; and strongly disagreed (SD)=1.

The face validity of the instrument was determined by three experts, two from Paul University Awka. To test the reliability of the instruments, the Cronbach's alpha method of reliability was used. The researcher administered the instrument to 20 students that were not part of the study sample. The reliability index of the instrument of 0.60 made the instrument reliable. Data collected from the survey were analysed with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 using frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and an independent t-test for testing the hypotheses at the .05 level of significance.

## Results

### Demographic Information of Respondents

**Table 1:** Demographic characteristics of participants

| <b>Age:</b>                | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percent</b> |
|----------------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 14– 18 years               | 180              | 60.0           |
| 19-21 years                | 120              | 40.0           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>300</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |
| <b>Gender</b>              |                  |                |
| Male                       | 134              | 44.7           |
| Female                     | 166              | 55.3           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>300</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |
| <b>Offering the course</b> |                  |                |
| CRS                        | 230              | 76.7           |
| NO CRS                     | 70               | 23.3           |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>300</b>       | <b>100.0</b>   |

The results in table 1 indicate the demographic characteristics of secondary school students. It shows that 60% of the students are 14-18 years old, while the remaining 40% are 19-21 years of age. This means that the respondents are within the age of senior secondary school and are exposed to some of the mental health issues under review. The percentage of male students is 44.7%, while 55.3% are the female students. The

percentage of students offering CRS is 76.7%, while non-CRS students is 23.3%. These findings will help to determine the actual impact of CRS on the student's mental health and wellbeing.

**Research Question One:** What is the impact of CRS on the physical wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 2:** Impact of CRS on Physical Wellbeing of Students in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| <b>S/N</b> | <b>Physical wellbeing</b>                         | <b>CRS</b>  |             | <b>NO CRS</b> |             |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|-------------|
|            |                                                   | Mean        | SD          | Mean          | SD          |
|            | Baseline                                          |             |             |               |             |
| 1          | I live a disciplined and healthy lifestyle        | 2.99        | 0.18        | 2.11          | 1.76        |
| 2          | I avoid harmful habits because of CRS             | 2.78        | 1.78        | 2.23          | 1.85        |
| 3          | I am more conscious of my body as a gift from God | 2.67        | 1.25        | 1.70          | 1.93        |
| 4          | I take better care of myself due to CRS teachings | 3.01        | 0.77        | 2.01          | 1.61        |
|            | <b>Grand mean</b>                                 | <b>2.80</b> | <b>1.09</b> | <b>2.01</b>   | <b>1.75</b> |

Data in Table 2 show that the mean score for the impact of CRS on physical wellbeing is 2.80 for CRS students, which is above the mean benchmark of 2.5, which indicates high physical wellbeing, while the mean score for non-CRS students is 2.01, which is lower than the 2.5 benchmark, indicating low physical wellbeing. This implies that CRS students enjoy better physical wellbeing on average. The scores are also more tightly clustered around the mean for CRS students, suggesting a more

uniformly positive physical state among them. CRS students reported higher levels of physical wellbeing, indicating that CRS may promote healthy lifestyles and discipline.

**Research Question Two:** What is the impact of CRS on the psychological wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 3:** Impact of CRS On Psychological Wellbeing of Students in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| S/<br>N | Psychological wellbeing                          | CRS         |             | NO CRS      |             |
|---------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|         |                                                  | Mean        | SD          | Mean        | SD          |
|         | Baseline                                         |             |             |             |             |
| 1       | Helps me to develop a strong sense of purpose    | 3.21        | 0.18        | 2.26        | 1.66        |
| 2       | I have more confidence in myself                 | 3.01        | 0.98        | 2.34        | 1.95        |
| 3       | CRS encourages me to think positively about life | 2.91        | 0.85        | 2.89        | 0.93        |
| 4       | I feel inner peace because of my study           | 3.92        | 0.97        | 1.90        | 1.01        |
|         | <b>Grand Mean</b>                                | <b>3.26</b> | <b>0.86</b> | <b>2.35</b> | <b>1.39</b> |

In table 3, the mean score for CRS students is 3.26, which is higher than the 2.5 mean benchmark, indicating that the students have higher psychological wellbeing, while the mean for non-CRS students is 2.35, which is lower than the 2.5 mean score, indicating lower psychological health. This reveals that psychological wellbeing is better among CRS students and lower for non-CRS students, indicating less predictability in their

psychological health. Hence, the psychological wellbeing of CRS students was found to be superior, suggesting CRS may serve as a source of psychological resilience and moral guidance.

**Research Question Three:** What is the impact of CRS on the spiritual wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 4:** Impact of CRS on Spiritual Wellbeing of Students in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| S/N | Spiritual wellbeing               | CRS         |             | NO CRS      |             |
|-----|-----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|     |                                   | Mean        | SD          | Mean        | SD          |
|     | Baseline                          |             |             |             |             |
| 1   | Deep relationship with God        | 3.21        | 0.18        | 2.26        | 1.66        |
| 2   | Good moral decision               | 3.01        | 0.98        | 2.34        | 1.95        |
| 3   | Spiritually strong                | 2.91        | 0.85        | 2.89        | 0.93        |
| 4   | Practice forgiveness all the time | 3.92        | 0.97        | 1.90        | 1.01        |
| 5   | Love the things of God            | 2.80        | 1.10        | 1.95        | 0.93        |
| 6   | Live in love and truth            | 2.20        | 0.92        | 1.25        | 0.38        |
|     | <b>Grand Mean</b>                 | <b>3.01</b> | <b>0.92</b> | <b>2.09</b> | <b>1.93</b> |

Table 4 shows that the CRS students' mean score is 3.01, while that of the non-CRS is 2.09. The table shows that CRS students not only score higher on average but also show greater consistency (lowest SD), affirming the role of religious education in spiritual development. Therefore, CRS students exhibited

significantly higher scores, indicating that CRS effectively supports spiritual development and purpose-driven living.

**Research Question Five:** What is the impact of CRS on coping strategies of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State?

**Table 5:** Impact of CRS on Coping Strategies of Students in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| S/N | Coping Strategies                  | CRS         |             | NO CRS      |             |
|-----|------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|     |                                    | Mean        | SD          | Mean        | SD          |
|     | Baseline                           |             |             |             |             |
| 1   | Practice mindfulness/meditation    | 2.27        | 1.18        | 1.26        | 1.66        |
| 2   | Skill training                     | 2.00        | 0.98        | 1.34        | 1.95        |
| 3   | listening to music technique       | 2.90        | 0.85        | 1.89        | 0.93        |
| 4   | social media relaxation technique, | 3.97        | 0.97        | 1.90        | 1.01        |
| 5   | Physical education                 | 3.87        | 1.10        | 1.95        | 0.93        |
| 6   | Building self esteem               | 3.29        | 0.92        | 2.15        | 0.38        |
|     | <b>Grand Mean</b>                  | <b>3.05</b> | <b>0.89</b> | <b>1.75</b> | <b>0.92</b> |

Table 5 shows that the mean score of CRS students is 3.05, which exceeds the benchmark mean. This indicates high coping strategies, while the Non-CRS students scored 1.75, which is lower than the 2.5 benchmark, indicating lower or poor coping strategies. This implies that CRS students are generally better at coping with stress or challenges. Their scores are also more consistent, which may indicate that religious teachings provide stable coping frameworks for them,

unlike non-CRS students. Hence, CRS appears to strengthen students' coping mechanisms, perhaps by providing moral teachings, faith-based encouragement, and a sense of hope.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on physical wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State.

**Table 6:** Significant difference in the impact of CRS on physical wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools Lagos State.

| Hypothesis      | Variables | Mean | T     | p-value | Decision               | Interpretation                           |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-------|---------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| H <sub>01</sub> | CRS       | 2.80 | 0.840 | 0.000** | Reject H <sub>05</sub> | Strong significant positive relationship |
|                 | Non-CRS   | 2.01 |       |         |                        |                                          |

The results of the t-test analysis in Table 6 reveal a strong statistically significant difference in the mean scores of CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their physical wellbeing. Specifically, the calculated t-value of 0.840 and a p-value of 0.000 indicate that the difference in opinions is significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference between

CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their physical wellbeing.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on psychological wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

**Table 7:** Significant Difference In The Impact Of CRS On Psychological Wellbeing Between Students Offering CRS and Those Without CRS In Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| Hypothesis      | Variables | Mean | T     | p-value | Decision               | Interpretation                           |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-------|---------|------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| H <sub>03</sub> | CRS       | 3.26 | 0.674 | 0.021** | Reject H <sub>05</sub> | Strong significant positive relationship |
|                 | Non-CRS   | 2.35 |       |         |                        |                                          |

The results of the t-test analysis in Table 7 reveal a strong statistically significant difference in the mean scores of CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their psychological wellbeing. Specifically, the calculated t-value of 0.674 and a p-value of 0.021 indicate that the difference in opinions is significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference between

CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their psychological wellbeing.

**Hypothesis Three:** There is no significant difference in the impact of CRS on spiritual wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in selected private senior secondary schools. Lagos State

**Table 8:** Significant Difference in the Impact of CRS on spiritual wellbeing between students offering CRS and those without CRS in Selected Private Senior Secondary Schools Lagos State

| Hypothesis      | Variables | Mean | T     | p-value | Decision               | Interpretation           |
|-----------------|-----------|------|-------|---------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| H <sub>03</sub> | CRS       | 3.01 | 0.815 | 0.001** | Reject H <sub>04</sub> | significant relationship |
|                 | Non-CRS   | 2.09 |       |         |                        |                          |

Data in Table 8 reveals a strong statistically significant difference in the mean scores of CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their spiritual wellbeing. Specifically, the calculated t-value of 0.815 and a p-value of 0.001 indicate that the difference in their opinions is significant at the 0.05 level. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected, suggesting that there is a significant difference between CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their spiritual wellbeing.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussion is based on the research questions and hypotheses raised in this study. Findings revealed that CRS students scored above the mean benchmark of 2.5, which indicates high physical wellbeing, while the mean score for non-CRS students is lower than the 2.5 benchmark, indicating low physical wellbeing. This implies that CRS students enjoy better physical wellbeing on average. The scores are also more tightly clustered around the mean for CRS students, suggesting a more uniformly positive physical state among them. This finding tallies with Beggs and Barbara (2021), who studied a mediation analysis of spirituality, wellbeing and academic performance in first-generation and low-income college students and discovered a significant relationship among religiosity, mental health and wellbeing. Another study by Wang (2017) studied the relationships, health, and spirituality among college students: factors of college success. Loma Linda University reported that religiosity can help collegian mental health and cultivate resiliency in their student body, particularly among incoming freshmen. More findings discovered that there is a significant difference between CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their physical wellbeing. This implies that CRS students have higher levels of physical wellbeing, indicating that CRS may promote healthy lifestyles and discipline.

Findings revealed that CRS students have higher psychological wellbeing than non-CRS students. This

reveals that psychological wellbeing is better among CRS students and lower for non-CRS students, indicating less predictability in their psychological health. Hence, the psychological wellbeing of CRS students was found to be superior, suggesting CRS may serve as a source of psychological resilience and moral guidance. Further findings revealed that there is a significant difference between CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their psychological wellbeing. These findings are in consonance with the studies of Beggs and Barbara (2021), who discovered negative religious coping would contribute to lower levels of psychological well-being. Alexandra (2020) investigated the relationship between acculturative stress, religious coping, resilience and psychological well-being among 176 international students in Hungary and also discovered higher psychological well-being and negative religious coping negatively correlated with psychological well-being. The relationship between positive religious coping and psychological well-being, however, was not found to be statistically significant. Oteri (2018) conducted a study to assess the influence religiosity has on psychological wellbeing among students of Delta State Polytechnic. Ozoro discovered that religiosity is therefore an important domain in human life since it has the ability to influence psychological well-being.

Findings revealed that CRS students not only score higher on average but also show greater consistency (lowest SD), affirming the role of religious education in spiritual development. Therefore, CRS students exhibited significantly higher scores, indicating that CRS effectively supports spiritual development and purpose-driven living. Further findings indicated that there is a significant difference between CRS and non-CRS students on the impact of CRS on their spiritual wellbeing. This study is well expected and is supported by the study of religious education, which brings about moral development, and that religious education is being handled with levity. The study tallies with the study of Klee and Bartkowski (2023), who explored mental health professionals' approaches to religiosity and spirituality in



the delivery of therapeutic care to youth at risk of suicide. It reported on reflections on the impacts of religion and spirituality on treatment efficacy for child and adolescent clients. Another study by Baraka and Lazarus (2018) discovered that Christian religious education prepares learners to be morally upright. There is a significant difference in teachers' ratings on frequency of disciplinary cases between schools that teach Christian Religious Education and those which do not teach the subject, the rate being higher in schools where Christian Religious Education is not taught. This implies that CRS is very important in improving one's spiritual wellbeing.

### Summary of Findings

This study examined the impact of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) on the wellbeing of students in selected private senior secondary schools in Lagos State. A total of 300 students participated, of which 230 were CRS students and 70 were non-CRS students. The findings are summarised as follows:

1. CRS had a positive influence on students' physical wellbeing, likely due to the values of discipline and healthy behaviour promoted in religious teachings.
2. A significant improvement in psychological wellbeing was observed among CRS students, indicating the role of CRS in promoting emotional balance and self-awareness.
3. CRS students had significantly better spiritual wellbeing, underscoring the primary role of religious education in nurturing spiritual development.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Christian Religious Studies plays a pivotal role in enhancing the holistic wellbeing of students. CRS not only builds spiritual and moral capacity but also contributes significantly to the mental, psychological, and physical health of learners. Furthermore, the subject equips students with valuable coping mechanisms to handle academic and personal life stressors. Its benefits are inclusive and not limited by gender.

This study validates the relevance of CRS in the current educational landscape and supports its

### Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational policymakers should reinforce the position of CRS as a compulsory subject in private and public senior secondary schools.
2. School administrators should create opportunities for faith-based discussions in secondary schools.

3. Mentorship programmes that integrate CRS teachings with student wellbeing practices should be integrated into the curriculum.

4. There should be inclusion of mental health education in the senior secondary curriculum, especially within a context like Nigeria.

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