

Systematic Review of Christ-Centered Holistic Curriculum Policy in Seventh-Day Adventist Education

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ABSTRACT

We conducted a systematic review of the implementation and efficacy of the Christ-centered holistic curriculum policy in Seventh-day Adventist schools. The study examined the impact of the Adventist school experience in assisting students to develop in all areas through the integration of faith, learning and character building. The review integrated theoretical and empirical studies on faith integration, holistic education, teacher roles, and policy implementation in Adventist schools. It did this through following the philosophy of Adventist education which stresses the wholesome development of the spiritual, intellectual, physical and social aspects of students.

The study investigated the philosophical and theological foundations of the Christ-centered curriculum, the infusion of faith and learning in the classroom, the role of teachers as spiritual guides, and the challenges and opportunities that arise in the implementation of holistic education policies. A systematic review method was used to analyze relevant books and previous research studies on Adventist education to identify common themes, practices and outcomes.

The findings showed that the Adventist educational system is still robustly rooted in a biblical perspective and the writings of Ellen G. White. The focus is on education as a way of healing and changing people. The review shows that students who combine faith and learning become smarter about right and wrong, grow spiritually, become more responsible and are better at being leaders. It was also found that well-rounded educational programs such as church activities, health education and community service are helping students grow in a healthy way. Teachers have a major role in modeling for students how to live like Christ and in creating spiritual moments that matter in the classroom.

The study also revealed some issues such as faith integration not always practiced, teachers not trained properly, a lack of teaching materials and problems between religious identity and national education standards. These issues were raised, but the review found that improvements could be made through better teacher training, more help for institutions, new content and more cooperation between Adventist schools.

The study concludes that the Christ-centered inclusive curriculum policy is still very important for the purpose and character of Seventh-day Adventist schools. If used properly it not only helps students to do well in school but it changes them spiritually and morally. The results can teach teachers, school managers, lawmakers and future researchers who want to improve Adventist education and maintain its Christ-centered purpose alive in modern schools.

INTRODUCTION

In faith-based schools, learning contributes to students' intellectual, moral, spiritual and social development. In the Seventh-day Adventist Church education is an opportunity to save people by making them more like God and preparing them to serve God in this world and the next. Therefore, Adventist education takes a Christ-centered and holistic approach to learning that integrates spiritual values with academic excellence and character development.

This method is based on biblical principles and Ellen G. White's writings on education, particularly her book *Education*. White contended that a true education involved the development of the physical, mental and spiritual faculties of students in harmony. It is this policy that guides teachers and school leaders as they plan and implement their lessons, design lessons, engage students and manage the school.

This is the reason why Adventist schools throughout the world have a Christ-centered inclusive education policy that combines faith and learning in all subjects. Adventist education does not isolate religion to a separate class. Rather, it uses Bible worldview perspectives in subjects such as science, math, writing and social studies. Its main purpose is to teach children good morals, critical thinking skills and a strong desire to help others.

The Adventist school system is considered one of the largest Protestant school systems in the world. There are thousands of schools in many places. These schools attempt to maintain their own specific teaching methods, while adhering to the national program and addressing the requirements of contemporary education. Adventist education has a strong intellectual basis, but it is increasingly important to examine closely the implementation of the Christ-centered holistic curriculum policy and the real-world evidence for its effectiveness.

The study has been done in so many different areas of Adventist education, on how to teach character, on how to include faith, on the role of the teacher. But the results are all over the place. Hence, the aim of this study is to review all the prior research on Christ-centered inclusive curriculum policy in Seventh-day Adventist education.

The study mixes theory and observational research to get a better picture of the way this policy affects the way the material is taught, the way students grow, the way teachers do their jobs and the way the school is run. The results of the review can contribute to the enhancement of the education process in Adventist schools and provide new ideas for teachers, administrators and legislators who are committed to the promotion of the purpose and philosophy of Adventist education.

The study intends to examine the level of knowledge and use of the Christ-centered inclusive curriculum policy by Seventh-day Adventist schools.

Specific Objectives:

1. To study the intellectual and religious foundations of the Christ-centered, holistic Adventist school program.
2. To summarize the theory and practice of the integration of faith into Adventist education.
3. To examine how Adventist schools offer a holistic education to foster students' spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social development.
4. To learn what teachers can do to help ensure that teaching is Christ-centered and that faith and learning are integrated in the classroom.
5. To identify the problems and opportunities of implementing the Christ-centered holistic education policy in Adventist schools.

LITERATURE OF THE STUDY

The Philosophy of Adventist Education

The philosophy of Adventist education is based on a Christian worldview that acknowledges God as the only source of truth and knowledge. George R. Knight states that the goal of Adventist education is to make people at peace with God, themselves and their environment. This means that education is not perceived as only intellectual development. It is also seen as a means of spiritual transformation and character building. Adventists believe in whole person development. This means that education should respond to the mental, spiritual, physical and social needs of the learner. This view is in line with the teachings of the Bible and the writings of Ellen G. White, who stated that education is "the harmonious development of all the powers of the human being."

Christ-Centered Curriculum Integration:

One of the core principles of Adventist education is the integration of faith and learning. Academic learning is not separate from teaching religion. The Adventist teachers do not follow this. They try to use bible principles and Christian faith views in all subjects.

Research has found that faith inclusion helps kids link morals and spirituality to what they learn in school. This helps students to see the link between faith, information and real life situations. Faith and learning also shape the ways in which teachers teach, and students speak, and do tasks. Teachers are encouraged to help students think through moral issues, biblical concepts, and the development of a Christian worldview.

Developing the Whole Person

Holistic education is an important part of Adventist education. It believes that students are complex beings with mental, social, spiritual and physical needs. Faith-based education studies have shown that schools that focus on whole-person development are more likely to develop strong character, social duty, and leadership skills among their students. Adventist schools promote health, community service, and spiritual activities that support a balanced development of students. This aligns with the larger educational theories that emphasize the importance of the whole person learning.

The Role of Teachers in Adventist Education

Teachers in Adventist schools are not to be merely teachers but are to be spiritual leaders and mentors. They also use religious concepts in their lessons and help students develop morally and spiritually.

The professional growth programs of Adventist education emphasize the importance of integrating faith and learning, Christian guidance, and responsible teaching. Teachers are instructed to make the school a place where respect, kindness, and service are valued.

Research has found that teachers who intentionally integrate faith into teaching can positively affect their students' character and spirituality.

Governance and Policy Implementation

In Adventist education, policies are developed and implemented by the church leadership, educational departments, and school boards. These groups help Adventist schools stay true to the church's mission and philosophy, while also meeting national educational standards.

School administrators play a key role in promoting the Christ-centered curriculum through ensuring teachers are trained, new lessons are planned, and that there are spiritual activities for the entire school community.

But researchers have pointed to problems in policy implementation, including the need to balance national educational standards with denominational identity, and the need to prepare teachers adequately for faith integration.

Results of the Study

This systematic review synthesizes the results of several theoretical and empirical studies that examined the Christ-centered inclusive curriculum policy in Seventh-day Adventist schools. The findings are presented in accordance with the specific objectives of the study.

Philosophical and Theological Foundations

The review indicates that the general consensus among the experts is that Adventist education is based on a biblical worldview that emphasizes healing, restoration and service. Ellen G. White's books and George R. Knight's work all stress the fact that education is not only about learning, it's about changing people. Studies have shown that a Christ-centered approach to school life affects everything from how the curriculum is made to how teachers teach to how students are involved.

Faith Integration in the Curriculum

Findings suggest that faith-learning integration is widespread in Adventist schools, but the depth and consistency of this integration varies. In Adventist education, spiritual growth and intellectual growth are complementary. Many teachers bring bible ideals into their teaching, into activities to help students understand those ideals, and into activities to help students think about what they are learning.

Research has found that students who receive combined instruction develop a stronger connection between what they learn at school and their ideas about right and wrong. But the review also finds that some teachers are not well prepared to integrate faith well because of inadequate training and lack of teaching materials.

Holistic Development of Learners

There are many pieces of evidence that holistic education supports the students to develop healthily. Adventist schools always have programs to meet students' intellectual, social, spiritual, and physical needs. The findings indicate that children in these settings are more likely to act in positive ways, including leadership, helping their community, and making moral choices. Holistic programs such as spiritual retreats, health education and outreach greatly assist in achieving these outcomes.

Teachers' Role in Christ-Centered Instruction

Teachers have a very important role in implementing the education policy. The review concludes that Christian teachers who intentionally teach faith and model Christian values have a major impact on the spiritual and moral development of their students.

But there is some variation in teacher preparedness. There are teachers who are very good at integrating faith, and teachers who need more training. To improve this we need training programs in both pedagogy and theology.

Issues highlighted in the literature are:

- the tensions between national curriculum demands and religious identity;
- lack of resources and training for faith integration;
- uneven policy implementation across schools;
- and possibilities for enhancement through greater institutional support, teacher training, and the creation of more relevant materials for students.

Better educational technology and networks that enable Adventist schools to collaborate can also bring about improvements.

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

This systematic review shows that the Christ-centered holistic curriculum policy continues to be an important component of the Seventh-day Adventist identity and the mission of education. One distinctive approach to education that seeks to develop the whole person is the integration of faith and learning. The theory and practice are closely linked, and this link shows that Adventist education is still faithful to its fundamental values. But as the way it is put into practice shows, there is a gap between policy and practice that needs to be filled.

One important lesson is the significance of teachers. This review supports other research in that teachers are the ones that truly bring faith to the classroom. If teachers are not adequately prepared and supported, the education program will not be as effective. Thus teachers should enhance their skills through programs integrating religious knowledge with teaching methods.

In line with the emphasis on holistic growth, contemporary education concepts prefer learner-centered and values-based teaching. But the thing that makes Adventist education even more unique is that it explicitly incorporates spiritual formation. This is what makes it unique compared to other faith-based school systems.

The issues raised are not confined to Adventist education, particularly the tension between national standards and religious identity. There are many faith groups that have the same sorts of problems. This requires flexible leadership and curriculum design that is responsive to the needs of the school and a strong commitment from the whole school.

The holistic curriculum policy that is centered on Christ works in theory and in practice, and it can have a bigger effect with better teacher training, stronger policy implementation, and more research.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this systematic review on Christ-centered holistic curriculum policy in Seventh-day Adventist education, the following recommendations are made for teachers, school administrators, policymakers, and future researchers:

For Teachers and Classroom Practitioners

Teachers should participate in ongoing professional development programs that help them develop their teaching skills and their spiritual growth. It is important to stress in training how to integrate faith and learning in all subjects, not only religious ones, in a practical way.

Teachers are also encouraged to consciously model Christ-like values in their daily interactions, since their own behaviour has a great impact on the development of their students as persons. The teachers are encouraged to use reflective teaching methods regularly in the classroom such as incorporating devotionals and having talks about values.

For School Administrators

The school leaders should lead the way in implementing the Christ-centered holistic curriculum by making the school environment favorable. This includes:

- Providing regular in-service training and mentoring programs for teachers
- Allocating resources for faith-integrated instructional materials
- Strengthening school-wide spiritual programs such as worships, weeks of prayer, and outreach activities

Administrators should also establish monitoring and evaluation systems to ensure that the integration of faith and holistic development is consistently practiced across all grade levels and subject areas.

For Educational Policymakers and Church Leadership Educational leaders within the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and its local missions and conferences should enhance policy support by: Developing clear and contextualized guidelines for faith-learning integration Strengthening collaboration between theological institutions and teacher education programs Ensuring alignment between denominational philosophy and national curriculum requirements Policies should also address the need for standardized training modules that equip teachers with both theological understanding and instructional skills.

For Curriculum Developers Curriculum designers should develop instructional materials that explicitly integrate biblical principles with academic content. For Adventist Educational Institutions Schools shall formulate holistic education plans that foster the spiritual, intellectual, physical, and social development of students.

Interdisciplinary methods are also required in order that students can study real-world problems from a Christian standpoint. This would help them to think critically and morally. These resources should be student-centered, culturally appropriate, and flexible enough to be used in a variety of classroom situations.

The school should demonstrate its commitment to the philosophy of Adventist education through its policies and daily operations. It needs to expand community service and mission-oriented activities; promote health and wellness programs consistent with Adventist beliefs; and foster student leadership and character development programs.

For Future Researchers

Future research should do empirical research to find the effect of Christ-centered holistic education on student outcomes such as academic achievement, spiritual development, and character formation. Researchers are also encouraged to: Compare Adventist schools with non-Adventist schools; Investigate the effectiveness of different faith-based blending approaches; Determine the long-term impact on Adventist school graduates.

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