

Global Challenge and Challenges of Curriculum of Religious Education in Nigeria

Selome Kuponu^{1*}, Exradallenum Olusegun Akinsanya²
Lagos State University

Corresponding Author: Selome Kuponu; Selome1965@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: ICT, Challenges of Curriculum, Religious Education, Curriculum Uniformity

Received : 17 December

Revised : 21 January

Accepted: 28 February

©2025 Kuponu, Akinsanya: This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).



ABSTRACT

Curriculum can be referred to as the learning experiences which the school has organized for the individuals it has the responsibility. In a religiously pluralistic society like Nigeria, religious education has been recognized as an important tool for promoting religious tolerance, understanding, and respect. The curriculum for religious education is intended to cater for the following needs in the life of learners who are educated in a secular society: attention to the religious aspect of the culture, the religious-moral-emotional development, the structural-imprinted-evolutionary dialect, and religious life. The methods of the research were based on the critical potential of philosophy, existential, axiological, logical cultural, historical, comparative, normative and constructive in religion, culture, and education. Religious education is a programs to orient humans towards their own plane of upliftment, noble character, inner strength, and physical well-being

INTRODUCTION

Different religious groups have often pursued different socio-political and economic goals. Occasionally, these different goals have led to the establishment of different political goals, which have, to a large extent, divided Nigerian citizens into religious poles. Today, the concepts of religious conflict and fundamentalism have almost become part and parcel of various ethnic, religious, and political communities in Nigeria. The establishment of religion is therefore crucial in the overall development of Nigerian society. The challenge of maintaining a civic and moral order while living within such a religiously pluralistic society would be one of the major challenges that Nigeria would face as it entered the 21st century (Zainuri & Huda, 2023, Akinsanya, et al, 2023). The religious education programme in the curriculum could act as a mirror, reflecting and teaching the values and belief system of Nigeria's people from different religious and cultural backgrounds. In a religiously pluralistic society like Nigeria, religious education has been recognized as an important tool for promoting religious tolerance, understanding, and respect. Its essential function, therefore, is to promote religious education that promotes cohesion and avoids division. It is an important macro subject in the curriculum.

Organizing education in Nigeria is very challenging. Nigeria is so diverse and complex to the extent that educational problems are colossal. It will take a lot of time, material resources, and intellectual commitment to solve them. Nigeria is the most populated black nation and very complex in terms of the diversities of its people, languages, cultures, and religions. There are 250 major ethnic groups, 374 languages spoken, and 225 spoken in various schools in Nigeria. Religious plurality is equally common in Nigeria. There are Christians, Muslims, Traditionalists, and other smaller religious groups. Nigeria is a secular state, but religion occupies a very important position in the life of the Nigerian people. Research shows that the effect of religious instability on the overall development of Nigerian society is significant. For example, Nigeria has been a bloody arena of religious confrontation between Christians and Muslims (Nwafor & Ekunke, 2021).

Background of Religious Education in Nigeria

They pray individually, in family, communities, and at public functions. They perform services of their religions and have regard for religious authorities. These are reflections of the various religious affiliations of the Nigerian state. Despite the plurality of religions, the presence of religious conflicts is felt both at the national and inter-state levels. Although various programs are provided to ensure coexistence and harmony among the adherents of various faiths in the nation, the problem of religion keeps recurring (Omotosho et al.2020). Moreover, most of the crises tend to originate from or have a bearing on religious affairs. This religious difference is often seen as a challenge to Nigerian educational curriculum provisions, where there is dissatisfaction with the contents, teaching styles, and modes, and their relevance in meeting the needs of Nigeria (Akam & Ojen, 2020). Curriculum provisions at various levels of education are usually approached differently to reflect the peculiarities, cultural, and religious affiliations of the constituent units of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Religious education is a field of study that draws its thematic and methodological resources from religion, religious studies, applied ethics, and social sciences. In Nigeria, religious education is a subject that is used to create religious and moral awareness in the citizenry. It should be noted that religion is a factor that cannot be easily ignored or overlooked in Nigeria because religion has its implications and impacts on every sphere of life of the Nigerian citizenry (Idoko, 2022). The curricular provisions of religious education as a subject for the country are diverse. Each state has its input, especially as it reflects the kind of basic type of education pursued in them. The resources available to the various states, socio-political administration, and bias sometimes manifest in the differential educational provisions of religious subject matter content across the states of the federation. The disparity creates a lot of problems in the administration and management of educational provisions in the country. The complexity of the Nigerian people and their existence is a function of their religious pluralism. Nigerians are generally religious and perform their religious rites regularly.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Challenges in Religious Education

1. Curriculum

The elementary curriculum has been described as multivoiced. It is subdivided into compulsory subjects prescribed by the Ministries of Education and called "basic" because they are studied by all children and optional subjects called "non-basic" because they are studied only by some children, mainly through the Special Educational Services. Thomas et al. 2021 opines that the dynamic character of the school curriculum forces constant revision, renewal, and reform in the curriculum. Demands regular evaluation by teachers, curriculum administrators, and specialists of the curriculum content. The need to bring about curriculum revision was pointed out as early as 1963 in a UNESCO publication, *World Ideologies and the Curriculum*. Here a suggestion was made that changes were called for in the subject matter of the curriculum to help the student gain insights and appreciation of ideologies "as social forces" that would constitute necessary preparation for future life as participants in the democratic process. As far as religious education is concerned, the curriculum refers to the package of different units of work.

2. The Nature of Modern Education

Modern education acknowledges that the nature of the child as the developing person consists in uncovering his own potentialities of successful accomplishment. The teacher no longer is the legalistic, authoritarian dictator in the classroom requiring exact memorization, strict order, and a perfect performance of each assigned task. In religious schools, the teacher, to a far greater degree, should reflect the image of his ideal teacher, Jesus Christ. The modern religious teacher understands that early childhood is a time of discovery, wonder, growth, recognition of the limitless bounds of learning. In the elementary years, the child is busy preparing himself for further career

choice, in play, and in self-expression. He finds help in the preparation of his true road through life in such basic subjects as religion, social studies, language, numbers, art, and music (Idoko, 2022).

The challenges confronting religious education today are daunting ones. The global world of today has brought a globalized world filled with radical changes impacting deeply on the minds, hearts, and attitudes of the cosmopolitan younger generation. What is causing tension and confusion is the rapid pace of change taking place in modern society (Han & Ahn, 2020). There has been a transformation, a revolution in the way of life of man wrought by changes in the field of medicine, sociology, and education, among others. Education is called upon to respond to this revolution and to aid in its accomplishment. The world of ideas is tumultuous. It is in this world that religious education must locate itself and make itself meaningful to today's youth. Religious education has two primary loyalties - to religion and to education.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the research was to determine the global challenge and the challenges of this global curriculum in religious educational content in Nigeria. The methodology of the research was based on theoretical, empirical, and comparative and sociocultural foundations of research. The methods of the research were based on the critical potential of philosophy, existential, axiological, and logical cultural, historical, comparative, normative and constructive in religion, culture, and education. In many countries of the world, the leaders and members of the different religions are engaging in a mighty effort to reform and modernize the religious educational content in their communities. It was revealed that the problems and prospects of this globalized curriculum of religious education emerged in the social world and in human culture in different cultural, social, and historical development.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Impact of Globalization

Religious education might well be one of the disciplines whose importance has increased most significantly in the wake of the challenges posed by globalization. The mission of the curriculum of religious education will have to include symbols and reflections pointing to the potential sources of meaning global citizens may draw upon. This is the reason why even in largely secularized societies since the latter half of the twentieth century, educational systems attached considerable importance to religious education (Taufik, 2020). The curriculum of religious education continues to be a way of grounding adult future citizens/leaders in the traditional spiritual, moral, and ethical values common to the national culture and thereby contributes to nurturing peace, tolerance, and social cohesion in both national and international contexts. Given its linkages with societies' value frameworks and questions of citizenship, religious education can be seen as a practical expression of the tradition of dialogue, conceived of as both a transfer of knowledge and a search for meaning within the educational field.

Challenges of Religious Education Curriculum in Nigeria

Curriculum can be referred to as the learning experiences which the school has organized for the individuals it has the responsibility. Religious education is designed to cater for the growth of the total individual. This is because ideally it is a key subject linking the entire curricular dimension: emotional, social, moral, and philosophical, hence addresses the key issues connected with the development of the mind or spirit of man. In West Africa's educational philosophy, religious education in Nigeria has been conceived to be part of a moral or value-placing subject in which the spiritual training of a child is a central issue (Uche and Udogu2022). The task of religious education in the schools is defined by the curriculum thus the curriculum for religious education is intended to cater for the following needs in the life of learners who are educated in a secular society: attention to the religious aspect of the culture, the religious-moral-emotional development, the structural-imprinted-evolutionary dialect, and religious life. To achieve these ends, a well-planned, progressive and developmental religious education is crucial (Ukeje & Aisiku, 2022).

Challenges of Religious Education Curriculum in Nigeria

Unlike other school subject areas, religious education is of great significance to man. It is a subject designed to educate the mind, attitude, logical processes, and ethical outlook of learners in line with the core values of society. Religious education is essential to the development of the person, the exercise of leadership by the citizen, and the nourishment of spiritual values without which society cannot function. It is as a result of the realization of the importance of religious education that great emphasis has been placed on the qualifications of the staff assigned duties to religious education in the schools.

It should also be quoted that the existence of different types of religion curriculum has tended to confuse most discerning people as living in doubt. Instantly, each type of curriculum is training citizens of different age groups in the same country, which, when they become mature, expect them to come to terms with the problems of living together in groups and with the same national organization. The lack of uniformity of religious curriculum will not allow the various subjects to achieve their associated objectives during the period such policies are implemented (Ezegwu & Okoye, 2024). Research has shown that the existing curricula fail to fulfill their objectives in Nigeria. Religious education is a discipline or subject that falls under the umbrella of the curriculum development process. Over the years, the problem of development, implementation, and evaluation and realization about religious education center on the relationship between the teacher and the pupil or student, or teacher and textbook, teacher-thought, and student intellectual development.

Curriculum standardization, as it is, is to ensure that the various subjects' curriculum content, as designed and implemented, is uniform. That is to reduce the questions of whether the religion curriculum content offered in Schools A will be the same as the content in Schools B. This issue of standardization encompasses uniformity and capabilities to achieve desired objectives. The need for the uniformity of religion curriculum derives from the fact that religious values and disciplines are universal (Atmowidjoyo et al.2022). They are aimed at

developing universal principles of human relationship and cooperation, for right attitudes, habits, and skills in living. For this development of right attitudes, habits, and skills in living, so as to grow into individuals as there is a community, where they can effectively contribute with some measure of value in terms of behavior, morality, and relationship. It is necessary that religious instructions be regarded as a subject based on universal principles that should be seen. Consider the ultimate outcome of social organization. Any curriculum that standardization is lacking will generate both the ultimate objective and the national requirement for a particular country (Nasir et al., 2020).

Comparative Analysis of Religious Education Curricula

The modest aim of this work does not extend far beyond marshalling and analyzing the curricular data, mediating insights and usable information to teachers and others in the field at all levels and institutional settings, and transferring a portion of curricular insights to decision supports. However, these strategic interventions point towards religious education curriculum reform and the resolution of controversy in the multi-ethnic, multi-religious primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. The chapter aims to contribute to ongoing applied scholarship in Nigerian religious education by analyzing data previously unknown and producing reports that further empower teachers and other workers on the frontlines of religious education in Nigeria. The ultimate goal is a fact-based analysis driving reform of a part of the school system that is prophetic and explicative of change in this strikingly complex and vital country (Austin, 2020).

Curricula of religious education are different in different parts of the world in terms of their objectives, subjects, themes specification, and so on. It is noteworthy that the curricula of religious education of different religious traditions, even at the formal education level, may apparently have the same specified goals, methods, organization, regulations, and others. Duties of the leading public ideologist in a state other than religious ideology premised that if they have the same number and type regulation, the result will be an objective agreement about the objectives and content of Religious Education School (Freatly & John, 2020). The comparative analysis of curricula of religious education is about the classification of points of curricula into the following groups. The introduction includes the title of subject, local setting and religious tradition, and specifies objectives of religious education at each education level, syllabus, assessment, textbook and forms of religious education input.

Comparison with Other Countries

The formal place of religious and moral education in a country's education system is an important question on which those involved in education policy and practice, as well as others, can be expected to have strongly held views. How is the subject treated in the educational system of other societies, and what can be learned from their experience? What do they aim to achieve through the educational provision they make, and how well do they perceive these aims are being met? What changes are they considering in response to the profound challenge of renaissance that all societies continue to face? Answers to such questions are needed. Such answers would be useful in enabling policymakers to take proper measures, to make the required claims for resources, and to justify

the effort not only in terms of national economic interests but also in terms of larger social, cultural, and moral concerns (Asif et al.2020). Such claims can be satisfactorily justified only when policy and practice are supported by a case that rigorously combines educational and cultural justifications.

There are other countries in the world that have institutionalized religious education in the formal school system. The fact that Nigeria is not the only country that introduces religious education in its curriculum makes the Nigerian case not unique. The Netherlands is the birthplace of 'compartmentalized' religious education, while South Africa is the founder of the 'integrated' type. Believing that the two distinguished types of 'compartmentalized' and 'integrated' religious education of the Netherlands and South Africa are the mainstay of religious education globally.

The Role of Technology in Religious Education

ICT has the unique property to carry, hold, show with clarity and impress the human spirit, the bases and icons of religions. Everything that is necessary in order to behold the holy books, the celebrations, the life-events, the particular communities, but through interactivity to also receive all the complexity of soul-purifying knowledge (Munjiat, 2020). Here are a few examples of what ICT allows the educator to do in religious education: to use electronic transfers such as video material about all religions; whatsoever touching the sacred and anyone who never had access; to develop photos or video material to be kept and stored; to conduct virtual journeys through the sacred locations of believers of the monotheistic religions or discover the dedication of the multiplied hidden temples of Hindus; to disclose the sacred ceremonies and the choreographic styles related to the religious expressions of goodness; to make the students discover their diversity. These tools can be seen as the benefits of digitalized reinforcements - they attract, provoke, and initiate the student's understanding of the vehicle used for distance learning in religious education.

Religious education in its present form can be seen as a sort of hand-written note. It is static and depends on the charisma, skill, and judgment of the teacher. There are limited and scarce resources. The role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in religious education can be seen as a digital revolution that helps educators to link with every available digital certificate, presenting to students in terms of content possibilities that are limited only by imagination. The availability of satellite services by the Internet is a powerful tool for the delivery of enhanced educational materials (Jegede et al.2021).

Digital Learning Tools

Although significant gains have been made as a result of the current curricular reform in Nigeria, there is no convincing evidence to suggest that sufficient and effective systemic intervention has been put in place to ensure that these changes affect the desired improvement in students' performance, in academic and learning outcomes (Baughman et al.2021). Since independence, the country has undergone several school-curriculum revisions, and there is yet no real indication that any of these attempts are not mere shifts - the log drift - in the same direction. Due to obvious reasons, it is clear that such minor changes do not address the underlying curricular issues or result in any improvement of the

retreat of religious values. The soul-searching exercise that has characterized the national educational debates reveals the serious concerns of members of the public about the integrity of several relationships affecting religion and society in Nigeria.

Learning, as we have seen from the above, is no longer the way it used to be. The generation of today needs to be abreast with the knowledge explosion. The ripples of globalization and information and communication technology have long been felt in the education sector and have precipitated some contentious debates within which religious education finds itself. There is, undoubtedly, visible change in classroom delivery and instructional approach towards the teaching of religious education. With the emphasis on exploration, the concept of knowledge inquiry and manipulation of information and communication technology, the use of religious education still lags behind the policy emotions. Inquiry learning strategy is yet to receive sustained systematic application in an education tradition dominated by a transactional approach (Ghadge et al.2022).

Ethical and Moral Dilemmas in Religious Education

According to Abolarin and Babalola (2020) moral and ethical decision-making has been sought as a consistent central feature for many religious education practices. Indeed, the moral dilemmatic nature of religious decision-making could be used as a reason for religious education and instruction. As a 'stepping forwards' subject, religious education/religion studies could train the students in questioning, validating, and establishing decisions. Religious education is worthwhile because religious faith and decision-making guide the life of many people. The second challenge refers to the avoidance of discrimination. Should schools offer religious studies options or direct forms of denominational schooling given a pluralist or secular society community? Both these challenges, and teaching dilemmas, indicate some limits to pursuing the traditional curriculum aims of religious education through existing curriculum practices (Jegade et al.2021).

Two possible areas of concern in school religious education have been identified by educators. First, the particular forms of discrimination promulgated in existing classes. Attention has been drawn, for example, to attitudes hostile to the physically disabled and to persons not of the white ethnic majority. In some cases, religious group prejudice is reinforced by curriculum content, and these attitudes may be brought to classes by some teachers whose own personal theology leads them to be hostile to the non-believer.

Ethical and moral dilemmas refer to complex ethical or moral problems which usually involve the questioning of commonly accepted solutions (Jegade et al.2021). Students are usually engrossed in moral and ethical issues when they feel a level of doubt about yesterday's solution, while teachers find themselves nursing unexpected areas of value conflict. Many of these dilemmas refer to the day-to-day ethical problems of existence. Recognized as such, they become a recurring focus for educators in religious education.

Handling Controversial Topics

There is the need to break social virtue of all kinds on the part of some religious schools. Secularly speaking, it would often be enough to associate individual virtues with common interests such as national pride or economic wealth. If, instead, those virtues are produced by or coexist with the experience of worship and serve the goals (like spiritual growth, religious truth) which religions proclaim, it is legitimate for religious schools to teach and cherish them (Onah & Agbo, 2021).

The different religions of which the society is composed may be perceived as very similar to one another and of equal worth in God's sight, and religious diversity may be recognized as a sign of hope for human understanding and for the practices of spiritual traditions (Ajibola, 2023). Yet, the difficulties and perplexities sparked off by the actual experience of contact and dialogue with religious diversity may lead people, even very good people, by impulse rather than by intention, to search for unity and unanimity in beliefs and practices and to threaten or exclude those who cherish conflicting conceptions of the truth and deserve other religious allegiances. In this case, discernment must be balanced by discipline, and the task of preserving unity may become both a demanding question on the curricula of religious education and an important concern in the dialogue between religious schools.

Teacher Training and Professional Development

One usual problem of teacher training and professional development in any education system is the matter of timing and efficiency. Educational reform takes time, consideration, and resources. Preparing teachers to form part of the reform, as well as being part of the reform, in this study on teacher training for MT E-Learning is that in the effort to produce the best strategies and orientation we must envision what has been going on, the trial and error effort and the training which has been given so far. It is crucial to see what problems surfaced and why they did. What were taken as concepts and designs, if at all? What alternatives present themselves as having worked well to lead us to the best understanding of the Learning Issues, the delivery systems, and their meeting, as well as the investment of human and technical resources? (Maphalala & Adigun, 2021).

The curriculum and instructions should be carefully considered throughout the picturization of an effective program if man management problems, trouble and error, distraction and waste are to be minimized. With this in mind, what should one look forward from teacher training for teacher preparation? What should be the pace and duration, direction and depth of the professional work and commitment to effective management of the teaching, learning, and ongoing outreach process addressed in our design? These are some of the central questions addressed here, in anticipation of the final design and implementation of the teacher training and professional development components of the proposed program for the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN).

No matter how homogeneous we may wish our teacher preparation programs to be, we differ greatly in vision and in mission, in goals and objectives, in steps and strategies, methods, curriculum, and instruction. Every MT program in every institution has its own focus and emphasis (Olaleye et al.2020). With this

background knowledge, it is clear that no distance program can succeed, no matter the goodwill of the teachers or the efficiency of the program administrators, if concern is not constantly given to keeping collaborative communication and encouraging staff and instructor professional development. This should be the priority consideration all the way from preliminary planning where needs must be discerned, through course development and delivery, to substantive assessments and proposal for modifications, and where institutional resources must be directed and marshaled in the most efficient way.

Importance of Continuous Learning

Text began to get the notion that we could actually do everything. We also harbored the false belief that we could get up every morning and keep things exactly as they were. We should, therefore, end our quest twofold with teaching and learning. Disabilities remain, allowing students to make educational opportunities. In reality, equality in education, with of hostages by the less educated. Equal educational opportunity programs cannot be made result only through the efforts of educators. If they are to be successful, the community must do its share (Lawal & Isah, 2022).

It is important to keep pace with societal development. If one does not learn, one lives in a world of the now. When one does not learn or know anything about what transpires in other parts of one's town, or the state or the nation, the consequences are very serious. The word developed a tendency to kill one's neighbors in order to capture the external world which has so much and which has been the substance of our desires. The man-made world is so attractive that men have been willing to kill for it. It would seem that the more educated men become, the more the knowledge produced makes the need to use that knowledge by those who, if it performed the chores of the menial and uneducated.

Community Engagement and Support

It can be expensive for a school to provide its students with rich, comprehensive, and challenging experiences of religion. However, educators, parents, employers, and politicians want these experiences. In the light of resistant students who do not value religious education, schools and education systems need help from the community. Museums, businesses, faith organizations, and colleges/universities can make an important contribution to religious education. However, without the urgency of community recognition, participation, and creation, such collaboration could end up being purely manipulative. The previous paragraph suggests the importance of community involvement and recognition. These factors set up a reciprocal exchange where the power between those providing funds, time, expertise, or support and those receiving them is more evenly balanced. This leads to community benefit. Participation in school activities, beyond denominational ceremonies, signals a school that recognizes and invites particular religious groups to help students make connections at school.

To achieve the aims and objectives of religious education in Nigeria, community members should be willing to be identified as stakeholders in the project. This will help in building character, moral values, and a disciplined society (Akinyemi et al.2021). Religious knowledge can also play a role in

forming and developing students' perspective of the world they live in. The school has a responsibility to create relevant curricular opportunities in partnership with the community it is situated in. This partnership can provide students with better learning experiences that reflect real-world situations. It can also offer them the support and advice of adults beyond the school. Teachers who think in terms of developing these communities stand a better chance of enabling students from diverse backgrounds to benefit from the curriculum.

Involving Parents and Local Leaders

Diana et al.2021 opine that the family-school relationship is crucial in education because the home is a significant partner in student learning, and a necessary component to students setting their learning standards and targets. Education will not only fail under the following conditions: children are viewed as only the school's property; parents do not hold the copyright over their children; parents are passive receivers of their children's school agenda; or the school demands what a parent considers too much of their time or energy away from the myriad other demands of their own lives. Yet parents and home leaders have legitimate voices (Abe & Chikoko, 2020). They, too, unlike those outside the school community, have practical, financial, and emotional stakes in the success of their children and in the performance of those who teach their children, and therefore, they should work jointly for the good of the students. The parents' contribution and influence on the Christian growth process of their children cannot be overemphasized. It is necessary for educators to offer parents continued education opportunities which serve to significantly increase parents' active participation, value, and trust in the learning institution.

Education occurs within a community, and schools do not exist in isolation. Education flourishes through the synergy of the home, the school, and all members of the community, where their interrelationship engenders collaborative effectiveness for reaching and building the learner as a whole. This understanding of community living recognizes the need for all adults - and not the school alone - to take active responsibility for children's and the youth's growth (Babalola & Olawuyi, 2021). Children and the youth grow and develop well when they are loved, cared for, and valued by their parents and other adults in their learning institution. Since learning programs cannot thrive without a well-cared-for learner, the home, the center of life where the children are cared for, supported, and loved must be carefully involved. This is because the effects of a child's home life permeate into each time of being and becoming a lifelong learner at school.

Gender Equality in Religious Education

God remains 'He', rare exceptions notwithstanding. Kstherin, Maryam, or Fathimah is assigned a subordinate role than kstavar, Yhwh, or Allah, as the people of the Books or believers in the one creator God call Him in matters of gender equality. Feminists and gender-aware men and women by and large regard these patriarchal versions of religious teachings and practices as exploitative, oppressive, repressive, exclusive, and divisive. On the opposite side of the divide are those who have the power and control of religion and religious education, who interpret matters in ways that perpetuate hitherto existing

privileges and authority (Campbell, 2020). Whichever may be the case, it is a gentlemanly agreement that for there to be genuine gender equality and justice in any society, it must stem from the religious foundation on which the society has been constructed. That being so, in this age of rights, faiths that ignore the challenge of gender equality do not provide real liberation to women. What is then the role of religious education in promoting gender rights and gender equality in Nigeria?

Each of the major religions of the world is not only distinctively patriarchal but characteristically so. Even where some aspects of religious teachings and practices might appear to grant some position, power, or right to women in a male-dominated community, the male group is known to use one or the other religious control mechanism to reinforce patriarchal control. Religious texts, rituals, customs, traditions, commandments, legal arrangements, prayers, and vows have been and are currently used to deny women rights of self-expression and self-development, opportunity to participate in ways commensurate with their God-given or inalienable abilities, aspirations, and potentials.

Empowering Female Students

Despite the abuses they undergo and which is against the faith they confess, the orthodox Christian would not have his daughters go topless. Despite these constraints, how to empower female Christian students educationally and otherwise in Nigeria must be a subtle and delicate process in order to sustain inter-religious relation existing among students in mission schools as Muslims have similar scruples similar to that of Christians on certain issues that deal with the female body. Both Muslims and the orthodox Christians being spiritual believers are serious in matters of faith and morals. Their daughters are committed to the religious disciplines they confess and uphold. The mission schools, therefore, help to sustain the schools' specialized ideals. Their students are made to excel in character-building through the academic programmes either in what they learn or what they do. However, to empower certain segments of the student's population, in addition to the general regulations, policies, rules and courses meant for the supervised moral and spiritual upbringing, some issues would have to be pursued more than others with certain overriding concerns and subtlety without any equivocation or bias which if examined critically seem to be of concern only to the female students in the schools (Ajayi & Somefun, 2020).

The issue of empowerment runs through the entire educational programme. It can also be seen in the empowerment and liberation as consequences of enlightenment and right living. Such empowerment involves enlightening the students so as to break the yoke of any form of bondage imposed upon them by tribal, religious, economic or political commitments. To the orthodox Christian community, such empowerment verges on religious enlightenment, growth, and maturity. In addition to the general comments we have made on this subject, it would be further developed without any equivocation and bias as dealing with female students in certain areas of the Nigerian Nation.

Religious Pluralism and Inclusivity

The imposition of educational curricula that necessarily favor one religion over others stands as a recipe for disaster and disharmony. Such an exclusionist stance is likely to generate increased tension within religious groups and have the effect of destroying trust, mutual understanding, respect, and cooperation. Furthermore, religious pluralism as a concept does not only suggest that we should recognize other religious beliefs as valid, it also indicates that we should be inclusive in our education towards disseminating knowledge about the beliefs of others. The indigenous religion, traditional African religion, and the imported religions of Christianity and Islam were equally recognized during the colonial administration of Nigeria as subjects for school religious curriculum. Consequently, by the time of independence in 1960, all the colonial educational structures were operated inclusive religious curriculum for a plural Nigerian nation.

Religious pluralism refers to the condition when there are several religions present in a particular geographical location. In the United States of America, there are many religions, so the term "religious pluralism" is very much applicable in that geographical location. It is also the same when religious adherents come from different cultures or there are different sects within the same religion. From the outset, we recognize that several religions are practiced in Nigeria, and the adherents of many of these religions can be found across the country. Nigeria, therefore, operates a religiously plural society, hence references to religious pluralism in plural societies. Religious pluralism comes with several implications which must be understood by education authorities because, in most cases, they come with issues such as discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion, especially when one religion is seen as the state religion.

Teaching Multiple Faiths

The solution tried is in the area of knowledge when seeking relevance in a religious community for pedagogical orientation. In religious teaching, emphasis will no longer only be placed on knowledge about religious culture, as was the case for instruction in the history of religions, but on being rooted in a religious faith and being concerned to promote dialogue. Faced with anxiety and violent fundamentalism, in terms that have no place for dialogue, there will also be dialogue through ethics, including socialization in learning to be responsible. This will include learning about differences, recognition of the other within his ignorance, sometimes lack of understanding, through the appropriation of an overall cultural landscape whose spiritual dimensions should bring them to unify knowledge subject thinking. For CDE, reference to the religious variable constitutes a challenge to our citizenship, which is in keeping with a bias for actively constructing a pluralist society. Educational systems should educate in teaching the French and European identity and not alienate into religion (Olowo, 2021).

In the world in general, the teaching of religious education is done in diverse faiths and values. We have Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, Taoists, sects, and traditionalists, etc. We also have people with no religion. A study has now been done on whether teaching in an area or

exposing a student to one religion is good, or exposing him to other religions is better. In which area would the educational aim of religious education be fulfilled? The Council of Europe (CRE) has proposed a syllabus for the realization of religious teaching of many faiths in schools in Europe. The syllabus and what it contains have long been a challenge and a subject of debate. According to the table framework for religious education document designated by any faith or philosophy, religions address similar fundamental questions to which there are no scientific answers.

Assessment and Evaluation in Religious Education

One of the major reasons for asking questions to students is to get feedback to establish whether the learning experience is sufficiently challenging or the demand can be readjusted. Systemized assessment is essential in controlling the courses, the whole structure of planned and unplanned activities. Quality of assessment is seen as the determinant of the quality of teacher education. There is a consensus amongst examination boards at times of examinations, such that the listening teacher is listening to no one. Assessment also appears to attract more research in the whole field of education than any other topic. This is perhaps because of the high stakes attached to its various systems for determining success and failure in education. With respect to religious education, there are substantial research literatures in the area of belief in practice, belief and discipline, and belief and institution. Data collected by Morse has shown that beliefs in aggregate do vary in ways that the religious tradition claims, that is, from student to student. By collecting data, some kind of evaluation of the aims can be made or described better than hitherto.

Assessment has been described as the textbook heart of the educational process. It is the point wherein the aims and objectives of education initially justify themselves. It is sufficient to say that, in fact, where no assessment is done, education is said to be complete and evaluation of achievements is just not easy. Every mathematics teacher tries to find if a student is changing, or a geography teacher needs this kind of information in order to modify his method which brought the result. Assessment, whatever form it takes, is itself a part of the teaching, for the sake of the student and not of what has been done. Education is goal-directed, even where the aims are inconsistent. The aim is somehow related to what students have learnt.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In the context of the principal focus of this paper, globalization refers to the great preponderance of the economic and cultural, as well as technological and political, forces that are described as challenging the three-quarters of the world which are "developing countries," including Nigeria. But the essay focuses on the ways in which Nigeria responds to the five dimensions of globalization: cooperation among education systems, the control of education by the state, the increase of intercultural education, research on the impact of globalization by educational research, and the role of religious education in the rapidly changing global village.

The primary concern of this essay was to examine the various global challenges, including Christian and Islamic, confronting present-day Nigeria and

the challenges facing the curriculum of religious education in particular. In so doing, we examined the concept of globalization, with its processes and attributes, and the global challenges facing Nigeria, as well as the nature and structure of the curriculum of religious education in the pre-independence and post-independence in Nigeria, and future directions.

The research concluded that the essence of man, the full development of his spiritual and other capabilities, the development of his pride, worth, assurance, moral strength, and spiritual qualities are the primary concern of education. As an empirical approach, education is the whole of life and is concerned with man's ability to participate in the country's economic, social, political, and cultural life with dignity and reflect on its development and the transformation of the natural environment. In this sense, the thesis supports the notion of development and the notion of human upliftment in the major cultures and religions of the world. Religious education has been one of the most powerful tools that have been used by various cultures, political, and economic systems, and programs to orient humans towards their own plane of upliftment, noble character, inner strength, and physical well-being. Utilizing different components, mechanisms, theoretical foundations practical in the world, therefore, religious education has the potential to mold societal behavior and attitudes towards the creation of a just and peaceful pluralist society in Nigeria.

REFERENCES

- Abe, E. N. & Chikoko, V. (2020). Exploring the factors that influence the career decision of STEM students at a university in South Africa. *International Journal of STEM Education*. [springer.com](https://www.springer.com)
- Abolarin, I., & Babalola, J. T. (2020). Christian religious education and integrity: a case study of Babcock University, Nigeria. *Koers: Bulletin for Christian Scholarship= Koers: Bulletin vir Christelike Wetenskap*, 85(1), 1-13. [scielo.org.za](https://www.scielo.org.za)
- Adedibu, B. A. (2020). Approaches to transformation and development: The case of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, Nigeria. In *African initiated Christianity and the decolonisation of development* (pp. 136-150). Routledge. [oapen.org](https://www.oapen.org)
- Ajibola, I. G. (2023). A Deconstruction of the Cross and the Crescent for Inclusive Religious Pluralism between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria. *Religions*. [mdpi.com](https://www.mdpi.com)
- Akam, S. S. & Ojen, M. I. (2020). Inter/Intra State Communal Conflict and Conflict Management in Cross River and Ebonyi States of Nigeria. *ESUT Journal of Social Sciences*. [esutjss.com](https://www.esutjss.com)
- Akrim, A. (2022). A new direction of Islamic education in Indonesia: Opportunities and challenges in the Industrial Revolution Era 4.0. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*. [staialhidayahbogor.ac.id](https://www.staialhidayahbogor.ac.id)
- Asif, T., Guangming, O., Haider, M. A., Colomer, J., Kayani, S., & Amin, N. U. (2020). Moral education for sustainable development: Comparison of university teachers' perceptions in China and Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 12(7), 3014. [mdpi.com](https://www.mdpi.com)
- Babalola, A. & Olawuyi, D. S. (2021). Advancing environmental education for sustainable development in higher education in Nigeria: Current challenges and future directions. *Sustainability*. [mdpi.com](https://www.mdpi.com)
- Bello, I. (2020). Sustainable development goals (SDGs) for education in Nigeria: An examination of Etisalat corporate social responsibility in Nigeria's post-basic education sector. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*. [academia.edu](https://www.academia.edu)
- Chater, M. (2020). Reforming religious education: Power and knowledge in a worldviews curriculum. [HTML]
- Diana, R. R., Chirzin, M., Bashori, K., Suud, F. M., & Khairunnisa, N. Z. (2021). Parental engagement on children character education: The influences

- of positive parenting and agreeableness mediated by religiosity. *Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 40(2), 428-444. academia.edu
- Erduran, S., Guilfoyle, L., & Park, W. (2022). Science and religious education teachers' views of argumentation and its teaching. *Research in Science Education*. springer.com
- Exradallenum, O.A et al (2023). Education and Challenges of Moral Ethics among Nigerian Youths. *International journal of Education, Culture and Society*, 8(4), 190 - 194.
- Fortuna, R. & Khadir, A. (2022). The Role of Civic Education in the Integration of the Indonesian Nation. *Jurnal Pendidikan Amarta*. rayyanjurnal.com
- Ibrahim, Y. K., Ahmad, A. A., & Shehu, S. (2021). Impact of incessant kidnappings on the external relations: A case study of Nigeria. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 5(1), 212-227. semanticscholar.org
- Idoko, P. E. (2022). Islamic Religious Education Textbooks in a Pluralist Nigeria. *Religions* 14: 42. academia.edu
- Iwuagwu, E. K. (2021). John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism: A Panacea to Nigeria's Socio- Political Quagmire. *Cogito-Multidisciplinary Research Journal*. idsi.md
- Keegan, P. (2021). Critical affective civic literacy: A framework for attending to political emotion in the social studies classroom. *The Journal of Social Studies Research*. nih.gov
- Matemba, Y. (2021). Decolonising religious education in sub-Saharan Africa through the prism of anticolonialism: A conceptual proposition. *British Journal of Religious Education*. researchgate.net
- Ngonso, B. F. (2022). Ethical lapses in the Nigerian higher education system: Obiora F. Ike's ethics of Education and the Nigerian context. *Journal of Ethics in Higher Education*. globethics.net
- Nwafor, O. & Ekunke, E. (2021). The Nigerian National Museums and the challenges of national unity and development: The Black Benz and the return of lost treasures. *National Museums in Africa*. [HTML]
- Omosho, M., Ihekuna, L., & Fakoya, O. (2020). Cultural Diversity and the Challenge of Inter-Ethnic Conflict In Nigeria. *EAS Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies*, 2(3), 165-171. easpublisher.com

Kuponu, Akinsanya

- Onah, N. G. & Agbo, R. S. (2021). Church proliferation and immorality in Nigeria: Interrogating the paradox. *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*. ajol.info
- Suleh, E. O., & Osuji, G. E. (2020). Implementation of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum for Students Character Formation in Public Senior Secondary Schools in Owerri Municipal, Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy*, 4(6), 2523-2665. gouni.edu.ng
- Taufik, M. (2020). Strategic role of Islamic religious education in strengthening character education in the era of industrial revolution 4.0. *Jurnal Ilmiah Islam Futura*. ar-raniry.ac.id
- Thaut Vinson, L. (2020). Disaggregating ethnicity and conflict patterns: Evidence from religious and tribal violence in Nigeria. *Ethnopolitics*. [HTML]
- Uroko, F. (2022). Perceived impact of conflicts and survival of children in Benue state- Nigeria: The role of faith-based organisations. *The International Journal of Social Sciences World (TIJOSSW)*, 4(1), 53-64. growingscholar.org
- Zainuri, A. & Huda, M. (2023). Empowering cooperative teamwork for community service sustainability: insights from service learning. *Sustainability*. mdpi.com