

TRANSFORMATION OF THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGH ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE TOOLS (AI) IN OUR SCHOOLS

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21926215>

Abstract

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into education is rapidly transforming teaching and learning across different disciplines, including Christian Religious Education (CRE). This paper examines how AI tools can improve the teaching and learning of CRE in our schools by making lessons more engaging, interactive, accessible, and learner-centered. Traditionally, the teaching of Christian Religious Education has relied heavily on teacher-centered and text-based approaches, which often fail to meet the learning preferences of today's digitally savvy students. Drawing from secondary sources such as scholarly journals, Christian publications, internet materials, and biblical perspectives, this study explores major AI tools including voice assistants, smart content, and virtual mentors and personalised learning systems. The paper highlights how these technologies can support students' spiritual, moral, and academic development by encouraging critical thinking, independent learning, and deeper understanding of Christian teachings. The study concludes that artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to significantly revitalise CRE by bridging the gap between technology and faith-based instruction and modern technology. When properly integrated into schools, AI tools can make CRE more relevant, meaningful, and spiritually enriching for contemporary learners, while also improving teaching effectiveness and students' overall learning outcomes.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Christian Religious Education, Transformation, Smart Content, Virtual Mentor, Personalised Learning

Introduction

The world is currently experiencing rapid technological growth that continues to reshape many aspects of human life, including communication, healthcare, commerce and education. Among the various technological innovations of the twenty-first century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as one of the most significant developments influencing contemporary society. Artificial Intelligence refers to computer-based systems capable of performing tasks that typically require human intelligence, such as learning, reasoning, decision-making, problem-solving, and language processing. As educational institutions increasingly adopt digital technologies, AI is becoming an important source for improving teaching practices and enriching students' learning experiences. The traditional model of education, where the teacher serves as primary source of knowledge, is gradually giving way to more interactive and technology-driven approaches. Today's learners are growing up in a digital environment characterized by the widespread use of smartphones, computers, internet resources, and educational application. Consequently, students often prefer learning experiences that are engaging, personalised, interactive, and aligned with the technological

realities of their daily lives. This changing educational landscape has encouraged teachers across different discipline to seek innovative methods that can enhance learning outcomes and increase student participation.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) plays a vital role in the educational system because it extends beyond the mere transmission of biblical knowledge. Sirega and Harefa (2025) pointed out that the subject seeks to foster spiritual development, moral virtues, character formation, and responsible citizenship among learners. Through the study of biblical teachings and Christian principles, students are guided toward understanding God's purpose for their lives, developing a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, and applying Christian values in their everyday interactions. In this way, Christian Religious Education contributes significantly to the holistic development of learners by addressing their intellectual, moral, emotional, and spiritual needs. Despite its importance, to teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education, many schools still rely heavily on conventional instructional methods such as lectures, note-taking, textbook-based instruction, and memorization. Although these approaches have served religious education for many years, they may not adequately meet the learning preferences of modern students who are accustomed to technology-enhanced environments. As a result, some learners view the subject as less engaging, which can affect their level of interest, participation, and understanding.

According to Nwadiokwu (2025), the growing emergence of Artificial Intelligence offers new possibilities for addressing these challenges and revitalizing Cristian Religious Education. AI-powered technologies, including virtual assistants, educational chatbots, adaptive learning platforms, smart content systems, and personalised learning applications, have the potential to transform the way religious education is delivered. These tools can provide immediate access to biblical information, support interactive learning activities, and offer individualised guidance that accommodates the diverse learning needs of students. Through such technologies, learners can explore Christian teachings in ways that are more engaging, flexible and relevant to their educational experiences. In addition, Artificial Intelligence can contribute to both the academic and spiritual dimensions of Christian Religious Education. Personalised learning systems can help students better understand biblical concepts, strengthen their critical thinking abilities, and encourage meaningful reflection on moral and ethical issues. At the same time, AI can support teachers through automated assessment, lesson planning assistance, and assess to a wide range of instructional resources. This enables educators to devote more attention to mentoring students and nurturing their spiritual growth.

Recent studies have highlighted the growing relevance of Artificial Intelligence in religious education. Researchers such as Mujiono and Wibowo (2025) argue that AI creates innovative opportunities for improving the effectiveness of Christian Religious Education by making learning more accessible, interactive, and engaging. Likewise, Majesty and Kia (2025) maintain that AI provides practical solutions to several challenges confronting religious instruction in contemporary educational settings. These perspectives suggest that AI should not merely be viewed as a technological advancement but also as a valuable educational tool capable of enriching faith-based learning experiences. Against this background, there is an increasing need to explore how Artificial Intelligence can be effectively integrated into Christian Religious Education to address the demand of the digital age. This paper therefore, examines the transformative role of AI tools in the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education in our schools. Particular attention is given to the ways technologies such as virtual assistants, smart contents systems, personalised learning platforms, and virtual mentors can enhance student engagement, deepen understanding of biblical teachings,

promote moral reasoning, foster spiritual development, and improve overall teaching effectiveness.

Statement of the Problem.

The teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education (CRE) in our schools have recently faced several challenges. The expectations of contemporary learners, who are increasingly tech-savvy and prefer interactive and customised learning experiences, have not been fully satisfied by traditional teaching methods which often depend on lectures, note-taking and little classroom interaction. As a result, many students view Christian Religious Education as antiquated or abstract, leading to reduced interest, low participation, and in some cases poor academic performance. In addition, instructors often find it difficult to effectively evaluate students' moral and spiritual development or growth through traditional or conventional teaching methods. This limits the overall impact Christian Religious Education in shaping students' values, character, and faith-based understanding.

The emergence and integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents a valuable opportunity to improve the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education. AI-driven tools such as adaptive learning platforms, virtual tutors, automated grading systems, and chatbots can support personalised learning, enable students to learn at their own space, and reduce the workload of teachers. These technologies also have the potential to make lessons more engaging, practical, and relevant to contemporary learners. However, despite these benefits, the integration of AI tools into the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education remains very limited in most schools. Many educators still lack adequate knowledge and skills on how these AI tools can be effectively used to improve students' understanding, moral reasoning, spiritual growth, and active participation in faith-based education. It is against this background that this paper examines how Artificial Intelligence tools can transform the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education in our schools.

Methods and Materials

This study is non-empirical in nature and relied on variety of secondary sources of data. Relevant information were obtained from online academic resources, Christian periodicals, journals, conference proceedings and the Holy Bible. These collected data were conceptually analysed to examine the potential of AI tools in transforming the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education.

Conceptual Clarification

Transformation.

Transformation refers to a significance alteration in form, appearance, nature or character. It applies to different sectors and usually involves a significant, systematic change rather than a minor tweak. In other word, it refers to growth or renewal that results from a fundamental shift which modifies the basic character of a person, system or situation. According to Goldstein, Navarrete, Balakrishna and Elrod (2022), transformation is a total change in shape, character, attitude, behaviour, or condition that involves transitioning from one state to another in a way that promotes development, growth or improvement.

In a nutshell, transformation is the process by which individual, system or circumstance improves, becomes more effective, or changes from its previous state. This often happen gradually and is impacted by experiences, discipline, surroundings, and social interaction. In the context of this study, transformation refers to the substantial advancement and modernization of Christian Religious Education instruction through the use of AI technologies. It entails switching from conventional teacher-centered teaching strategies to

more interactive, learner-centered, and technologically advanced ways that improve students' comprehension, engagement, moral growth, and spiritual development.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is the capacity of a computer systems to perform tasks and operations that are similar to those performed by the human intellect. To put it in another way, AI mimics human-like cognitive abilities that arise naturally. According to Ferguson (2023), AI refers to systems or technologies that used human intelligence to perform tasks and that can change based on the data they collect. He says further that it is a form digital learning in which computers extract knowledge from data using reform learning techniques. Based on the definitions above, AI is a branch of information technology that creates intelligent computers systems with the ability to create, assess, and respond to inputs.

Christian Religious Education

Zamani (2024) defines Christian religious education as the intentional, methodical, and on-going efforts of God and humanity to impart knowledge, values, attitude, skills, sensibilities, and reformation of individuals, groups, and structures through the power of the Holy Spirit in order to conform to the revealed will of God as expressed in the scriptures, particularly in the person of Jesus Christ as well as any results of the endeavor. Accordingly, Ezeobi (2022) defines Christian religious education as the teaching and learning of Christian concepts, beliefs, and customs that aim to promote spiritual advancement, virtue cultivation, and an awareness of Christian tenet or principles and how they apply to everyday life. The notion is the foundation of the concept that education should help people develop a personal relationship with God and live according to Christian ideals. It is a component of the holistic-oriented education that leads students to progressive habit for social responsibility towards the community to which they belong and have a share. Tan (2022) and Abolarin and Babalola (2023) also pointed out that Christian religious education is an effort to develop the ability of students to understand and live the love of God in Jesus Christ, which can be evident in everyday life towards others.

In a nutshell, the curriculum, instructional strategies, and educational philosophies of Christian religious education are based on a Christina religious worldview that acknowledged the existence of a supreme God. It is the development and training of the will, emotion, and intellect to enable the three to operate as the best they can in every situation. Furthermore, this education is intended to help students acquire values by molding their character for a successful life and acceptance before God in worship.

Review of Related Literatures.

AI-power tools and systems such as voice assistant, smart content and virtual mentors have transformed the delivery of instruction as well as the level of students' engagement. These systems provide real-time feedback, tailor instructional materials to each students' needs, and support personalised learning. Some of these AI-power tools are discussed below.

Voice Assistants

This AI-powered classroom assistants make teaching and learning more interactive and accessible to learner. Majesty and Kia (2025) submits that voice assistants are AI tools that share similarities with virtual mentors but differ in some aspects because they rely mainly on voice functions as center for interaction and communication. A good number of educators have recently have adopted Voice Assistant technologies such as Google Assistant (Google), Cortana (Microsoft) and Siri (Apple) to help students find content and materials more quickly and effectively. This technology allows students and teachers to search for materials,

reference questions, articles, and books simply by speaking keywords after which the system displays the information based on the keywords mentioned. Furthermore, students and teachers with the help of voice assistants can easily ask questions about Christian teachings, Bible verses and religious events and receive instant answers. Voice Assistants can also speak and explain the information needed by students like a personal assistant.

Going by the above discussion, Voice Assistants represents a significant transformation in the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education because they enable students to interact with various learning materials without direct communication with the teacher. This has helped students to learn independently.

Smart Content

Smart Content refers to interactive digital learning materials such as e-books and multimedia presentations. This technology is used to assess the level of learners' understanding and adjust the difficult level of content and further provide additional explanations, and also suggest new learning paths. Kumari and Kaur (2025) reiterate that this ensures learners study according to their unique needs and improves retention. Furthermore, it enables digital book and learning materials to be accessed more easily and quickly in digital libraries within our educational institutions. This accord AI technology the potential to provide a new approach to learning by allowing more personalised and dynamic interactions between learners and educational materials. AI also enables Christian Religious Education to become more accessible cross-border and more tailored to individual needs. Smart content has, no doubt greatly transformed the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education because, instead of relying solely on textbooks, students can now easily engage with interactive Bible stories and get instant feedback.

Virtual Mentor

This is one of the AI tools that significantly transforms the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education by offering personalised guidance, extended support and interactive learning experiences for students and teachers. One of the important roles of virtual mentors is analysing student's learning patterns, strengths and weaknesses in order to provide individualised feedback and adaptive learning paths. Ringo and Pasaribu (2023) opine that one of the major roles virtual mentors play in transforming the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education is suggesting additional materials when students experience difficulty with a concept and also providing advanced tasks for academically outstanding students. Supporting the aforementioned, Fitria (2021) submits that virtual mentor can provide feedback on students' learning activities and practice questions and then recommend material that needs to be revisited like a teacher would do.

Personalised Learning

Ringo and Pasaribu in Anyebe (2020) submit that personalised learning is a technique that emphasises the student's learning process and caters for their talents and interest. This type of learning provides students with a variety of learning experiences that enable them to acquire knowledge effectively. By implication, this learning approach goes beyond the orthodox style of learning, which is one of the reasons why teachers, especially Christian Religious Education teachers increasingly supports it, as students can benefit from a customised educational environment. She further added that one of the benefits of incorporating AI into the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education is its ability to provide personalised learning experiences for each student. By analyzing vast amounts of data, such as students' learning styles, comprehension levels, and spiritual development, AI can identify individual strengths, limitations, and learning preferences, thereby allowing the creation of

customised curricula and learning materials. AI can cater for each student's distinct needs via personalised learning, ensuring that the content supplied is relevant to their unique abilities and interests. For example, students who prefer visual learning can be provided with multimedia-rich materials, while those who prefer textual learning can receive written content. This customised learning technique can strengthen student commitment to and understanding of the subject matter thereby fostering a resilient nexus between student and their study material. Due to AI modification of learning materials to suit individual expectations, students feel valued and reinforced in their academic journey. Consequently, this can go a long way to encourage learners to develop a sense of autonomy and responsibility over their academic progress, resulting in greater academic achievement and deeper spiritual connection. This is indeed a remarkable transformation in the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education.

Conclusion and recommendations

From the discussion so far, Artificial Intelligence has become a catalyst for transforming the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education. By integrating AI-driven tools such as voice assistants, smart content, virtual mentors, and personalised learning systems, teachers can foster an engaging, inclusive, and spiritually enriching learning environment. These tools bridge the gap between traditional faith-based education and modern technology, enabling students to access relevant materials, learn independently, and deepen their understanding of Christian values. While challenges such as limited infrastructure and inadequate awareness persist, the potential of AI to revolutionise Christian Religious Education remains immense. If effectively implemented, AI can enhance comprehension, moral reasoning, and faith engagement ultimately preparing learners not only for academic success but also for purposeful Christian living in a digital world.

It is therefore, recommended as follows:

1. Educational institutions should incorporate artificial intelligence tools such as smart content, voice assistants, and virtual mentors into the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education. This will make learning more assessable and interactive, thereby meeting the needs of this generation.
2. There should be regular training and workshops for teachers and learners to enhance their digital literacy. This will equip them with the knowledge to effectively integrate AI technologies into the teaching and learning.
3. Necessary infrastructures such as reliable internet access and computers should be provided by the government and school administrators. This will ensure the smooth integration of AI tools in the classrooms.
4. Nigerian government in collaboration with schools should embrace AI-tools and platforms such as voice assistants, smart content, virtual mentor and many more for the teaching and learning of Christian religious education as this will greatly transform the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Education.

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