DEPLOYMENT OF TECHNOLOGY IN TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BY THE TEACHERS AND RELIGIOUS LEADERS

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Abstract
Abraham was the forefather of both Christians and Muslims. The two religions were from the same parent (father) and so, there should be religious tolerance on the part of the religious people. That is why the writer of this paper wrote on deployment of technology in teaching religious education by the teachers and religious leaders in Nigeria. The product of culture is called technology. There are many technologies that can be engaged in teaching religious education ranging from electronic media (radio, television), print media (newspaper, magazines, etc) and the use of apps (WhatsApp) and software. The writer adopted both historical and documentary methods to gather data to justify the use of technology by both teachers and religious leaders and it was found out that both print and electronic media would go a long way in helping both teachers and religious leaders in educating their subjects. Conclusion was made that religion and education go together and it was recommended that the religious leaders should try and preach the word of God and not inciting one religion adherents against the other through technological media platforms among others.

Keywords: Technology use, teaching religious education, Nigeria.

Introduction

A way of seeking the pleasure of God who is a Supernatural Being whom we belief created the universe and all therein is called religion. Through religion, human beings move closer to God trying to know Him, love Him and serve Him. There are three major religions in Nigeria namely Traditional religion, Christianity and Islam. However, these days, Christianity and Islam are more pronounced in our society and are being taught in schools at different levels. Therefore, this paper focussed on Christianity and Islam. Okwuchukwu (2019) defined religion as a system whereby there is recognition of the existence of a supernatural controller of the universe -God- who is the object of worship, obedience and love, that ultimately results in practical piety and morality. Also, religion is a fundamental factor in any society of the world which cannot be safely overlooked or ignored because it is an obvious and usual aspect of human life. Most people in Nigeria have been nurtured, raised and developed on the platform of religions.

The need for the Nigerian child to be adequately groomed morally cannot be overemphasised since this is crucially an important aspect of the development of human personality and moral development (Kosoko-Oyedeko & Tella, 2010). Both Christianity and Islam have their language(s) of communication to God and among one another which is peculiar to them. For instance, Christians talk of PAX, SALEM (PEACE) while Muslims talk of SALAM (PEACE), it is language that is different, whether Christian or Muslim, we should not allow language to cause crises between us. Once it is community school, both Christians

and Muslims have the right to send their children there as members of the community and be able to practice their religions without panic. In community school, vision and mission of the school must not be tampered with to suit a particular religion. Rules and regulations of the school must be followed and adhered to; to the letter, no beret for Christian students and no hijab for Muslim students because it is neither Christian school nor Muslim school.

Okeke (2001) defined education as a society's meant for transmitting to its younger generation the totality of the way of life of that society. Okeke (2001) went further saying that education is both process and product and that the procedure of inculcating theories, ideas, beliefs, facts, practices, customs etc of a given society to her younger ones is the society's process of education. The end result of the process, that is, what has been imbibed or learned by the educated is the product of education. Through religion we can inculcate in individual essential qualities like: obedience, humility, meekness, love for one's neighbour and forgiveness of sins.

Religious education is the instruction on the teachings of a particular religion as distinguished from moral education which is wider in scope and is not confined to a particular religion and whose parameter of assessment is the consonance to rationality (Okwuchukwu, 2019). Religious education syllabus has been designed to assist the learners develop morally and spiritually so as to grow into a balanced, responsible and matured persons in Nigeria. Religious practice is to educate Nigerians both morally and intellectually and instil in them the desire to be good citizens and not otherwise. Man learns through his religion that certain actions are good or bad which help to direct him towards living an honourable life. This is needed for good relationship among individuals. In this paper, all Nigerians are considered as the students of both Christian religious education and Islamic religious education.

It is widely accepted that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) can be used to improve the quality of religious education in Nigeria because ICT has become a normal element of man's daily life; hence, its use in teaching education to Nigerians has become a necessity (Kosoko-Oyedeko & Adedoja, 2012). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is defined as both print and electronic media tools used by people to work with the information and communication processing needs of Nigerians to educate them on the need to teach religions to tolerate both Christians and Muslims in the country. It also encompasses the computer hardware and software, the network and several other devices (video, audio, photography camera, etc.) that convert information (text), images, sound, and motion, and so on into common digital form. ICT is important in education because it can promote students' intellectual qualities through higher order thinking, problem solving, improved communication skills, and deep understanding of the learning tool and the concepts to be taught (Sutton, 2006). ICT can promote a supportive, interactive teaching and learning environment, create broader learning communities, and provide learning tools for students, including those with special needs (Trinidad et al. 2001; Hawkins 2002).

Research Methodology

Teachers in the schools teach religious education while religious leaders also teach religious education outside the school system. Both this group have relationship with the teaching of religious education to their subjects. The researcher adopted historical and documentary approaches in this study justifying the use of technology by both teachers and religious leaders in the teaching of religious education either within or outside the school environments. Past records were consulted and perused including materials prominent on technology and its uses to impart religious education to the students and learners in order to teach ideal principles of the religions to their subjects and to make them better practitioners of religions.

Textbooks, journals, magazines and dailies and internet sources were used to juxtapose the argument of leveraging on the use of technology for the teaching of religious education into the students and others to imbibe sound moral qualities and high level spiritualism in them.

Some Technologies that can be put in place to teach Religious Education in Nigerian
Once it has been ascertained that every religion's aim is to teach the adherents how to be good, responsible and mature human beings who know, serve and propagate God, there is no need to help God in fitting anybody of a religious sect different from yours. Christian religious knowledge trains the students morally and instils in them the desire to do good and be virtuous (Eluu, 2017), Islamic religious knowledge also does but in different way(s). There is no need killing human beings like yourself simply because doing that will make you make heaven straight, this cannot let anyone go to heaven straight; it is an heresy in religion.
According to Ekanem & Ekefre (2013), religion could serve as an instrument of social harmony and on this basis, these technologies listed below can be adopted in Nigeria to teach religious tolerance to her citizens and also Konkin, et al (2021) said specific educational platforms and software can be adopted:

Short Messaging Service (SMS) and Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS): This is popular on mobile telephones with mobile telephone users. Short messages on religious education, tolerance can be sent to people like the political parties do, just to encourage them on religious tolerance. MMS too can be utilised.

E-**mail**: It means Electronic-mail which is a way of writing, sending and receiving electronic text which may or may not include audio and/or video file over a computer network. This is the most commonly used collaborative tool for communication. It is very popular for knowledge sharing, one–to-one or one-to- many. Knowledge is transferred and shared. Email differs to other messaging systems in that it is asynchronous in nature. It is a giant photocopier because it can be easily used to distribute and update information to many people at the same time and provide unique learning spaces so it can be used to teach Nigerians religious education.

Radio: It is a means of reaching all the nooks and crannies of the country. It can reach the people living in both rural and urban areas of the country. Through radio jingles and programmes running on radio, religious education can be taught.

Mailing List / Discussion Group: It is an electronic discussion that anyone can subscribe to. A discussion group is an online forum for individuals to discuss various topics amongst each other. People add their comments by posting a block of text to the group. Others can then comment and respond. Discussion groups (also known as mailing lists) are used to send messages/information to a group of people with similar interests. A discussion group is controlled by a computer (mail server) which forwards a copy of any message it receives to those people who have chosen to join (subscribe) the discussion group. If a member of the discussion group (subscriber) contributes to a discussion group then the message sent will be forwarded to everyone else who is part of that discussion group. It is therefore a useful means of disseminating information to a particular group of people. Discussion groups are moderated so that messages are checked for suitability before being distributed to other members of the discussion group. Members of a discussion group can either receive messages as they are sent, or as a compilation of messages (digest) at the end of the day. This is very useful for creating, sharing and transferring knowledge. Members of the group can discuss on any issue of concern. It is a major medium for knowledge management process. It may be

moderated or not (Kosoko-Oyedeko, & Adedoja, 2012) hence very useful in teaching religious education.

Newsgroups: This is a group where exchange of information takes place. A newsgroup is a discussion about a particular subject consisting of notes written to a central Internet site and redistributed through Usenet, a worldwide network of news discussion groups. Usenet uses the Network News Transfer Protocol. There are many news groups on a variety of topics. Anyone can post messages to newsgroups. Membership is not necessary unlike the discussion groups where membership is mandatory. Newsgroups are organized into subject hierarchies, with the first few letters of the newsgroup name indicating the major subject category and sub-categories represented by a subtopic name. Many subjects have multiple levels of subtopics. Some major subject categories are: news, (recreation), (society), (science), (computers), and so forth. Users can post to existing newsgroups, respond to previous posts, and create new newsgroups on religious matters (Kosoko-Oyedeko, & Adedoja, 2012).

Television: This displays both the audio and visual information. It makes information more meaningful to its audience. This is very good in creating awareness on religious tolerance, principles, theories, practices and many more.

Knowledge Weblogs: This is a type of website where entries are made such as in a diary displayed in reverse chronological order. A blog consists of a title, headline, URL, post date and time. The person who updates a blog is called a blogger and their activity of updating is called blogging. So, a blogger can be of help in educating people on religion because blogging engages the students in a more effective way. The present situation in the country where Nigerians experience scarcity of fuel, naira both new and old notes which has restricted movements of people including teachers and students across the country calls for innovative and creative ways of teaching our religious students across all levels particularly those in the higher institutions. Use of blogs could serve as better alternatives to where physical contacts have been hampered.

Newspapers and Magazines: These are print media that are also used to communicate to the citizens. There can be special corner or page where both Christians and Muslims can enlighten Nigerians about the two religions. Both religions ailed from Abraham our forefather, so, there should not be crises at all, even, use of cartoons are also very good.

Social Networking Tools: A social networking service is an online services, platform, or site that focuses on building and reflecting of social networks or social relations among people. Social networking tools like Facebook, WhatsApp and Twitter are commonly used among Nigerians to communicate whether in text, audio, video or visual; this is also good in teaching religion to our people.

Conclusion

Various religions teach their religious adherents to take in and live out sound moral and ethical values that go a long way to create religious harmony in the country. Religion and education go together in the enlightenment and proper formation of the human mind. The role technology is playing in teaching religion to the religious people cannot be overemphasized, so, technologies like e-mail, Facebook, blogs,WhatsApp and so on can be used to teach religious education to the citizens of Nigeria.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- The religious leaders should try and preach the word of God and not inciting one religious group against the other through technological media platforms,
- The government should provide technological tools and platforms for institutions to leverage on the teaching of religious education.

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