

Christian Religious Education and the 21st Century Global Technological Practices In Nigeria

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Abstract

Christian Religious Education has been a common subject in academia, especially in the context of Nigeria. With the ever-evolving global Christian practices and technologies in the 21st century. It has become imperative to analyze the impact of Christian Religious Education on the adoption of 21st century Global Practices in Nigeria. This research aims at exploring the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours of students towards technology. The result shows that Christian Religious Education has significant influence on the adoption of global technological practices in Nigeria, specifically in terms of promoting critical thinking skills and positive attitudes towards technological advancements. However, this research seeks to identify some challenges faced by students in integrating technology into their religious practices, such as cultural and societal norms. It provides insight for scholars, students in the field of religious studies and policy makers to support and promote the integration of Technology in Christian Religious Education. It concludes that successful alignment of Christian Religious Education within 21st century global technological practices in Nigeria will serve as a key to empower students with the knowledge, skills and ethical foundation necessary to navigate the complexities of rapidly changing world, while upholding their doctrinal beliefs, values and faith.

Keywords: Christian Religious Education, Global Practices, Technology, Culture, 21st Century.

Introduction

Christian Religious Education has been a fundamental aspect of Nigeria's educational system, playing a significant role in shaping the moral, ethical, and spiritual development of students. As Nigeria continues to navigate the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century, it becomes essential to assess the alignment of Christian Religious Education with contemporary global practices in Nigerian educational institutions (Oyeronke, 2015).

According to Okorie (2016), Christian Religious Education in Nigeria incorporates global trends while maintaining its core principles and values as students are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding necessary to thrive in an interconnected and diverse world.

Today, Nigeria boasts of a diverse and thriving Christian community, encompassing various denominations and traditions. Adeyanju (2014) stated that; Christian Religious Education holds a profound place within the cultural and educational landscape of Nigeria with a rich history spanning centuries as the practice of Christian Religious Education has shaped the moral compass and spiritual development of countless individuals in the country. Nigeria, being home to a predominantly Christian population, has witnessed the growth and influence of various Christian denominations, each contributing to the dissemination of Christian teachings and values (Adeyemi, 2019).

Furthermore, the importance of exploring Christian Religious Education in the context of 21st century global Christian practices stems from religious pluralism and the increasing diversity of religious beliefs and practices which necessitates a more inclusive approach to Religious Education as exemplified by countries such as Canada, where Religious Education programs have been developed to foster interfaith dialogue and understanding among students of different religions (Nasir, 2017).

The aim of this study on Christian Religious Education and the 21st century technological practices in Nigeria is to examine the role of technology in enhancing the delivery and accessibility of Christian Religious Education in the context of 21st-century global practices, and to assess the current state of Christian Religious Education in Nigerian educational institutions and its alignment with 21st-century global technological practices.

Globalization has significantly increased access to information and theological resources for both educators and students. Adeyemi (2019) states that, through the internet, students can access a wealth of religious texts, theological discussions, and educational materials from different Christian traditions as accessibility promotes a broader understanding of Christianity and encourages critical thinking and engagement with theological ideas. Globalization has facilitated the growth of transnational religious movements within Christianity as these movements transcend national boundaries and create networks of believers who share common religious practices and ideologies. Examples include the Pentecostal and Charismatic movements, which have experienced significant growth and influence through transnational connections (Gaiya, 2016).

Fatokun (2018) posits that, globalization has given rise to new ethical and moral challenges that need to be addressed within Christian Religious Education. Issues such as economic inequality, environmental degradation, human rights abuses, and cultural clashes require students to develop a critical ethical framework grounded in Christian values. Christian Religious Education can engage with these challenges by exploring biblical teachings on justice, stewardship, compassion, and social responsibility.

Technology and Accessibility of Christian Religious Education

The role of technology in enhancing the delivery and accessibility of Christian Religious Education is becoming increasingly prominent in the context of 21st-century global practices. Technological advancements offer new opportunities to expand the reach of Christian Religious Education, provide innovative learning resources, and facilitate meaningful engagement with diverse communities around the world. Awosika (2017) states that by leveraging technology, educators create more dynamic, interactive, and inclusive learning experiences for students while also addressing the evolving needs of the global Christian community.

Yohanna (2018) states that one way in which technology enhances the delivery of Christian Religious Education is through the creation of digital learning resources and platforms as educators utilize multimedia tools, interactive websites, educational apps, and virtual reality experiences to engage students in diverse learning activities, such as interactive simulations of

historical events, virtual tours of significant religious sites, and multimedia presentations of religious texts and teachings. These resources provide students with immersive and dynamic learning experiences that cater for different learning styles and preferences, making the educational content more accessible and engaging for a wider audience.

Technology facilitates the dissemination of Christian Religious Education beyond traditional classroom settings. Online learning platforms, live-streamed events, webinars, and digital resources enable students to access educational content from anywhere in the world, effectively transcending geographical boundaries and providing access to those who may not have had the opportunity to participate in traditional, in-person educational experiences (Awosika, 2017). This expanded accessibility is particularly valuable for individuals in remote or underserved communities, as well as for those with physical disabilities or mobility challenges, allowing them to engage with Christian Religious Education in ways that were previously limited by physical proximity or resources.

In addition to expanding access to educational content, Osadolor (2019) states that technology also enables educators to cultivate meaningful connections with diverse communities and individuals through social media, online forums, and digital communication tools, provide platforms for students to engage in dialogue, share experiences, and collaborate with peers from different cultural, geographical, and religious backgrounds. This type of global engagement fosters a sense of community, intercultural understanding, and empathy among students, creating opportunities for them to learn from and with individuals with diverse perspectives, experiences, and beliefs.

Furthermore, technology supports the development of inclusive and diverse curricula within Christian Religious Education as digital platforms and resources offer educators the flexibility to incorporate diverse perspectives, cultural expressions of faith, and global narratives into the curriculum. By leveraging digital resources, educators can supplement traditional educational materials with multimedia content, documentaries, virtual cultural experiences, and firsthand accounts from individuals representing a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds (Chukwu, 2019). This approach not only enriches the learning experience by providing students with diverse perspectives, but it also fosters a more inclusive understanding of the global nature of Christianity and its intersections with diverse cultural contexts.

Another way in which technology enhances the delivery of Christian Religious Education is through the facilitation of interfaith dialogue and collaboration. According to Awosika (2017) digital platforms provide opportunities for students to engage in respectful and meaningful interactions with individuals from different religious traditions, fostering a spirit of dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. Online discussion forums, webinars, and collaborative projects can bring together students from diverse religious backgrounds to explore common values, address misconceptions, and engage in interfaith initiatives that promote mutual respect and cooperation.

Technology also supports the ongoing professional development of educators in the field of Christian Religious Education. Yohanna (2018) is of the view that online training programs, webinars, and digital resources provide opportunities for educators to engage with best practices, innovative teaching methods, and diverse perspectives in a convenient and flexible manner. While Emmanuel (2017) asserts that digital platforms facilitate networking and collaboration among educators, allowing them to share resources, exchange ideas, and learn from one another's experiences, thus enhancing the quality and effectiveness of Christian Religious Education worldwide.

Christian Religious Education and the 21st-Century Global Technological Practices

Christian Religious Education in the Nigerian context is a critical component of the educational system, and its alignment with 21st-century global practices is essential to ensure that students are equipped to navigate the complexities of the modern world. In the 21st century, ethical and moral challenges are prevalent, and Christian Religious Education should equip students with the knowledge and values to navigate these challenges (Emmanuel, 2017).

Additionally, Gaiya (2016) opines that with the advancement of technology, it is crucial to integrate digital tools and platforms into the teaching of Christian Religious Education as this will enhanced students' digital literacy, enable access to a wealth of resources, and facilitate interactive learning experiences as educators are trained to leverage technology effectively in teaching Religious Education. Also, the curriculum for Christian Religious Education did not focus on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students but if applied,

it will empower them to analyze complex issues, make informed decisions, and apply their knowledge to real-world challenges within the global context.

According to Chukwu (2019), Christian Religious Education emphasize on the concept of global citizenship by encouraging students to engage with global issues such as poverty, environmental sustainability, and social justice from a Christian perspective. This can be achieved through service-oriented projects and awareness of global challenges as teachers of Christian Religious Education undergo continuous professional development to stay abreast of modern pedagogical practices, global trends in Religious Education, and cultural competence. This will enable them to effectively deliver 21st-century education to their students.

Global Christian Practices and their Relevance to Christian Religious Education

According to Abiodun (2016), the integration of technology in Religious Education facilitates interactive learning experiences, provides access to a vast array of resources and information, and enables educators to engage students through digital platforms and tools which are used to create immersive experiences of biblical narratives and historical religious sites. This enhances students' understanding and connection to the teachings of Christianity. Additionally, the use of online platforms and educational apps can supplement traditional classroom learning, providing opportunities for interactive discussions, multimedia presentations, and collaborative projects related to Christian Religious Education (Emmanuel, 2017).

Multiculturalism is another essential component of 21st-century global technological practices that must be integrated into Christian Religious Education. In today's interconnected world, students are exposed to diverse cultures, traditions, and belief systems, necessitating an inclusive approach to Religious Education as educators incorporate multicultural perspectives by exploring the history and influence of Christianity in various global contexts, as well as promoting an understanding of other major world religions (Abiodun, 2016). Environmental sustainability is an increasingly important aspect of the 21st-century global technological practices that should be integrated into Christian Religious Education. Given the global concern for environmental stewardship and sustainability, it is imperative for Christian Religious Education to address environmental issues from a theological perspective as educators explore the teachings of stewardship and environmental responsibility within the Christian faith, as

well as engage students in discussions about environmental ethics, climate change, and the intersection of faith and environmental activism (Gaiya, 2016). Emphasizing environmental sustainability within Christian Religious Education provides students with a holistic understanding of their ethical responsibilities as global citizens and aligns with the contemporary focus on environmental consciousness.

Challenges of Christian Religious Education and Strategies for Addressing these Challenges

It is essential to acknowledge and address these challenges proactively to ensure that the integration of global Technological practices does not compromise the integrity of Christian Religious Education. One potential conflict arises from the rapid advancement of technology and its impact on the traditional pedagogical methods in Christian Religious Education as technology offer valuable tools for enhancing learning experiences. There is a risk of over reliance on digital platforms which may detract from the personal and communal aspects of faith formation. To address these challenges, educators should adopt a balanced approach that leverages technology to supplement traditional methods while prioritizing personal interactions, mentorship, and communal engagement in Religious Education (Fatokun, 2018).

Chukwu (2019) states that another potential conflict arises from the cultural diversity embraced within 21st-century global practices and the preservation of traditional Christian teachings while multiculturalism enriches the understanding of global Christianity, there may be tensions between the inclusive nature of multicultural education and the distinctive theological doctrines of Christian faith as educators navigate this challenge by promoting a balanced approach that respects diverse cultural expressions within Christianity while upholding the foundational tenets of the faith.

Additionally, the emphasis on environmental sustainability in the 21st-century global practices may present challenges in reconciling ecological stewardship with traditional theological interpretations within Christian Religious Education as environmental consciousness aligns with the call for stewardship of creation in Christian teachings, there may be differing perspectives on specific environmental policies, practices, and ethical considerations (Emmanuel, 2017). Educators can address this challenge by engaging students in thoughtful

discussions that integrate biblical teachings on stewardship, ethical considerations, and contemporary environmental issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the intersection of Christian Religious Education and 21st-century global practices in the Nigerian context presents both opportunities and challenges. It is essential to recognize the significance of integrating relevant global technological practices into Religious Education while maintaining the core values and teachings of the Christian faith.

Embracing technology as a tool for enhancing the delivery of Christian Religious Education and evaluating its impacts on students' moral and ethical development is vital in preparing them for the demands of the modern world. Additionally, drawing lessons from successful models in other regions and formulating tailored recommendations and policy guidelines for Nigeria will contribute to the effective integration of Christian Religious Education with 21st-century global practices.

Ultimately, the successful alignment of Christian Religious Education with 21st-century global practices in Nigeria will serve to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical foundation necessary to navigate the complexities of a rapidly changing world while upholding the values of their faith. This endeavor contributes to the holistic development of individuals who are capable of positively impacting their communities and the wider global landscape.

Recommendations

Based on the fore-going, the study recommends that:

1. The Christian Religious Education curriculum should place a strong emphasis on fostering critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students. This will prepare them to navigate the complex challenges of the 21st century and engage with global issues from a Christian perspective.
2. It is important for Christian Religious Education to incorporate global perspectives into the curriculum, exposing students to different cultural, religious, and socio-economic

contexts. This will help students develop a broader understanding of the world and appreciate diversity, in line with global citizenship practices.

3. The curriculum should focus on fostering ethical and moral values that are relevant to the 21st century global context. This includes addressing contemporary ethical dilemmas, promoting empathy and compassion, and guiding students on making ethical decisions in a complex world.
4. There is a need to incorporate digital learning tools and platforms into the Christian Religious Education curriculum. This will ensure that students are exposed to technology and learn to navigate the digital landscape in line with global practices. Teachers should be trained on how to effectively integrate technology into their teaching methods.
5. Teachers should undergo continuous professional development to enhance their skills in teaching Christian Religious Education in alignment with 21st century global practices. This can include workshops, seminars, and training programs focused on modern teaching methodologies, cultural competence, and global awareness.

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