

Impact of Christian Education Curriculum in the Application of Christian Stewardship Principles among Christian Students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria

Omolara A. Areo (Ph.D)^{1*}

¹HOD, Teacher Education, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

DOI: [10.36348/sjhss.2023.v08i06.007](https://doi.org/10.36348/sjhss.2023.v08i06.007)

| Received: 07.05.2023 | Accepted: 19.06.2023 | Published: 27.06.2023

*Corresponding author: Omolara A. Areo

HOD, Teacher Education, Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Nigeria

Abstract

The intention of this paper was to find out the impact of Christian education curriculum in the application of Christian stewardship principles among Christian students of university of Ibadan, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised to guide the study to which answers were given based on the findings of the study. The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted among Christian students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study engaged a purposive sampling technique and 210 (two hundred and ten) Christian students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, were purposively selected, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. The instrument for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire which benefited from literature. The instrument was validated and a reliability coefficient value of $r = .71$ was obtained. This adjudged the instrument to be reliable. An electronic questionnaire was sent to 210 (two hundred and ten) Christian students in the University of Ibadan through their fellowship presidents and coordinators. However, 205 Christian students responded to the questionnaire. The data was analysed using mean, mean percentage, standard deviation and ranking. Findings revealed some material pursuits among Christian students of UI to include exotic cars, latest gadgets such as phones and laptops, designer wears and accessories, visit expensive bars and club houses and books to study. The study also shows the extent Christian students in UI possess material things is moderate. Again, the study shows the application of Christian Stewardship principles among Christian students of UI to include stewardship of ownership, responsibility, reward and accountability.

Keywords: Christian Education Curriculum, Christian Stewardship, Christian Stewardship Principles, Christian Students, Nigeria.

Copyright © 2023 The Author(s): This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

God is the creator of all things that exist. Martin asserts that man is essentially created to serve God with all he is and has, including his life and assets because God owns all things by creation and redemption of man [19]. According to Grindstaff, man is therefore a steward expected to handle the gifts received from God responsibly; oversees God's property with wisdom because it is sacred; and also administers God's goods faithfully [9-11]. In the words of Muncy, a steward is a person who has been intrusted with the management of estates and affairs that is not his own and these includes the use of time, personality, opportunity and material things [5-7]. Christian students as created by God are expected to serve God with all that they have as life, gifts, influence and asset and thus,

showing their obedience to Biblical standard. The study's objectives are to: identify some material pursuits among University of Ibadan Christian students, find out the extent to which University of Ibadan Christian students desire material things and investigate the application of Christian stewardship principles among University of Ibadan Christian students.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION CURRICULUM

The church is responsible for reaching out to people and making them disciples, baptizing them and teaching them all that Jesus has commanded while on earth physically (Matthew 28:19-20). It is interesting to note that the last of the assignment Jesus gave the church as He ascended to heaven was to teach those that have been reached, made disciples and baptized. In order words, when teaching is done without the first step which is an encounter with Jesus, it results to

nothing but confusion for the one being taught and an error on the part of the church. Teaching done by the church is referred to as Christian education and it can take place in the church, home, and church schools.

Jones, stated that the purpose of Christian education curriculum is “to build up Christians”. This is done through all the experiences the church, home, and church school exposes people to. Christian education is peculiar to the teachings of Christ and these teachings are found in the Bible. The teachings found in the Bible are expected to meet with the situation of men and women, boy and girls through the crossing point experience for transformation to take place. Thus, the curriculum of Christian education is Bible based, Christ centered and life applied. If these three factors are not present in any Christian education curriculum then, it will not be able to bring about the needed change or transformation expected of a Christian curriculum. One significant area of the Christian life that Christian education curriculum need to emphasis in this contemporary time is stewardship and how to develop a stewardship lifestyle that is based on Bible, centered on Christ and can be applied to daily living.

University of Ibadan Christian student’s curriculum includes all the activities the fellowship provides for the maturation of the Christian students. These activities include Bible study, evangelism, worship services, discipleship, Sunday school, and visitation. All of these avenues are a kind of Christian education for making the Christian student a faithful steward of the manifold grace of God.

CONCEPT OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

According to Oladimeji, Stewardship is the activity of the child of God and the church in managing all of life and life’s resources for God’s purpose [5-7]. Jorgenson stated that the Greek word for steward in the New Testament is rendered “*oikonomos* [4] which is used to describe an official who controls the affairs of a large household.” Stewardship, in the opinion of Conway, is a biblical concept. It alludes to the Judeo-Christian conviction that God has favored each person with certain abilities, capacities, assets, and openings that they are called to nurture and create for the benefit of others and themselves. Hence, a steward is one who has been graciously favored with certain abilities to supervise the affairs in a large house in place of the owner.

Christian stewardship is an act or way of life expected of the followers of Christ, which is managing Christ’s empire here on earth. Hence, Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians 4: 1, “said this, then, is how you ought to regard us: as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the mysteries God has revealed.” Hence, it is expected that Christians lead lives as those responsible for the manifold grace of God. In the words

of Reuman, Christian stewardship is man’s grateful and obedient response to God’s redeeming love, expressed by using all resources to fulfil Christ’s mission in the world [5].” This submission suggests that Christian stewardship is man’s expression of gratitude to God through the faithful use of his great resources. Rodin further stated that Christian stewardship is the “practice, the work, the vocation of a steward. It is the ‘how-to’ the ethical imperatives of the call to be steward” [16].” Hence, Christian stewardship is the expected way of life of a steward.

According to Dillard Stewardship should be practised because it is a life principle of get and give; the logical expression of christian experience; a parent-child relationship, a divine -human partnership and a practical, all-man, all-time job [6-9].

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP PRINCIPLES

The Bible has continued to serve as the substantive guide throughout all ages in Christianity and biblical principles of stewardship are crucial to fulfilling the task of a Christian steward. Hence, it should be noted that biblical principles are relevant for all times and applicable to all seasons. Principles are often found in a manual of operation, and the only manual of operation in Christendom is the Holy Bible. Hence, Christian stewardship principles are drawn from the scriptures. Rusbuldt evocatively submits that “stewardship is a living grounded in what the Bible tells about human lives as God’s people in God’s created world” [1] Reuman assert that the “Bible is God’s guidebook for man as he seeks to live as his steward.” Oladimeji listed Christian stewardship principles as the principle of ownership, responsibility, accountability, and reward [1]. These principles are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Principle of ownership connotes that God is the creator and owner of all things, and he has only given man a special place in his creation by giving man authority over the things He created. Hence, Locke and Locke stated that man is to follow God’s lead in the way the authority is used [10]. Moreover, Lane submits that although man has the “highest place in the created order, he is still part of the created order” [25]. Hence, man must acknowledge his place in the order and seek to live and lead as expected. Meanwhile, Ojo noted that “stewardship begins and ends with understanding God’s ownership of all” [24]. Therefore, man is delegated by God to manage his resources and creation. Moreover, the Scripture says the earth is the Lord’s and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it, substantiating God’s ownership of all things.

Principle of responsibility connotes that man is a manager of God’s resources, and he is responsible for all resources that he has been given. Locke and Locke describe a steward as “a manager of someone else’s

properties" [10]. This description reveals that man is a manager of God's manifold resources. Hence, man must acknowledge this truth in all areas of their lives, including material possessions, which according to Locke and Locke, are only a part of a steward's responsibility, and man's "relationship to these possessions often indicates his relationship to God and whether or not he is acknowledging God's right to control his lives" [11]. In other words, man is expected to live in such a way that he manages God's property faithfully. However, "many people have failed in the way they handled the property of God in their custody". Moreover, the Scripture says "...that a person in charge as a manager must be faithful." Hence, man is accountable to God.

Principle of accountability states that man is accountable to God and he will give account to God on the last day. Grindstaff submits that "a believer is expected to hold possessions, but he is to acknowledge his Lord's ownership. He must give an account of their use and disposition [6]." God has bestowed on individuals gifts and talents expected to be used for his kingdom's growth. The scriptures say that you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. However, while a noticeable number of persons have neglected the use of their God-given gifts, it is rather unfortunate as "some do not neglect to use their talents, but they misuse them" [17]. Hence, a Christian steward is accountable to God, the owner of the resources and will be rewarded when due.

Principle of reward connotes that God is the rewarder of all, and He will reward all His stewards according to their acts. Several stories in the Scripture substantiate God as the rewarder of all. Prominent of all is the parable of talent in Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:11-27. The story revealed the inevitable nature of man's reward according to how he manages God's resources as his stewards. Ojo states that "all men having been created in God's image are accountable to God for their stewardship". Thus, man ought to live bearing this truth in mind.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher observed that students are more concerned now with how they can make money, live in expensive hostels, wear expensive cloths and jewelries than in the academic requirements for hard work that results in academic excellence. This is evident in some noticeable activities of students such as yahoo-yahoo, yahoo plus, prostitution, examination malpractice etc. The interest of this work is to find out if these activities are also found among Christian students who are expected to be stewards of the grace of God on campus.

Purpose and Objective of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the impact of Christian education curriculum in ameliorating acquisitive attitude through the application of Christian stewardship principles among Christian students of university of Ibadan, Nigeria. Specific objectives of the study are to:

- Identify some material pursuits among Christian students of UI.
- Find out the extent to which UI Christian students desire to possess the items.
- Investigate the application of Christian Stewardship principles among Christian students of UI.

Research Questions

- What are some material pursuits among Christian students of UI.
- To what extent do Christian students in UI desire to possess material things.
- What are the Christian Stewardship principles applied by Christian students of UI.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The study was conducted among Christian students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The study engaged a purposive sampling technique and 210 (two hundred and ten) Christian students of the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, were purposively selected, including undergraduate and postgraduate students. The instrument for the study was a researcher designed questionnaire which benefited from literature. The questionnaire had sections. The questionnaire had four sections. Section A was on demographic data while sections B-D were on material pursuits among Christian students of UI, extent to which Christian students in UI desire to possess material things and the Christian Stewardship principles applied by Christian students of UI. The instrument was validated by giving it to experts in the field of Christian education to verify the contents. To ensure reliability, the questionnaire was trial-tested through a pilot study with 17 Christian students in Ladoko Akintola University of Technology which is outside the areas of study. The split-half method was applied, and a reliability coefficient value of $r = .71$ was obtained. This adjudged the instrument to be reliable. An electronic questionnaire was sent to 210. However, 205 responded Christian students. However, 205 (two hundred and five) Christian students responded to the questionnaire. The data was analysed using mean, mean percentage, standard deviation and ranking.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographics of Respondents: The demographics of the respondents are shown in Figure 1 below.

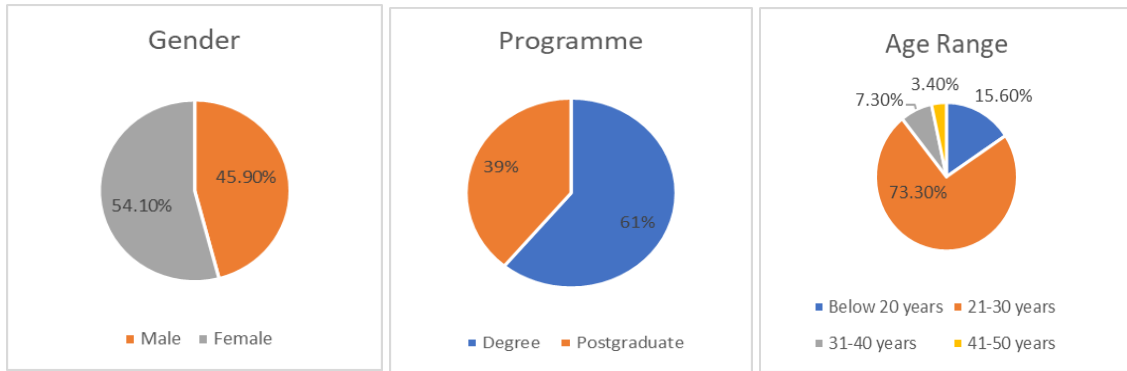


Fig. 1: Demographics of Respondents

Fig. 1 shows the characteristics of the respondents. It shows that male respondents are 94, which is 45.9 percent of the total respondents, and females are 111, which is 54.1 percent. It also showed that the degree student constituted 61.0 percent of the samples while 39.0 percent were postgraduate students of the total sample, making the majority of the respondents' degree students. The table also shows that

most of the respondents are students between the ages of 21 and 30, making 73.3 percent of the total respondents. Moreover, the table showed that 15.6 percent of the total sample is students below 20 years.

Research Question 1: What are some material pursuits among Christian students of UI.

Table 1: Some material pursuits among Christian students of UI

Items	R	Min.	Max.	\bar{x}	\bar{x} %	SD	Rank
Exotic cars	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.63	65.85	.705	5 th
Latest gadgets such as phones and laptops	2.00	2.00	4.00	3.32	83.05	.681	1 st
Designer wears and accessories	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.17	79.26	.630	2 nd
Visit expensive bars and club houses	3.00	1.00	4.00	2.80	70.12	.741	4 th
Books to study	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.11	77.80	.835	3 rd

Table 1 shows some material pursuits among Christian students of UI. It shows that the latest gadgets such as phones and laptops and designer wear and accessories ranked first among the material possessions with a mean score of 3.32 and a mean percent of 83.05. Next to it, designer wears and accessories with a mean score of 3.17 and a mean percent of 79.26. This is followed by books to study with a 3.11 mean score and 77.80 mean percent. Visiting expensive bars and clubhouses is next, with a 2.80 mean score and 70.12

mean percent, while the last on the table is exotic cars, with a 2.63 mean score and 65.85 mean percent.

It is concluded therefore that the material pursuit among Christian student of UI includes latest gadgets such as phones and laptops, designer wear and accessories, books to study, visiting expensive bars and clubhouses and exotic cars

Research Question 2: To what extent to do Christian students in UI desire to possess material things.

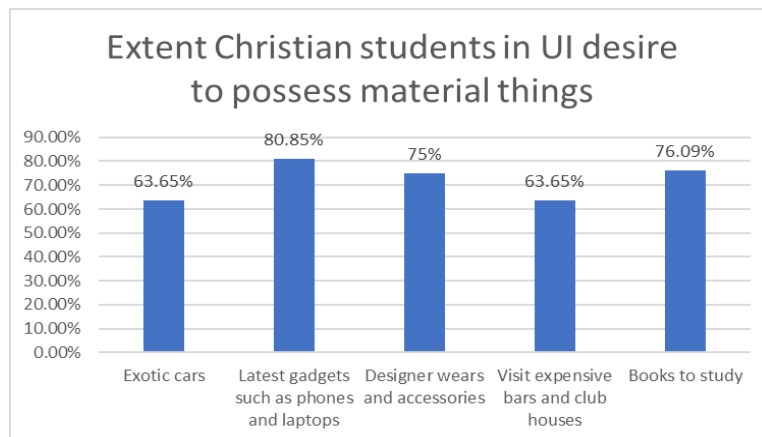


Fig. 2: Extent to which UI Christian students desire to possess material things

Fig. 2 shows the extent to which Christian students in UI desire to possess material things. It shows that Christian students often desire to possess the latest gadgets, such as phones and laptops, with a 3.23 mean score and 80.85 mean percent. The next is books to study with a 3.04 mean score and 76.09 mean percent. While designers wear accessories and exotic cars with a 3.00 mean score and 75.00 mean percent ranked third. The table also showed a tie between visiting expensive bars and clubhouses and exotic cars with 2.54 and 63.65 mean percentages. The standard

deviation scores of the items on the table reveal that the respondents' opinions on the subject under consideration are highly homogeneous. Hence, it can be said that the desire for these items are evident but moderate. This is because the first two items desired are related to Christian student academic life, while the last two items are related to desire for material things.

Research Question 3: What are the Christian Stewardship principles applied by Christian students of UI.

Table 2: Showing results for the application of Christian Stewardship principles as a Christian student

Items	R	Min.	Max.	\bar{x}	\bar{x} %	SD	Rank
I am a manager of God's venture in school	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.09	77.44	.747	5
I must never be anxious to possess material things	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.06	76.70	.967	6
I must be ready to assist others in my area of giftedness	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.44	86.22	.806	1
I must be ready to give account to God, my school and society	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.32	83.17	.783	4
I will be rewarded for all that I do within and without the school	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.36	84.02	.802	3
God is not against pursuing material things as students	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.00	75.00	.863	7
I represent Christ on campus	3.00	1.00	4.00	3.36	84.14	.815	2

Table 2 shows the application of Christian stewardship principles among Christian students at UI. The table 2 shows that the statement I must be ready to assist others in my area of giftedness, with a mean score of 3.44 and 86.22 mean percent ranked first. While the statement I represent Christ on campus with 3.36 mean percent and 84.14 percent came next to it. Also, the table showed that the statement I will be rewarded for all that I do within and without the school with a 3.36 mean score and 84.02 mean percent came third, while the statement I must be ready to give account to God, my school and society with 3.32 mean percent and 83.17 mean percent ranked fourth. The table also shows that the statement I am a manager of God's venture in school, with a 3.09 mean score and 77.44 mean percent come fifth. The table shows a 0.06 and 1.7 difference in the mean scores and percentage scores of the statement I must never be anxious to possess material things and God is not against pursuing material things as students, which ranked sixth and seventh, respectively.

Therefore, it is concluded based on the ranking of the responses that Christian students of the University of Ibadan are applying the ownership, responsibility, reward and accountability as they assist others in area of giftedness (1st), represent Christ on campus (2nd), live with the consciousness that they will be rewarded for what they do within and without the school (3rd), must be ready to give account to God, school and society (4th) are aware that they are manager of God's venture in school (5th) and must never be anxious to possess material things (6th).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study has found out the impact of Christian education curriculum in the application of

Christian stewardship principles among Christian students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria and the results have shown some material pursuits among Christian students of UI to include exotic cars, latest gadgets such as phones and laptops, designer wears and accessories, visit expensive bars and club houses and books to study. Also, the study also shows the extent Christian students in UI desire to possess material things which is moderate as shown in the mean (%) value of 80.85, 76.09, 75.00, 63.65 and 63.65 for latest gadgets such as phones and laptops, books to study, designer wears and accessories, exotic cars and visit expensive bars and club houses. Again, the study shows the application of Christian Stewardship principles among Christian students of UI to include stewardship of stewardship of ownership, responsibility, reward and accountability as they assist others in area of giftedness (1st), represent Christ on campus (2nd), live with the consciousness that they will be rewarded for what they do within and without the school (3rd), must be ready to give account to God, school and society (4th) are aware that they are manager of God's venture in school (5th) and must never be anxious to possess material things (6th).

The essence of man's creation is for him to manage God's manifold resources. Hence, man should live with this consciousness throughout his life. It thus suffices to conclude that Christian students in UI are aware of the principles of Christian stewardship, and their Pursuit of material things can be checked using the Christian stewardship principles.

Hence, it is recommended that the Christian education teachings going on in the fellowship should keep emphasising the need to be good stewards and managers of God's resources because Christian, students will give account to God. Christian students in

the university of Ibadan should also seek to bring others to the knowledge of their being stewards on campus because God is the owner of everything in their possession and they will give account to God of how the resources God gave them was spent whether of life, time, money, and influence.

REFERENCES

1. Martin, Alfred (2005). *Biblical Stewardship*. USA: ECS Ministries. p. 19
2. Grindstaff, W.F., (1967) *Principles of Stewardship development*. Nashville: Convention Press. p. 9-11
3. Muncy, W.L., Jr (1953). *Fellowship with God through Christian Stewardship*. Kansas City: Central Seminary Press. p. 57
4. Jones, Alonzo Trevier (nd). *The place of the Bible in Education*. New York: Pacific Press Publishing Company.
5. Oladimeji Samuel Oluwafemi & Oyewo, Gabriel O. (2015). "Balance Stewardship Gems: The Essential Components of Christian Stewardship" in Ayo-Obiremi Olusola (compiler) *Balancing Your Church's Christian Education Ministry*. Nigeria: Baptist Press Ltd. p.75.
6. Jorgenson, Allen G. (2010). *Awe and Expectation: On Being Stewards of the Gospel*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publisher. p4.
7. Conway, Daniel. (2005). *Stewardship Ministry: I Like Being in Parish*. Np: Twenty Third Publications.
8. Reuman, John H. (1995). *Stewardship and the Economy of God*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publisher. p5.
9. Rodin, Scott R. (2000). *Stewards in the Kingdom: A Theology of Life in All its Fullness*. Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press. p16
10. Dillard, J. E. *Good tewards*. Nashville: Broadman Press. p.6-9
11. Rusbuldt, Richard E. (1994). Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. p1
12. Reuman, John H. (1995). *Stewardship and the Economy of God*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publisher.
13. Oladeji, Samuel O. (2019). *Responsible Christian Stewardship (Appreciating God through Purposeful Stewarding of all Creation)*. Nigeria: Baptist Press (Nig.) Ltd. p. 1
14. Locke Russell & Veda Locke. (1986). *Total Christian Stewardship*. Ibadan: The Publishing Board, Nigerian Baptist Convention. p10
15. Lane Charles R. (2006). *Ask, Thank, Tell: Improving Stewardship Ministry in Your Congregation*. Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress. p26
16. Niyi-Ojo, Thomas. (2014). *Understanding Christian Stewardship: A Practical Guide to Becoming Effective Managers of God's Resources*. Ogbomoso: Hirise Celebrity Publishers. p24
17. Psalm 24:1
18. Locke Russell & Veda Locke. (1986). *Total Christian Stewardship*. Ibadan: The Publishing Board, Nigerian Baptist Convention. p10
19. Ibid11
20. Niyi-Ojo, Thomas. (2014). *Understanding Christian Stewardship: A Practical Guide to Becoming Effective Managers of God's Resources*. Ogbomoso: Hirise Celebrity Publishers. p33
21. I Cor. 4:2, NLT
22. Grindstaff, W.F. (1967) *Principles of Stewardship development*. Nashville: Convention Press. p6
23. 1 Peter 4:10
24. Locke Russell & Veda Locke. (1986). *Total Christian Stewardship*. Ibadan: The Publishing Board, Nigerian Baptist Convention. p17
25. Niyi-Ojo, Thomas. (2014). *Understanding Christian Stewardship: A Practical Guide to Becoming Effective Managers of God's Resources*. Ogbomoso: Hirise Celebrity Publishers. p28