



Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Transformative Religious Studies Education Curriculum in Nigeria: Teachers' Perspectives

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore teachers' perspectives on the integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Religious Studies Education Curriculum in Nigeria, with a focus on the potential benefits and challenges of AI integration. The study employed a survey research design, collecting data from 1000 teachers in Nigeria using a self-developed questionnaire. The study's conclusions show that while teachers view AI as a useful tool to enhance Religious Studies Education teaching methods, they also voice concerns about the lack of support and training for integrating AI, the possible dangers of relying too much on technology, and epistemic limitations. The report also suggests methods for integrating AI effectively, such as creating a comprehensive strategy that strikes a balance between the advantages of AI and the need for critical thinking, human contact, and spiritual development. The study comes to the conclusion that while AI has the potential to improve Religious Studies education, educators and policymakers must carefully weigh the advantages and disadvantages of integrating AI to make sure that it helps students develop their critical thinking, spiritual literacy, and problem-solving abilities. Based on the findings, the study recommends that educators develop a holistic approach to AI integration, teach AI literacy, and ensure data privacy and security, while policymakers provide training and support for teachers and develop guidelines for AI integration. By understanding teachers' perspectives and developing effective strategies for AI integration, educators can promote deeper learning, spiritual growth, and critical thinking in students.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence, Education curriculum, Nigeria, Religious studies, Teachers' perspective

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Introduction

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education has transformed the way teachers teach and students learn. This is also true in religious studies education, a discipline that has historically been based on interpersonal relationships and spiritual development. Theological institutions are investigating AI solutions for teaching, evaluation, and pastoral interaction as a result of the growing digital change in education. The purpose of this research is to find out how instructors feel about using AI to create a curriculum that transforms religious studies education. Personalised learning, adaptive evaluations, and increased student engagement are just a few advantages of using AI in religious education (RE). AI-powered solutions are able to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, examine individual learning patterns, and provide personalised learning suggestions. Additionally, AI may expose pupils to a variety of viewpoints in real time and promote interfaith discussion. However, when AI is included into RE, issues with authority, interpretation, and theological distortion surface. It is necessary to address the issues of whose theological stance is being expressed and how other viewpoints are taken into consideration. It is also necessary to take into account the possible dangers of an excessive dependence on technology and epistemic limitations (Ahmad et al., 2023); (Zhai et al., 2024).

Teachers' opinions about AI integration in the classroom have been the subject of several research. Despite their poor understanding of AI, instructors believe it might be a useful tool to complement their teaching methods, according to a research by (Bewersdorff et al., 2023; Holmes & Tuomi, 2022). Similar to this, (Vieriu & Petrea, 2025); (Wang et al., 2023), emphasised how AI creates a more dynamic learning environment by enabling educators to tailor their lessons to each student's requirements (Krishna, 2024). In the context of Religious Studies Education (Marrone et al., 2024; Marzuki et al., 2023), AI can enhance administrative efficiency, provide personalized learning experiences, and facilitate data analysis. However, the challenge lies in maintaining a balance between technology and spiritual values. Research conducted by (Alwaqdati, 2025), shows that the quantitative data generated by AI is often insufficient to capture the qualitative aspects of students' spiritual experiences, therefore this study seeks to answer the following research questions: 1. What are teachers' perspectives on the integration of AI in Religious Studies Education Curriculum in Nigeria?; 2. What strategies can be employed to ensure effective integration of AI in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria while preserving essential spiritual values?.

This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on AI integration in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria. The findings will provide insights into teachers' perspectives on AI integration and identify strategies for effective implementation. The study's results will be useful for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to harness the potential of AI in Religious Studies Education.

Methodology

In order to find out how instructors in Nigeria felt about using artificial intelligence to improve the Religious Studies Education Curriculum, this study used a survey research approach. Teachers of Religious Studies in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly those employed by public and private institutions throughout the country's four regions, make up the study's population. A sample size of 800 respondents was selected using a random sampling technique, five states (5) were selected from each of the region in Nigeria and the sample size was distributed equally to private and public religious studies teachers in each of these states. The sample was drawn from 200 secondary schools in Nigeria, with 4 religious studies teachers selected from each school. The survey instrument was a self-developed questionnaire administered online to gather data on teachers' perspectives on AI integration in Religious Studies Education, including benefits, challenges, and strategies for effective implementation. The questionnaire undergoes pilot testing to ensure its validity and reliability, and

data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics, including frequency distributions, means, and standard deviations, as well as regression analysis to test the hypotheses. The constructs were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree), with a mean criterion of 3.0 used as the benchmark for interpretation. The study used SPSS software to analyse the data and present the findings in tables, figures, and narratives.

Results and Discussion

Data Presentation

The presentation of the data was tailored to the goals of the study. Primary data were examined, and a questionnaire was dispersed at random according to state, location, and certain demographic traits including age, gender, and status. Percentages were used to compute all other demographic factors.

Table 1. Regional and State Distributions of the Questionnaires

Region	No. of State in Region	Names of State Selected	No. of Selected Schools	No. of Questionnaires Distributed & Returned
North	18	Abuja	10	40/34
		Benue	10	40/29
		Kano	10	40/33
		Kaduna	10	40/36
		Plateau	10	40/27
South	6	Akwa Ibom	10	40/31
		Cross River	10	40/26
		Delta	10	40/38
		Edo	10	40/32
		Rivers	10	40/30
East	5	Abia	10	40/29
		Anambra	10	40/33
		Enugu	10	40/21
		Imo	10	40/28
		Ebonyi	10	40/29
West	7	Ekiti	10	40/22
		Ondo	10	40/25
		Ogun	10	40/28
		Osun	10	40/21
		Lagos	10	40/35
			200	800/587

Source: authors compilation (2025)

Table 2. Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Socio-Demographic Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	239	40.7
Female	348	59.3
Total	587	100
Status		
Single	156	26.6
Married	431	73.4
Total	587	100
Age Range		
26-35 years	132	22.5
36-45 years	239	40.7
46-55 years	121	20.6
56 and above	95	16.2
Total	587	100
Academic Qualification		
HND/BSC	432	73.6
MSC/PHD	155	36.4
Total	587	100
Total	587	100

Source: Authors Survey, 2025.

The information in Table 1 above shows the specifics of the population's state and regional distribution. Five (5) states were chosen from each of Nigeria's four (4) regions after the population was randomly assigned to each of them. Of the 587 responders in table 2 above, 431 (73.4%) are married, making up the majority. 239 men (41.7% of the total) and 348 women (59.3% of the total) make up the gender distribution. The majority of respondents are between the ages of 36 and 45. In addition, the biggest percentage of respondents (73.6%) had an HND/BSC 432 when asked about their educational background.

Data Analysis

The results from this study are shown and examined below utilising standard deviation, SPSS software, and Cronbach alpha correlation to assess the suitability of the research topics Research Question One What are teachers' perspectives on the integration of AI in Religious Studies Education Curriculum in Nigeria?

Table 3. Respondents' perceptions on teachers' perspectives on the integration of AI in Religious Studies Education Curriculum in Nigeria

S/N	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	AI enables personalised learning experiences, enabling students to interact with digital commentary and multimedia resources while exploring intricate theological content at their own speed.	3.6	3.4	Accepted
2	AI helps teachers with data analysis, scheduling, and grading, allowing them to concentrate on instruction and spiritual counselling.	3.5	3.3	Accepted

3	AI-powered solutions made main texts and resources more accessible, especially for pupils who lived in rural or underdeveloped areas.	3.2	3.1	Accepted
4	Teachers emphasise that while AI is very good at language analysis and pattern identification, it lacks the sophisticated comprehension and sympathetic judgement necessary for theological investigation.	3.8	3.6	Accepted
5	An over-reliance on AI runs the danger of simplifying intricate religious stories and fostering a dependency on artificial intelligence.	3.7	3.5	Accepted
6	If AI systems are not created with inclusion in mind, they may reject other viewpoints and reinforce prevailing religious assumptions.	3.8	3.5	Accepted
7	Instructors worry about the possible repercussions of disclosing to other parties their students' theological beliefs or religious records.	3.9	3.7	Accepted
8	By giving students immediate feedback on their projects and tests and enabling them to quickly correct any errors or misunderstandings, artificial intelligence (AI) enhances the interest and significance of religious studies.	3.3	3.2	Accepted
9	Important ideas employed in various languages or cultures are difficult for AI to comprehend, which might cause miscommunications and misrepresent religious meaning.	3.4	3.2	Accepted
Average Total		3.6	3.4	Accepted

Source: Author's survey, 2025.

The purpose of table 3, item 1–9, is to explore instructors' opinions about the incorporation of AI into the Nigerian Religious Studies Education Curriculum. The total mean of the elements exceeds the mean criteria of 3.0, as can be seen in the accompanying table. Additionally, based on all replies, the standard deviation is 3.4 and the mean is 3.6, demonstrating the respondents' variety in response. According to the aforementioned findings, all respondents agree that AI helps with administrative efficiency, accessibility, and personalised learning. However, teachers' perspectives on the integration of AI in Nigeria's Religious Studies Education Curriculum highlight several challenges and concerns, including epistemological limitations, theological distortion, bias and inclusivity, improved engagement, contextual misunderstanding, data privacy, and security.

Research Question Two

What strategies can be employed to ensure effective integration of AI in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria while preserving essential spiritual values?

Table 4. Respondent perception on strategies that can be employed to ensure effective integration of AI in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria while preserving essential spiritual values

S/N	Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Create a comprehensive strategy that strikes a balance between the advantages of AI and the demands of critical thinking, human connection, and spiritual development.	3.5	3.2	Accepted
2	Make sure that integrating AI enhances human instruction and spiritual direction rather than takes its place.	3.9	3.7	Accepted
3	Teach students how to utilise AI responsibly, taking into account its limits, prejudice, and ethical issues.	3.4	3.1	Accepted
4	Promote judgement and critical thinking while using AI-generated material.	3.8	3.6	Accepted
5	Adjust AI tools to suit educational capabilities, theological traditions, and local demands.	3.3	3.0	Accepted
6	Ensure that AI integration is sensitive to the cultural and spiritual context of the students.	3.6	3.4	Accepted
7	Use AI to augment, rather than replace, human interaction and spiritual guidance.	3.9	3.6	Accepted
8	Encourage students to engage in discussions, debates, and reflections that promote deeper understanding and spiritual growth.	3.5	3.3	Accepted
9	Put strong data security procedures in place to secure students' private and spiritual data.	3.6	3.4	Accepted
10	Make sure data security and privacy are taken into consideration while designing AI systems.	4.0	3.8	Accepted
11	Students should be encouraged to analyse AI-generated information critically and to take into account different viewpoints.	3.5	3.3	Accepted
12	Provide tasks and exercises that encourage analysis, critical thinking, and spiritual discernment.	4.1	3.7	Accepted
13	Give educators continual assistance and training so they may successfully incorporate AI into their lesson plans.	3.9	3.6	Accepted
14	Make sure educators are prepared to meet their kids' emotional and spiritual needs.	3.4	3.2	Accepted
15	Encourage students to reflect on their experiences with AI and provide feedback on its effectiveness.	3.7	3.5	Accepted
16	Use this feedback to refine and improve AI integration in Religious Studies Education.	4.0	3.6	Accepted
Average Total		3.7	3.4	Accepted

Source: Author's survey, 2025.

In Table 4 item 1-16, the items aim to discuss the strategies that can be employed to ensure effective integration of AI in Religious Studies Education while preserving essential spiritual values. As shown in the table above, the average for this items are completely above the 3.0 mean criterion.

Additionally, based on all responses, the mean average is 3.7 and the total standard deviation is 3.4 indicating that all the respondents unanimously agreed that balancing technology and spirituality, teaching AI literacy, contextualizing AI integration, preserving human interaction, ensuring data privacy and security, fostering critical thinking and discernment, providing ongoing support and training, encouraging reflection and feedback are strategies that can be employed to ensure effective integration of AI in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria while preserving essential spiritual values.

Discussion of Findings

According to the respondents' responses in table 3 above, the study's conclusions show that while teachers view AI as a useful tool for enhancing religious studies education teaching practices, they also voice concerns about the lack of support and training for integrating AI, the possible dangers of becoming overly dependent on technology, and epistemic limitations (Shi et al., 2024); (Kim & Kim, 2022). The Connectivism Theory, which highlights how technology may link people and resources to facilitate learning, lends credence to these results (Alam & Mohanty, 2023). The results are also in line with the empirical research of (Sihombing, 2024), which emphasises the possible advantages and difficulties of integrating AI in education. For example, despite having little understanding of AI, instructors believe it may be a useful tool to help their teaching techniques, according to a research by (Althoey et al., 2024). Once again, based on the respondents' responses, the study's results in Table 4 indicate that educators support a comprehensive strategy that strikes a balance between the advantages of AI and the demands of critical thinking, human connection, and spiritual development. Additionally, they stress the need of contextualising AI integration, promoting AI literacy, and protecting data security and privacy. The Connectivism Theory and the TPACK Theory, which stress the significance of using technology in a manner that promotes learning and upholds fundamental values, corroborate these results (Çelik & Baturay, 2024); (Gu, 2025). The results also align with the reviewed empirical research, which emphasises the significance of creating plans for successful AI integration in the classroom (Nyathi, 2023); (Shabur et al., 2025). For example, the research of (Sivakumar et al., 2023), highlights the need of a comprehensive strategy that strikes a balance between the advantages of AI and the requirements for human connection and spiritual development.

Conclusion

The possible advantages and difficulties of integrating AI in this setting have been highlighted by this research, which examined instructors' opinions on the subject. According to the study's findings, educators view artificial intelligence (AI) as a useful tool to enhance religious studies instruction. However, they also voice concerns about the lack of support and training for integrating AI, the possible dangers of relying too much on technology, and epistemic limitations. The report also suggests methods for integrating AI effectively, such as creating a comprehensive strategy that strikes a balance between the advantages of AI and the need for critical thinking, human contact, and spiritual development. The results of this study have implications for educators, policymakers, and researchers looking to maximise the potential of AI in Religious Studies Education in Nigeria while upholding fundamental spiritual values. They are corroborated by the Connectivism Theory, the TPACK Theory, and the empirical literature reviewed. Teachers may encourage students' critical thinking, spiritual development, and deeper learning by comprehending their viewpoints and creating successful AI integration tactics.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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