

LEVERAGING ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND CREATIVITY IN CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO ENHANCE NATION- BUILDING IN NIGERIA

Tsebam Celina Mainaji

C.R.S Department, Kogi State College Of Education, Ankpa

Abstract

Christian Religious Education (CRE) faces an accelerating need to adapt as Nigeria negotiates the Fourth Industrial Revolution. This paper argues that deliberately integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) and creativity into CRE can strengthen moral formation, civic responsibility, and the human capital needed for nation-building. Using a mixed review of Nigerian policy documents, recent empirical studies, and regional AI-in-education literature, the study highlights how AI tools (adaptive learning platforms, intelligent tutoring systems, automated assessment, and administrative AI) and creativity-centered pedagogies can complement CRE's aims: moral reasoning, social cohesion, and service-oriented citizenship. The paper identifies concrete roles for AI in personalizing religious instruction, supporting faith leaders' professional development, and scaling values education across underserved regions. It also examines major challenges — infrastructure gaps, digital divides, moral/ethical concerns, and weak regulatory oversight — and situates them in Nigeria's evolving AI policy landscape. Finally, the paper proposes practical recommendations: national curricular integration, teacher training in AI and creative pedagogy, community-centered pilot projects, ethical guidelines for faith contexts, and multi-stakeholder partnerships to align CRE with national development goals. Implemented responsibly, AI and creativity can renew CRE's contribution to Nigeria's social and economic transformation.

Keywords: Christian Religious Education, Artificial Intelligence, creativity, nation-building, Nigeria, ethics, educational innovation

Introduction

Nigeria's education sector is at an inflection point. Rapid advances in Artificial Intelligence (AI), coupled with the global emphasis on creativity and innovation, present both opportunities and pressures for religious education. Christian Religious Education (CRE) has traditionally been central to moral formation, community cohesion, and civic engagement in Nigeria's plural society. Yet contemporary socio-economic challenges — youth unemployment, social fragmentation, and uneven educational access — call for fresh pedagogical approaches that combine technological affordances with creative teaching to support nation-building goals. This paper examines how AI and creativity can be harnessed to enhance the content, delivery, and societal impact of CRE across Nigeria's educational landscape. for example, Papakostas (2025) argues that Ai roots such as adaptive learning systems and natural language processing can enrich religious education when developed with ethical over sight that preserves theological integrity and human agency.

Objectives of the Paper

1. To examine the potential roles of AI and creative pedagogies in enhancing CRE learning outcomes.
2. To review recent Nigerian policy and empirical literature on AI in education and ICT in CRE.
3. To identify benefits and risks of integrating AI into CRE and propose practical recommendations for policy and practice.

Jayatin (2025) stated that Ai Artificial intelligence in Christian religious Education is to enhance pedagogical effectiveness by using Artificial intelligent tools to generate relevant teaching materials interactive score process based content and adaptive lesson frameworks that align with diverse learner needs,

Definitions of Key Terms

Christian Religious Education:

Christian Religious Education is the process of teaching and learning that develops a person's knowledge, faith, character, and behavior based on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Schweitzer, F. (2023).

Christian Religious Studies (CRE): Formal and informal instructional activities aimed at teaching Christian beliefs, ethics, scripture, worship practices, and values to learners within schools, churches, and community settings.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

UNESCO (2025) defined Artificial Intelligence (AI) as the capability of machines to carry out tasks that typically require human intelligence, including learning from data, making decisions and solving problems.

Computer systems and algorithms that perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence, including adaptive tutoring, natural language processing, predictive analytics, and automated feedback.

Nation-building:

Adegbemi T. (2024) stated that, nation building is more than just political independence. It includes developing infrastructure, education, and institutions, as well as fostering citizen's participation and shared values to ensure long term national growth.

Processes by which citizens, institutions, and policies contribute to national cohesion, economic development, and democratic governance.

Literature and Conceptual Review

AI and Education: Global and Nigerian Perspectives

Recent reviews of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education show its capacity for personalized learning, formative assessment, and scalable administrative efficiencies (Tan, 2024; AI in Education reviews). In the Nigerian context, empirical studies indicate growing, though uneven, adoption of AI and intelligent systems in universities and some secondary settings, with promising improvements in administrative efficiency and learning analytics where deployed. Nigeria's National

AI Strategy National centre for Artificial intelligence and Robotics/National Information Technology Development Agency (NCAIR/NITDA, 2024) emphasizes ethical AI development, capacity building, and sectoral adoption — signaling government support for integrating AI across education.

Information Communication Technology, Christian Religious Education, and Digital Adoption in Nigeria

Multiple studies have examined Information and Communication Technology In (ICT) use in Christian Religious Education (CRE) teaching, recommending computer laboratories, multimedia resources, and teacher ICT training to improve engagement and learning outcomes (Odey, 2024; earlier ICT studies). Practitioners and researchers note that CRE can gain from digital storytelling, audio-visual scripture resources, and interactive discussion platforms, especially in contexts where textbook resources and trained teachers are limited.

Creativity and Curriculum Innovation

Creativity is identified as a core competency for 21st-century education and is central to curriculum innovation and sustainable development in Nigeria (curriculum innovation studies). UNESCO and education scholars recommend policy actions that promote creative pedagogy to boost employability, entrepreneurship, and cultural sectors — outcomes aligned with nation-building aims.

Roles of Artificial Intelligence and Creativity in Enhancing Christian Religious Education

Personalization of Learning

Artificial Intelligence (A.I) driven adaptive learning platforms can personalize content delivery to students' prior knowledge, pace, and interests. In Christian Religious Education (CRE), this allows differentiated pathways: Bible literacy for beginners, ethical reasoning modules for advanced learners, and contextual case studies tailored to local socio-moral concerns. According to Anyebe (2025) artificial intelligent enhances Christian Religious Education by creation personalized learning by pathways and adaptive tutorial systems that meet individual student's need.

Enhancing Teacher Capacity and Professional Development.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers and clergy through on-demand resources, automated lesson planning suggestions, and smart professional development platforms that provide targeted pedagogical tips, classroom management strategies, and assessment tools. Tan, x. (2024) Emphasizes The need for more balance research attention, deepen professional development programs, and general attention ethical both issues to ensure that Ai adoption supports teacher

Scaling Values Education and Outreach

Scale values Education and outreach scale indicate improved understanding of scripture. Increased student engagement and high retention of Christian teachings.

Artificial Intelligence-enhanced e-learning and mobile applications can reach remote communities, offering Christian Religious Education (CRE) resources where trained teachers are scarce. Creative multimedia—interactive narratives, gamified ethics scenarios, and multimedia sermons—can engage youth and foster civic virtues.

Sudarman (2025) wrote that Artificial Intelligence (AI) Enhance Spritual growth and self directed learning, but requires ethical supervision Atlantis press. Ai in Christain Religious Education Scales strongly in education- deep learning outreach- wider evangelism.

Data-Informed Pedagogy and Assessment

Data informed Pedasons refers to teaching practices that use data (learning analysis. Artificial Intelligence feedback student performance records) to guide instructional decisions, while data-informed assessment sage such as data to evaluate and improve students learning.

Artificial Intelligence Systems focus on measure outcomes, which may overlook spiritual growth and faith formation. This creates a limitation in Christian Religious Education where learning is deeply personal and experiential. Duher (2025).

Learning analytics can inform CRE educators about comprehension gaps, moral reasoning development, and engagement patterns. These insights support iterative instructional design and targeted interventions.

Data - informed pedagogy and assessment. Artificial Intelligence (AI) plays a significant role in enhancing data - informed pedagogy and assessment in Christian religious education by enabling personalized learning, efficient assessment and evidence - based teaching.

Stimulating Creativity and Critical Thinking

Integrating creativity into Christian Religious Studies (CRE) through project-based learning, digital storytelling, and cross-disciplinary projects (e.g., faith and social entrepreneurship) encourages students to apply values to real-world problems, thereby linking faith formation with nation-building skills. Research by Ouma et.al (2025) found that, Artificial intelligent when use, will improve self - reflection, Conceptual thinking, and creativity when guided properly, Ai stimulates creativity and critical thinking in Christian Religious Education. It however it effectiveness depends on responsible use guided by teachers and spiritual mentorship

Benefits to Nation-Building

Moral and Civic Formation: Strengthened CRE can nurture ethical leaders and citizens committed to public service and social responsibility.

According to Lago (2025) Artificial Intelligence creates attractive and innovative learning environments in Christian Religious Education So Artificial Intelligence (AI), in Christian Religious Education (CRE) will leads to Promonny peace, more interactive more accessible more engaging.

Kayode, A.E. (2024) wrote that Ai. enhance teaching through Automated grading systems instant feedback mechanisms virtual teaching assistants'. these tools help lecturers manage large classes efficiently and improve students engagement. UNESCO (2025) has developed related tools like the readiness assessment

methodology to help counties assess their Ai governance landscapes and identify gaps that needs policy action.

Social Cohesion:

Social Cohesion refers to the level of unity trust, and cooperation among member of the society. According to Emile Durchein, Social cohesion is the force that binds individuals together through shared values and belief.

Christian Religious Education (CRE) programs that leverage AI to adapt culturally appropriate content can promote inter-community understanding and reduce polarization. Education Access and Equity: Scalable AI tools and creative digital resources can expand quality CRE instruction to marginalized and rural populations. These benefits are consistent with Nigeria's AI and education policy goals.

Lago E.P.J. (2025) Highlights tension between Ai tools and spritual authority problem that, student may trust Ai or pastors, teaches and scripture interpretation in community.

The integration M.C.R.E present significant challenges to social cohesion, including reduced interpersonal interaction, doctrinal inconsistencies and digital inequity and over dependence in technology

Challenges

Infrastructure and Digital Divide

Power unreliability, limited broadband coverage, and unequal access to devices remain major constraints in many Nigerian regions. These gaps hinder equitable Artificial Intelligence (AI) deployment and risk widening existing educational inequalities. Recent assessments of Nigerian education infrastructure and Artificial Intelligence (AI) pilots show uneven rollout across institutions.

Infrastructure plays a critical role in the integration of Artificial Intelligence into Christian Religious Education (CRE) however implementation. Like internet and devices. Many Schools especially in developing regions lack reliable internet connectivity and adequate digital devices.

(kuarata, 2025) involve that effective Artificial Intelligence (AI) integration requires strory institutional and technical support system. infrastructure limitations and the digital divide and major challenges facing the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Christian Religious Educations.

Teacher Preparedness and Attitudes

Teacher preparedness and attitude preparedness refers to teachers technical skill, pedagogical competences and confidence in using a tools effectively, teachers who lack technological competence often strangle to apply Ai meanyifully in classroom instruction.

Many Christian Religious Education (CRE) teachers lack training in AI-enabled pedagogies, digital content development, and creative instructional design. Professional development programs are uneven and underfunded, limiting effective adoption. Studies of technology use in Christian Religious Education (CRE) highlight gaps in teacher competence and confidence.

Ofem et. al (2025) wrote that, studies shows that many teachers are not adequately prepared to integrate Ai into teaching and assessment. teachers preparedness and attitude remain major challenges in the integration of Ai and activity in Christian religious education while Ai has the potential to enhance teaching and learning, its effectiveness depends on largely on teachers skills, confidence and receptions.

Ethical, Moral, and Theological Concerns

Artificial Intelligence (AI) raises concerns about decontextualized content, automated assessment of moral reasoning, and potential theological misinterpretations. Faith communities may worry about mechanizing spiritual formation or outsourcing pastoral responsibilities to algorithms. Moreover, broad ethical issues — privacy, bias, explainability — are salient in faith contexts where trust and pastoral confidentiality are key. Nigeria's policy landscape is emerging but still developing specific AI ethical guidance relevant to education and faith institutions.

Artificial Intelligence algorithms my exhibit biases, favouring certain cultureal, social or doctrinal perspectives which can unintentionally influence learners understanding papakostas, (2025) wrote that, such bias could lead to misrepresentation of scripture or selective moral emphasis.

Regulatory and Data-Protection Gaps

Urban-rural disparities . There is a clear gap between urban and rural schools in terms of Access to digital technologies. Urban schools are more likely to have internet connectivity and digital devices, while rural schools often lack these resources UNESCO (2023) stated that access to AI-enhanced learning opportunities.

While Nigeria has progressed on data protection (Nigeria Data Protection Act, 2023) and a National AI Strategy (2024), concrete regulations governing AI use in education and religious contexts are nascent. This raises questions about data governance, children's data protection, and accountability for AI decisions.

Cost and Sustainability

Artificial Intelligence systems are not a one time investment. The required regular update, technical experts and system maintenance.

Kurata L.et.al (2024). Wrote that this create continuous financial pressure on religious institutions.

Developing and maintaining AI systems, localized content, and teacher training programs require sustained funding. Without committed budget lines and partnerships, pilots may remain fragmented and short-lived.

The major issue is that while Artificial intelligence can improve learning, its high cost and sustainability challenges makes it difficult for many Christian institutions to adopt and maintain effectively. Careful planning is needed to ensure affordability and long term use.

Conclusion

AI and creativity offer transformative potentials for Christian Religious Education in Nigeria. When deployed thoughtfully, they can strengthen moral formation, expand access, and connect faith education to nation-building priorities like employment,

civic responsibility, and social cohesion. However, harnessing these technologies requires careful attention to infrastructure, teacher capacity, ethical safeguards, and inclusive policy frameworks. By combining national policy momentum, multi-stakeholder collaboration, and locally rooted creative pedagogy, Nigeria can position CRE as a constructive force in its broader educational and economic transformation.

Recommendations

To realize the promise of AI and creativity for CRE and nation-building, the following actions are proposed.

Policy and Curriculum Integration

National policy linkage: The Federal Ministry of Education and relevant faith education bodies should align CRE curricular frameworks with the National AI Strategy, ensuring ethical and culturally sensitive AI integration. (NCAIR/NITDA strategy provides a policy foundation.) Curricular updates: Integrate digital literacy, AI awareness, and creative problem-solving modules within CRE syllabi at secondary and tertiary levels.

Teacher Professional Development

Scaled training: Launch national teacher training programs focused on AI pedagogy, digital content creation, and creative instructional design for CRE teachers. Communities of practice: Support peer networks for faith educators to share digital resources, lesson plans, and ethical case studies.

Ethical Guidelines and Data Governance

Faith-sensitive AI ethics: Develop ethical guidelines for AI use in faith education co-created by educators, clergy, technologists, and data-protection experts to address privacy, bias, and pastoral concerns.

Child data protection protocols: Ensure AI platforms comply with the Nigeria Data Protection Act and adopt child-safety best practices. Pilot Programs and Evidence Generation Contextual pilots: Fund community-based pilots that combine AI tools with creative pedagogies in different Nigerian regions (urban, semi-urban, rural) and evaluate outcomes on moral reasoning, civic engagement, and learning. Research partnerships: Encourage university–church–industry collaborations to produce evidence on what works in CRE tech integration.

Infrastructure and Access

Public–private partnerships: Mobilize partnerships to expand broadband, low-cost device programs for schools, and solar power solutions where electricity is unreliable. Open educational resources (OER): Develop and share OER CRE resources adapted to local contexts and languages.

Encourage Creativity and Entrepreneurship

Project-based learning: Embed CRE projects that apply faith ethics to community challenges (e.g., youth social enterprises, environmental stewardship projects). Incubation and mentorship: Link creative CRE projects to incubators and mentorship networks to translate values into economic and civic initiatives.

Implementation Framework (Practical Steps)

- Phase 1 (0–12 months): Stakeholder consultations (education ministry, church bodies, NITDA/NCAIR, teacher unions), ethical guideline drafting, and small-scale pilot design.
- Phase 2 (12–36 months): Pilot deployment in selected states; teacher training roll-out; monitoring and evaluation.
- Phase 3 (36+ months): Scale successful models nationally; integrate findings into national curriculum reforms; secure sustainable funding.

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