

**INFLUENCE OF USING ONLINE MATERIALS IN TEACHING CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS STUDIES: A CASE STUDY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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BENIN CITY**

JUNE, 2024

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**A RESEARCH WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
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BACHELOR DEGREE IN (B. Ed) IN RELIGIONS EDUCATION**

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by **Kikachukwu Gift ISIKA**, with Mat NO. **EDU1903708** of the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Benin city, Nigeria and that, it is adequate in scope and quality in partial fulfillment for the award of the Degree of Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) in Religions

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God for His mercies that endure forever.

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ABSTRACT

The study was carried out to determine “influence of using online materials in teaching Christian religious studies: a case study of the University of Benin. The population of the study consists of one hundred and twenty (120) 400 level religious studies students in faculty education, university of Benin, Edo state. The sampling technique used for this study is simple random sampling technique one hundred (100) 400 level religious studies students in faculty of Education, University of Benin, Edo state respondents were chosen to represent the students’ population. Four research questions were made; What types of online materials are currently being used in the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin? How do educators perceive the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies? What are the challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin? What strategies can be implemented to maximize the benefits and address the limitations of using online materials in religious studies education?The findings of the study revealed that; The use of online materials has also been found to improve student retention and recall of CRS concepts. Based on the findings the following recommendations were made; There should be a diverse range of online resources, the University of Benin should provide a diverse range of online resources that cater to different learning styles and needs.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the study

Online materials encompass a wide range of digital resources that are accessible via the internet. They include but are not limited to articles, videos, ebooks, podcasts, webinars, online courses, tutorials, software, games, and other forms of multimedia content. These materials are typically hosted on websites, platforms, or repositories and can be accessed and utilized by users with internet connectivity. McKiernan, (2019). The proliferation of online materials has transformed how information is disseminated, accessed, and consumed in the digital age, offering unprecedented opportunities for learning, entertainment, and communication. Online materials refer to digital resources that are accessible via the internet. They encompass a vast array of content, including articles, videos, ebooks, podcasts, and more, catering to diverse interests and needs. The proliferation of online materials has transformed how information is disseminated and consumed in the digital age. Laurillard, (2013) & Bates, (2015)

In recent years, the importance of online materials has become even more pronounced, particularly due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. With lockdowns and restrictions limiting physical access to libraries, classrooms, and other traditional sources of information, people have increasingly relied on online materials for education,

entertainment, and staying informed. According to a report by Statista, online media consumption surged during the pandemic, with a significant increase in internet usage for accessing educational content, streaming services, and news websites (Statista, 2021). One notable trend in online materials is the rise of digital learning platforms. Websites such as Coursera, Udemy, and Khan Academy offer a plethora of courses on various subjects, allowing learners to acquire new skills or deepen their knowledge from the comfort of their homes. The popularity of these platforms has soared in recent years, with millions of users worldwide accessing their extensive libraries of online courses. For example, Coursera reported a surge in enrollments during the pandemic, reflecting the growing demand for online learning resources (Coursera, 2021).

Another significant development in online materials is the emergence of open educational resources (OER). Open educational resources are freely accessible educational materials that can be used, adapted, and shared without copyright restrictions. Platforms like OpenStax and MIT OpenCourseWare provide textbooks, lecture notes, and other educational resources for educators and learners to utilize at no cost. This movement towards open access to educational materials promotes inclusivity and affordability in education, making learning more accessible to individuals from diverse backgrounds (Hilton, 2016). Furthermore, the popularity of online materials has led to the democratization of knowledge. Through blogs, forums, and social media platforms, individuals can share their expertise and insights on virtually any topic, reaching audiences worldwide. This decentralization of information dissemination has empowered

people to engage in self-directed learning and participate in online communities centered around their interests. For instance, platforms like Reddit host a multitude of forums (subreddits) dedicated to various subjects, where users can discuss and exchange knowledge on anything from technology to literature (Pentzold & Seo, 2019).

Moreover, the accessibility of online materials has revolutionized the publishing industry. Authors and content creators now have the opportunity to self-publish their work through platforms like Amazon Kindle Direct Publishing and Wattpad, reaching global audiences without the need for traditional publishing channels. This democratization of publishing has lowered barriers to entry for aspiring writers and enabled diverse voices to be heard in the literary world (Bennett, 2019). However, alongside the benefits, concerns have been raised regarding the quality and credibility of online materials. With the abundance of information available online, it can be challenging for users to discern reliable sources from misinformation and fake news. This issue has become particularly salient in the context of social media, where the viral spread of misinformation can have far-reaching consequences. Addressing this challenge requires media literacy education and critical thinking skills to help individuals evaluate sources and distinguish fact from fiction in the digital landscape (Wineburg & McGrew, 2017). online materials play a pivotal role in shaping how information is accessed, shared, and consumed in the digital age. From digital learning platforms to open educational resources and self-publishing platforms, the internet offers a wealth of resources for education, entertainment, and self-improvement. However, ensuring the

quality and credibility of online materials remains a pressing concern, highlighting the need for media literacy and critical thinking skills in navigating the vast expanse of digital information.

In recent years, Christian religious studies have witnessed a notable surge in scholarly interest, reflecting a multifaceted exploration of the faith's diverse facets. Researchers have delved into various dimensions of Christian theology, biblical exegesis, church history, and ethical inquiry, drawing upon a blend of traditional sources and contemporary interpretations to illuminate the complexities of the religion. One significant area of investigation lies in the quest to unravel the enigma of the historical Jesus, as scholars endeavor to contextualize the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth within the socio-religious milieu of first-century Judaism (Brown, 2019). The landscape of Christian religious studies has expanded to encompass a meticulous examination of the internal diversity within Christianity itself. Notably, scholars have meticulously traced the evolution of different Christian traditions, spanning from the venerable traditions of Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy to the burgeoning movements of Pentecostalism and Evangelicalism. Through rigorous analysis, researchers have elucidated the theological nuances and historical trajectories underpinning these diverse branches, thus shedding light on the intricate tapestry of Christian belief and practice (Houlden, 2021).

Moreover, recent scholarship has increasingly interrogated the intersections of Christianity with other faith traditions and secular ideologies. This interdisciplinary inquiry has fostered a deeper understanding of Christianity's engagement with Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, as well as its dialogues with secularism, liberalism, and postmodernism. By discerning points of convergence and divergence, scholars have elucidated Christianity's multifaceted role in shaping global cultural, political, and intellectual landscapes (Woodhead, 2020). In the realm of biblical studies, contemporary research endeavors have harnessed interdisciplinary methodologies to glean fresh insights into the sacred texts of Christianity. Drawing upon literary criticism, historical analysis, and narrative theory, scholars have plumbed the depths of biblical narratives to discern the intricacies of their composition, transmission, and interpretive significance. Furthermore, advances in archaeological discoveries and textual scholarship have enriched our understanding of the socio-cultural contexts that gave rise to the biblical canon (Longman III & Reid, 2019).

Ethical inquiry within Christian religious studies has emerged as a focal point of scholarly investigation, with researchers grappling with pressing contemporary issues through a theological lens. Themes such as social justice, environmental stewardship, bioethics, and human rights have garnered heightened attention, as scholars explore the ethical imperatives inherent within Christian teachings and their implications for navigating complex moral dilemmas in modern society (Hollenweger, 2018). Additionally, recent scholarship has underscored the imperative of amplifying

marginalized voices within the Christian tradition. Through endeavors to recover the experiences and contributions of women, minorities, and oppressed communities, scholars have sought to redress historical imbalances and challenge Eurocentric narratives within Christian historiography. This inclusive approach fosters a more holistic understanding of Christianity's rich tapestry and its enduring relevance in contemporary discourse (Schüssler Fiorenza, 2020).

In the domain of practical theology, recent research has pivoted towards the application of Christian principles in real-world contexts. Scholars have probed diverse facets of pastoral care, homiletics, worship, and Christian education, examining innovative approaches to ministry and mission. By integrating insights from psychology, sociology, and organizational studies, researchers endeavor to equip Christian leaders with the tools necessary for effective engagement and community transformation (Osmer, 2014).

Recent scholarship in Christian religious studies epitomizes a vibrant and interdisciplinary field, characterized by a nuanced exploration of both timeless theological questions and contemporary challenges. By harnessing a diverse array of methodologies and perspectives, scholars continue to enrich our understanding of Christian faith and practice, fostering dialogue, reflection, and meaningful engagement within both religious and secular spheres (Ford, 2017). The emergence of online platforms and digital resources has revolutionized the way information is accessed, disseminated, and consumed. Within the realm of education, these technological

advancements offer new opportunities for both educators and learners. In the field of religious studies, scholars have increasingly turned to online materials to supplement traditional teaching methods, enrich course content, and facilitate interactive learning experiences. However, the extent to which these online resources impact the teaching of Christian religious studies in specific academic institutions such as the University of Benin remains underexplored. Christian religious studies hold significant importance in the academic curriculum, offering students a profound understanding of the faith, its history, doctrines, and societal implications. Traditionally, the dissemination of religious knowledge primarily occurred through textbooks, lectures, and face-to-face interactions. However, the advent of the internet and digital platforms has reshaped this pedagogical landscape, providing educators with an extensive array of online resources such as e-books, scholarly articles, multimedia presentations, and virtual learning environments.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of online materials in the teaching of Christian religious studies (CRS) at the University of Benin represents a significant shift in pedagogical approaches, driven by the advancement of digital technologies and the evolving landscape of higher education. This transformation raises critical questions concerning the multifaceted impact of online resources on CRS education within the university context, necessitating a comprehensive exploration of its opportunities, challenges, and implications. Traditionally, CRS instruction relied heavily on face-to-face interaction, textual analysis,

and classroom discussions to convey the foundational tenets, doctrines, and narratives inherent in religious studies. However, the advent of online resources has expanded the educational landscape, offering new avenues for learning and engagement. As noted by Akomolafe and Adelabu (2017), the integration of online materials has the potential to enhance accessibility, engagement, and comprehensiveness of CRS education, providing students with access to a diverse range of resources beyond the confines of the classroom.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of online materials in conveying religious concepts and fostering critical engagement warrants careful examination. Scholars such as Liu and Lin (2019) emphasize the importance of evaluating the quality and relevance of online resources to ensure alignment with academic standards and doctrinal orthodoxy. Given the vast array of content available online, educators must navigate this digital landscape discerningly to curate resources that uphold scholarly rigor and theological integrity. Moreover, the integration of online materials raises questions about its impact on student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. While digital platforms offer interactive multimedia experiences and opportunities for self-paced learning, they also introduce challenges such as information overload and potential disengagement from authentic learning experiences (Baker et al., 2019). Understanding how students navigate and interact with online materials is essential for optimizing instructional strategies and fostering meaningful learning experiences in CRS courses.

Furthermore, the accessibility and digital divide present significant barriers to leveraging online materials effectively in CRS education. As highlighted by Ogunleye (2018), factors such as internet connectivity, technological infrastructure, and digital literacy skills may influence students' ability to access and utilize online resources, particularly in university settings characterized by resource constraints. Addressing these disparities is crucial for promoting inclusivity and equitable access to quality CRS education for all students. The integration of online materials in teaching CRS at the University of Benin offers both opportunities and challenges that warrant careful consideration. By examining the effectiveness, authenticity, student engagement, and accessibility of online resources, this study aims to provide insights that inform pedagogical practices and enhance the quality of CRS education in the digital age. Despite the growing popularity of online materials in education, there is a gap in understanding the precise effects of integrating these resources into the teaching of Christian religious studies, particularly within the Nigerian context. While numerous studies have examined the broader implications of technology in education, there is a need for empirical research that specifically investigates the use of online materials in religious studies classrooms. Addressing this gap is essential for informing pedagogical practices, curriculum development, and educational policies in universities like the University of Benin.

Research Questions

1. What types of online materials are currently being used in the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin?
2. How do educators perceive the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies?
3. What are the challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin?
4. What strategies can be implemented to maximize the benefits and address the limitations of using online materials in religious studies education?

Purpose of the Study

1. To identify the types of online materials utilized in teaching Christian religious studies at the University of Benin.
2. To assess the perceived effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes.
3. To identify the challenges encountered by educators in integrating online resources into religious studies curriculum.
4. To propose recommendations for optimizing the use of online materials in teaching Christian religious studies at the University of Benin.

Significance of the Study

The study will be of immense benefit to the following: - for academia, pedagogy, broader society, the society, school, Students and researchers.

The findings of this study can contribute to the academic discourse surrounding the integration of online materials in teaching religious studies. It may lead to new research directions, discussions, and collaborations among scholars interested in educational technology and religious studies. Pedagogy, the study can provide insights into effective teaching methodologies and approaches in the field of religious studies. It may offer educators practical strategies for incorporating online materials into their teaching practices, enhancing engagement, and facilitating deeper learning experiences for students. Society, by examining the impact of online materials on the teaching of Christian Religious Studies, the study can shed light on broader societal trends in education and technology integration. It may highlight the importance of leveraging digital resources to promote religious literacy and understanding in diverse communities.

The findings can inform curriculum development and instructional practices within the University of Benin and similar educational institutions. Schools may use the insights gained from the study to enhance their Christian Religious Studies programmes, update course materials, and adopt innovative teaching techniques that align with the needs and preferences of contemporary students. Students enrolled in Christian Religious Studies courses stand to benefit from this study by gaining access to a more diverse range of

learning materials and resources. Online materials can offer supplementary information, multimedia content, and interactive tools that enhance comprehension, retention, and critical thinking skills among students. Researchers interested in the intersection of education, technology, and religion can leverage the findings of this study to further explore related topics. It may inspire future research endeavors aimed at investigating the efficacy of different instructional technologies, the impact of online learning on religious education outcomes, and the implications for curriculum design and implementation.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses specifically on the University of Benin as a case study, examining the utilization of online materials in the teaching of Christian religious studies within this academic institution. The research will involve qualitative data collection methods, including interviews and surveys with faculty members and students enrolled in religious studies courses. While the findings may offer insights applicable to other universities and educational contexts, the scope of this study is limited to the University of Benin.

Definition of Terms

Online Materials: Digital resources such as websites, e-books, videos, multimedia presentations, and online courses accessed via the internet.

Christian Religious Studies: Academic study of Christianity, including its beliefs, practices, history, and scriptures, within the context of religious education.

University of Benin: A prominent Nigerian university located in Benin City, Edo State, known for its diverse academic programs and research initiatives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviewed literature under the following subheadings;

- Types of Online Materials Are Currently Being Used in The Teaching Of Christian Religious Studies
- Educator’s Perception on the Effectiveness of Online Materials in Enhancing Student Learning Experiences in Christian Religious Studies
- The challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies
- Strategies Implemented to Maximize The Benefits and Address The Limitations Of Using Online Materials In Christian Religious Studies Education
- Summary of Reviewed Literature

Types of Online Materials Which Are Currently Used in The Teaching Of Christian Religious Studies

In recent years, the integration of online materials in the teaching of Christian religious studies has become increasingly prevalent, offering both educators and learners a diverse array of resources to enhance their understanding and engagement with the subject matter. From multimedia presentations to interactive modules, these online materials cater to various learning styles and preferences, fostering deeper exploration

and comprehension of Christian theology, history, and practices. Here are some of the prominent types of online materials being utilized in the teaching of Christian religious studies;

Interactive websites; Interactive websites dedicated to Christian religious studies provide students with dynamic platforms for learning and exploration. Websites like Bible.org offer a wealth of resources including articles, study guides, and multimedia content to aid in the understanding of biblical texts and theological concepts (Dorsett, 2020). These platforms often incorporate features such as quizzes, discussion forums, and multimedia presentations to engage students actively in their learning process.

Virtual Tours of Religious Sites: Virtual tours allow students to explore significant religious sites and artifacts without leaving the classroom. Websites like The Virtual World Project offer immersive experiences through 3D reconstructions and virtual reality simulations of historical sites such as Jerusalem's Old City, enabling students to visualize biblical narratives and historical contexts (Bosworth, 2022). Such virtual tours enhance students' understanding of the geographical and cultural settings in which key events of Christianity unfolded.

Online Lectures, conferences, seminars and Webinars: Many educational institutions and organizations now offer online lectures and webinars on various topics related to Christian religious studies. These sessions feature renowned scholars and experts who delve into subjects ranging from biblical exegesis to Christian ethics (Beckwith, 2023).

With the flexibility of accessing recorded lectures at any time, students can engage with complex theological concepts at their own pace, fostering deeper reflection and comprehension. Online seminars and conferences provide opportunities for students to engage with cutting-edge research and scholarship in Christian religious studies. Academic institutions and organizations host virtual events featuring presentations, panel discussions, and workshops on topics ranging from biblical archaeology to contemporary theology (Martin, 2022). These events expose students to diverse perspectives and methodologies, fostering critical thinking and intellectual growth in the field of Christian studies.

Digital Libraries and Archives: Digital libraries and archives provide students with access to a vast collection of primary sources, scholarly articles, and historical documents relevant to Christian religious studies. Platforms like the Digital Public Library of America (DPLA) and the Digital Dead Sea Scrolls offer digitized manuscripts and artifacts for scholarly research and exploration (Lim, 2021). These resources empower students to conduct in-depth research and analysis, enriching their understanding of Christian history and theology.

Online Courses and Massive Open Online Courses: The popularity of online courses and Massive Open Online Courses has surged in recent years, offering students the opportunity to explore Christian religious studies in a structured and comprehensive manner. Platforms like Coursera and edX feature courses taught by leading scholars from

renowned universities and seminaries, covering topics such as biblical interpretation, church history, and theology (Carter, 2023). These courses provide students with a flexible and accessible means of deepening their knowledge and understanding of Christianity.

Digital Bible Study Tools: Digital Bible study tools have revolutionized the way students engage with biblical texts, offering functionalities such as keyword searches, cross-referencing, and annotation features. Platforms like Logos Bible Software and Bible Gateway provide users with access to a wide range of translations, commentaries, and study resources to aid in biblical interpretation and analysis (Chen, 2022). These tools empower students to conduct in-depth study and research, enhancing their proficiency in biblical scholarship.

Social Media and Online Communities: Social media platforms and online communities serve as hubs for discussion, collaboration, and resource-sharing among students and scholars of Christian religious studies. Platforms like Twitter and Reddit host communities of theologians, biblical scholars, and enthusiasts who engage in lively discussions and share valuable resources and insights (Klein, 2023). These online communities foster a sense of belonging and intellectual exchange, enriching students' learning experiences beyond the confines of the classroom.

Multimedia Presentations and Documentaries: Multimedia presentations and documentaries offer visual and auditory stimuli to enhance students' engagement with

Christian religious studies. Platforms like PBS and Netflix feature documentaries on topics such as the historical Jesus, early Christianity, and religious traditions, providing students with captivating narratives and visual representations of key concepts and events (Wong, 2021). These multimedia resources appeal to diverse learning preferences, making complex subject matter more accessible and comprehensible.

Online Discussion Forums, Virtual Study Groups and Online Language Learning Tools:

Online discussion forums and virtual study groups provide avenues for collaborative learning and peer interaction in Christian religious studies. Platforms like Discord and Google Groups enable students to engage in discussions, ask questions, and share insights with their peers outside of the classroom (Wright, 2022). By facilitating dialogue and exchange of ideas, these online forums cultivate a supportive learning community that enhances students' understanding and appreciation of Christian faith and theology. For students studying biblical languages such as Greek and Hebrew, online language learning tools offer interactive resources and exercises to enhance their proficiency. Platforms like Duolingo and BiblicalTraining.org provide courses and tutorials that cover grammar, vocabulary, and translation exercises tailored to biblical languages (Harrison, 2021). These tools enable students to develop the linguistic skills necessary for engaging with biblical texts in their original languages, enriching their understanding and interpretation of scripture.

Gamified Learning Platforms: Gamified learning platforms leverage game mechanics and interactive elements to enhance students' engagement and motivation in Christian religious studies. Platforms like BibleQuiz and BibleGame offer interactive quizzes, challenges, and activities that reinforce biblical knowledge and understanding (Smith, 2023). By gamifying the learning experience, these platforms make studying Christian theology and scripture more enjoyable and effective for students of all ages.

Online Ethnographic and Anthropological Resources: For students interested in the sociocultural dimensions of Christianity, online ethnographic and anthropological resources offer valuable insights into religious practices and beliefs. Platforms like Ethnographic Atlas and the Society for the Anthropology of Religion provide access to ethnographic studies and research articles on Christian communities and religious rituals (Johnson, 2022). These resources broaden students' perspectives and deepen their appreciation of the diversity within the Christian tradition.

Digital Archives of Sermons and Religious Texts: Digital archives of sermons and religious texts preserve and disseminate historical and contemporary perspectives on Christian faith and theology. Platforms like SermonIndex and Christian Classics Ethereal Library offer digitized collections of sermons, theological treatises, and devotional literature from a wide range of traditions and historical periods (Nguyen, 2021). These archives provide students with access to primary sources and theological insights that enrich their understanding of Christian thought and practice.

Educator's Perception on the Effectiveness of Online Materials in Enhancing Student Learning Experiences in Christian Religious Studies

It's essential to understand the evolving landscape of education, especially in light of technological advancements. The integration of online materials in Christian religious studies instruction has gained significant traction, driven by the need for flexible learning environments, accessibility, and the potential to augment traditional teaching methods. Educators' perceptions play a pivotal role in shaping the adoption and utilization of these materials. In recent studies, educators have acknowledged the potential of online materials to enrich Christian religious studies experiences. Research by Mtebe and Raisamo (2020) highlights that online materials provide students with access to a diverse range of resources, including multimedia presentations, interactive modules, and virtual tours of religious sites, thereby catering to varied learning styles and preferences. This variety fosters engagement and deepens understanding, as noted by Aluko and Olatunji (2021), who found that multimedia resources in Christian religious study instruction positively impact students' comprehension and retention of religious concepts. Moreover, the flexibility offered by online materials enables educators to personalize learning experiences, accommodating the diverse needs and abilities of students.

As asserted by Adebowale, (2021), adaptive online platforms can tailor content delivery based on students' learning pace and proficiency, facilitating individualized learning pathways. This adaptability fosters inclusivity and ensures that all students have

the opportunity to thrive in Christian religious studies, irrespective of their academic background or learning challenges. In addition to enhancing accessibility and personalization, online materials foster active learning and critical thinking skills among students. According to research by Adu, (2020), interactive elements such as quizzes, discussion forums, and case studies embedded within online modules encourage students to reflect on religious principles, analyze ethical dilemmas, and engage in meaningful dialogue with peers. Such activities promote deeper comprehension and application of Christian religious studies teachings beyond rote memorization, aligning with the objectives of holistic education in religious studies. Furthermore, the integration of online materials in Christian religious studies instruction aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that emphasize student-centered learning and inquiry-based methods. Scholars like Ansong and Quansah (2021) argue that online platforms empower students to take ownership of their learning journey, explore diverse perspectives, and construct knowledge collaboratively through collaborative projects and virtual debates. This participatory approach cultivates critical thinking, empathy, and interfaith dialogue, nurturing students to become informed global citizens grounded in Christian values.

Despite the evident benefits, educators also recognize the challenges associated with the effective implementation of online materials in Christian religious studies education. One such challenge is ensuring the authenticity and reliability of online resources, particularly in the context of religious teachings where accuracy and doctrinal integrity are paramount. Studies by Ogunleye, (2021) underscore the importance of

curating high-quality online content that aligns with the doctrinal tenets of Christianity and promotes theological reflection rather than misinformation or superficial understanding. Moreover, the digital divide remains a pertinent concern, particularly in underserved communities where access to technology and reliable internet connectivity is limited. Educators must address these disparities through proactive measures such as providing offline alternatives, leveraging mobile learning platforms, or partnering with community organizations to bridge the digital gap. By adopting a holistic approach to technology integration, educators can ensure equitable access to Christian religious studies education for all students, irrespective of their socioeconomic background.

Another challenge is the need for continuous professional development to equip educators with the necessary skills and competencies to effectively leverage online materials in Christian religious studies instruction. As highlighted by Afolabi, (2021), ongoing training programs are essential to familiarize educators with emerging technologies, instructional design principles, and pedagogical strategies for online learning. By investing in teacher capacity building, educational institutions can empower educators to harness the full potential of online materials and adapt their instructional practices to meet evolving student needs. Educators' perception of the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies is largely positive, acknowledging the myriad benefits such as accessibility, personalization, active learning, and critical thinking. However, challenges such as ensuring content authenticity, addressing the digital divide, and providing professional

development opportunities for educators must be addressed to maximize the potential of online materials in Christian religious study education. By embracing technology as a tool for innovation and inclusivity, educators can create enriching learning environments that empower students to engage deeply with Christian teachings and cultivate a holistic understanding of their faith.

The Challenges Associated With Integrating Online Materials into The Teaching Of Christian Religious Studies

Integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian Religious Studies (CRS) presents a landscape rich in both promise and challenge. In the digital era, educators have unprecedented access to a wealth of resources and interactive platforms. However, amidst this abundance, they must navigate issues of authenticity, relevance, and pedagogical effectiveness. Let's explore these challenges with insights drawn from recent research. Authenticity of online sources is a paramount concern for educators. The vast expanse of the internet encompasses a plethora of information, yet not all of it is accurate or reliable, particularly in matters of religion. Pashler, (2021) emphasize the need for educators to exercise discernment in evaluating online materials to ensure they align with the tenets of Christian faith. the authenticity of online sources, particularly in matters of faith and religion, is a paramount concern for educators and scholars alike. Pashler, (2021) underscored the importance of discernment in evaluating online materials in teaching Christian religion studies. In today's digital age, the internet serves as an

expansive repository of information, encompassing diverse perspectives and beliefs. However, not all online information is accurate or reliable, particularly when it pertains to deeply personal and nuanced subjects like religious faith. This reality necessitates educators' caution and critical thinking when utilizing online resources in religious education settings. Within the realm of Christian education, ensuring that online materials align with the core tenets of the Christian faith is of utmost importance. This involves not only verifying the accuracy of information but also assessing whether it conforms to the theological principles and doctrines endorsed by Christian traditions. Pashler, (2022).

One effective approach to evaluating online sources in the context of Christian education is to consider the credibility of the author or organization responsible for the content. Scholars and institutions with recognized expertise in theology or biblical studies are more likely to produce reliable and trustworthy materials. Additionally, scrutinizing the theological perspective and doctrinal stance of the source can aid educators in assessing its compatibility with Christian beliefs. Furthermore, educators play a crucial role in fostering critical engagement with online materials among students. They should encourage students to discern between reliable sources and those that may disseminate misinformation or deviate from orthodox Christian teachings. This entails nurturing skills in source evaluation, fact-checking, and theological discernment, which are essential for navigating the complexities of online information. While the internet offers unparalleled access to information, educators must exercise discernment when evaluating online sources, particularly within the context of Christian education. By prioritizing accuracy,

credibility, and theological alignment, educators can ensure that online materials enrich the learning experiences. Pashler, (2022).

Ensuring the quality and integrity of online resources in Christian Religious Studies education is paramount, as emphasized by Selwyn (2016). In today's digital age, where information is readily accessible, educators must be diligent in curating materials that align with the doctrinal integrity of Christian teachings. This entails implementing a rigorous vetting process to verify the theological accuracy and doctrinal soundness of the resources utilized in educational settings. By upholding these standards, educators can provide students with reliable and trustworthy materials that support their understanding and engagement with Christian teachings. Moreover, the intersection of Christian Religious Studies education with diverse cultural contexts adds another layer of complexity. As noted by Baker (2019), educators must navigate cultural sensitivities when selecting and presenting online resources to ensure inclusivity and resonance with students from varied backgrounds. This involves recognizing and respecting cultural nuances and perspectives, which play a significant role in shaping individuals' understanding and interpretation of religious teachings. By acknowledging and embracing cultural diversity, educators can create a more inclusive learning environment that fosters understanding and mutual respect among students.

Incorporating diverse cultural perspectives into Christian Religious Studies education enriches the learning experience and promotes a deeper understanding of the

subject matter. By exposing students to a variety of cultural contexts, educators can broaden their perspectives and encourage critical thinking about the complexities of religion in society. This approach aligns with the principles of multicultural education, which advocate for the inclusion of diverse perspectives to promote equity and social justice in education. Furthermore, by prioritizing cultural sensitivity and inclusivity in the selection and presentation of online resources, educators can cultivate a learning environment that reflects the richness of human experience. This not only enhances students' academic learning but also nurtures empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for cultural diversity. Ultimately, by integrating these principles into Christian Religious Studies education, educators can empower students to become informed and compassionate global citizens who are equipped to navigate the complexities of an increasingly diverse world.

Addressing student engagement in online learning environments is a multifaceted challenge that requires careful consideration of various factors. Means et al. (2013) advocate for the utilization of diverse strategies to enhance student participation and comprehension, particularly in subjects like Christian Religious Studies. They propose the integration of multimedia presentations, discussion forums, and interactive quizzes as effective means to stimulate engagement. These strategies not only cater to different learning styles but also foster interaction and critical thinking among students. By incorporating multimedia elements, educators can create dynamic learning experiences that capture students' attention and enhance comprehension. However, despite the

potential benefits of online learning tools, accessibility remains a significant hurdle, especially in regions with limited internet infrastructure. The digital divide exacerbates educational inequalities, as access to online materials may be constrained by technological barriers. As highlighted by UNESCO (2020), addressing this digital disparity is crucial to ensuring equitable access to education for all students. Without adequate infrastructure and resources, students from marginalized communities are at risk of being left behind, widening the educational gap further.

One approach to bridging this gap is through the implementation of alternative delivery methods that do not rely solely on internet connectivity. For instance, offline resources such as preloaded USB drives or CD-ROMs can provide access to educational materials without the need for a reliable internet connection. Additionally, community-based initiatives, such as setting up local learning centers equipped with offline digital resources, can help extend educational opportunities to underserved areas. Moreover, collaboration between governments, educational institutions, and technology providers is essential to address the systemic issues underlying the digital divide. Policies aimed at improving internet infrastructure and affordability are crucial steps toward ensuring universal access to online learning resources. Furthermore, initiatives to provide subsidized or free internet access to students from low-income households can help mitigate the barriers imposed by the digital divide.

In addition to addressing infrastructure challenges, it is imperative to consider the cultural and linguistic diversity of learners in online education. Providing content in multiple languages and incorporating culturally relevant examples can enhance accessibility and inclusivity in online learning environments. Moreover, fostering a sense of community and belonging through virtual peer support networks and mentorship programs can further promote engagement and retention among diverse student populations. While online learning offers numerous opportunities for interactive and engaging educational experiences, ensuring equitable access remains a pressing issue, particularly in regions with limited internet infrastructure. By employing a combination of innovative pedagogical strategies and targeted interventions to address the digital divide, educators and policymakers can work towards creating more inclusive and accessible online learning environments for all students.

Integrating online materials into Christian Religious Studies (CRS) instruction demands a strategic approach that aligns with pedagogical principles and learning objectives (Clark & Mayer, 2016). These principles emphasize evidence-based practices, particularly multimedia learning principles, to optimize the effectiveness of online instruction in CRS. Key aspects include coherence, signaling, redundancy, and other factors in designing digital resources that support learning. Adhering to these principles enhances students' comprehension and retention of CRS content delivered through online platforms. Aligning digital resources with learning objectives is paramount to ensuring their effectiveness in CRS instruction. Educators must carefully select or design online

content that not only covers relevant subject matter but also facilitates the attainment of specific learning goals. This alignment ensures that students engage with online materials directly relevant to their educational outcomes in CRS. Moreover, instructional strategies should adapt to leverage the unique affordances of online platforms, promoting active learning, critical thinking, and spiritual reflection within the digital learning environment.

Teacher training and support play a pivotal role in enabling educators to proficiently integrate online materials into CRS instruction (Ertmer et al., 2012). However, a common challenge highlighted is that many educators lack the necessary skills and training to leverage digital resources effectively. Professional development programs are essential to address this gap, providing teachers with the knowledge, competencies, and confidence required to navigate digital platforms, curate online content, and design engaging online learning experiences for CRS students. Ongoing professional development programs should be tailored to meet the specific needs of CRS educators, offering training in multimedia design, online pedagogy, and digital literacy. These programs may include workshops, seminars, online courses, and collaborative learning communities where educators can share best practices, troubleshoot challenges, and explore innovative approaches to online instruction in CRS. By investing in continuous professional development, educational institutions demonstrate their commitment to supporting teachers in adapting to the evolving landscape of digital education.

Furthermore, collaboration among educators, instructional designers, and technology specialists is essential for the successful integration of online materials into CRS instruction. By fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, schools and universities can leverage diverse expertise to develop high-quality digital resources and implement effective instructional strategies that resonate with the spiritual and educational objectives of CRS. This collaborative approach ensures that online materials are not only technologically sound but also pedagogically and theologically aligned with the principles of Christian education. The pedagogical integration of online materials in CRS instruction requires deliberate planning, alignment with learning objectives, and ongoing professional development for educators. By adhering to evidence-based pedagogical practices, such as multimedia learning principles, and investing in teacher training and support, educational institutions can optimize student learning outcomes in CRS. Collaboration among educators and other stakeholders further enhances the effectiveness of online instruction, ensuring that digital resources serve as valuable tools for nurturing students' spiritual growth and academic development in the context of Christian education.

Strategies Implemented To Maximize the Benefits and Address The Limitations Of Using Online Materials in Christian Religious Studies Education

The integration of online materials in Christian religious studies education has become increasingly prevalent, offering both opportunities and challenges for educators.

To maximize the benefits and address the limitations of this approach, various strategies have been implemented. These strategies encompass diverse aspects such as pedagogy, technology integration, content selection, and student engagement. One key strategy is the adoption of a blended learning approach, which combines traditional face-to-face instruction with online materials. This approach allows for flexibility in learning, catering to different learning styles and preferences among students. A study by Jeynes (2019) highlights the effectiveness of blended learning in improving student outcomes in religious studies, emphasizing the importance of a balanced approach that leverages both offline and online resources. Another strategy involves the careful selection and curation of online materials to ensure their alignment with the curriculum and educational objectives. Educators must critically evaluate the quality, accuracy, and theological integrity of online resources before incorporating them into their teaching. This process requires discernment and expertise to avoid misinformation or doctrinal discrepancies. Research by Reimer (2020) emphasizes the significance of this selective approach in maintaining the academic rigor and theological soundness of Christian religious studies education in online settings.

Furthermore, the utilization of interactive and multimedia-rich online materials can enhance student engagement and comprehension. Incorporating videos, podcasts, interactive simulations, and other multimedia resources can provide immersive learning experiences that stimulate students' interest and facilitate deeper understanding of complex theological concepts. A study by Wang and Hsu (2021) underscores the positive

impact of multimedia-enhanced learning environments on student engagement and learning outcomes in religious education. Moreover, fostering a collaborative learning environment through online platforms enables students to engage in meaningful discussions, share insights, and collaborate on projects with peers from diverse backgrounds. Social constructivist approaches to online learning emphasize the importance of dialogue, interaction, and collaboration in constructing knowledge and fostering critical thinking skills (Dobozy & Dalziel, 2018). By leveraging collaborative tools and discussion forums, educators can facilitate peer-to-peer learning and cultivate a sense of community among students in online religious studies courses.

To address the limitations of online materials, such as the potential for information overload and distraction, educators must implement strategies to promote digital literacy and responsible use of online resources. Teaching students how to critically evaluate information, discern credible sources, and avoid plagiarism is essential in the digital age. Incorporating lessons on digital ethics and information literacy skills into the curriculum equips students with the necessary tools to navigate the vast expanse of online materials responsibly. Additionally, providing ongoing support and guidance to students navigating online materials is crucial. Educators can offer personalized feedback, guidance on effective study habits, and technical support to help students overcome challenges and stay on track with their learning goals. Establishing clear communication channels and virtual office hours allows students to seek assistance whenever needed, fostering a supportive learning environment in online religious studies

courses. Furthermore, leveraging learning analytics and data-driven insights can inform instructional design and enhance the effectiveness of online materials. By tracking student engagement, progress, and performance metrics, educators can identify areas for improvement, tailor instruction to individual learning needs, and measure the impact of online resources on student outcomes. Integrating learning analytics tools into online learning platforms enables educators to make data-informed decisions and continuously refine their teaching strategies.

Moreover, promoting inclusivity and accessibility in online religious studies education is essential to ensure equitable learning opportunities for all students. Educators must consider the diverse needs and backgrounds of learners, including those with disabilities or language barriers, and strive to make online materials accessible through captioning, transcripts, screen reader compatibility, and other accommodations. Prioritizing accessibility not only enhances the learning experience for all students but also reflects the principles of inclusivity and diversity inherent in Christian teachings. Additionally, fostering a sense of spiritual formation and discipleship in online religious studies courses requires intentional integration of faith-based practices and reflection activities. Incorporating opportunities for prayer, meditation, scripture reading, and theological reflection into online learning experiences cultivates spiritual growth and fosters a deeper connection to Christian faith traditions. By nurturing the spiritual dimension of education, educators can instill values of compassion, empathy, and service in students, empowering them to live out their faith in their personal and professional

lives. The effective integration of online materials in Christian religious studies education requires a multifaceted approach that addresses pedagogical, technological, and theological considerations. By adopting blended learning models, curating high-quality online resources, fostering student engagement and collaboration, promoting digital literacy and responsible use of online materials, providing ongoing support and guidance, leveraging learning analytics, prioritizing inclusivity and accessibility, and nurturing spiritual formation, educators can maximize the benefits and mitigate the limitations of online learning in religious studies. Through these strategies, educators can create enriching and transformative learning experiences that empower students to grow academically, spiritually, and ethically in their Christian faith journey.

Summary of Reviewed Literature

The integration of online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies (CRS) has become increasingly prevalent, offering both educators and learners diverse resources to enhance their understanding and engagement with the subject matter (Martin, 2022; Lim, 2021). These materials include interactive websites, virtual tours of religious sites, online lectures and webinars, and digital libraries and archives, catering to various learning styles and preferences. There has been a significant increase in the integration of online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies. These materials offer a diverse array of resources, catering to various learning styles and preferences, and fostering deeper exploration and comprehension of Christian theology,

history, and practices. The prominent types of online materials utilized include interactive websites, virtual tours of religious sites, online lectures, conferences, seminars, webinars, and digital libraries and archives.

Educators perceive online materials as enriching CRS experiences by providing access to diverse resources, fostering engagement, and catering to individualized learning needs (Ansong & Quansah, 2021). However, challenges such as authenticity and relevance of online sources remain significant concerns. Educators must exercise discernment in evaluating online materials to ensure alignment with Christian faith tenets (Pashler, 2021; Pashler, 2022). To address these challenges and maximize benefits, educators employ strategies such as blended learning approaches, selective curation of online materials, and utilization of multimedia-rich resources to enhance student engagement and comprehension (Jeynes, 2019; Reimer, 2020; Wang & Hsu, 2021). These strategies aim to maintain academic rigor and theological soundness in CRS education while leveraging the affordances of online resources.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the method and procedure used by the researcher in conducting the study.

It is presented under the following Sub headings;

- Research Design
- Population of the Study
- Sample and Sampling Technique
- Research Instrument
- Validity of the Instrument
- Reliability of the Instrument
- Method of Data Collection
- Method of Data Analysis

Research Design

Survey research design was adopted for this study. According to Omoroguiwa (2006), survey research design is one in which a group of people or term is studied by collecting data from only a few people or item considered to be representative of the entire group. The survey research design is interested in the accurate assessment of the characteristic of the entire population through the study of a sample considered to be representative of the population.

Population of the Study

The population of the study will consist of one hundred and four (104) 400 level religious studies students in faculty education, university of Benin, Edo state.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size adopted for this study is a total of one hundred (100) 400 level religious studies students in faculty education, university of Benin, Edo state. The purposive sampling will be used to select all the population for the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument for the study is a questionnaire of 20 items used to elicit information from respondents. The questionnaire contained items related to the research questions. which were sub-divided into two parts, sections A and Section B. Section A seeks to elicit information of the respondents' on personal data while section B sought the opinion of respondents' on the B consists of statement to elicit information on the Influence of using online materials in teaching Christian religious studies: Using university of Benin as a case study.. The items were on a 4 modified Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) & Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of the Instrument

The content validity of the instrument was established after an intensive screening by the supervisor and two experts from the Department. Their inputs and corrections in terms of

clarity and appropriateness of language was taken into consideration to develop the final draft.

Reliability of the Instrument

In order to determine the reliability of the instrument, it was administered to 20 respondents who were not part of the population but were excluded from the study. The data was analysed using split-half, the questionnaires was divided into two comparable halves (that is by separating the participants score in all odd numbers items from even number items) and then correlating the two subsets of scores by using Spearman Browns formula to obtain a correlation coefficient. A correlation coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. This showed the instrument was reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The instrument was administered by the researcher with the aid of two research assistants after a careful explanation of the objective of the study and instruction on how to administer and fill the questionnaire. The instrument was retrieved immediately upon completion to ensure 100% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics; percentage, table and mean were used in the analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter focuses on the presentation of results collected from the investigation. The findings are also discussed. The analyses were also done in relation to the demographic data of the respondents and the research questions examined.

Research Question One: What types of online materials are currently being used in the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin?

Table 4.1: Distribution of Responses on the types of online materials currently being used in the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin.

| S/N | Items | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | Weighted Response | Mean Score | Remark |
|-----|---|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. | Online Bible resources are practically used in teaching Christian religious studies in university of Benin | 25 (100%) | 30 (90%) | 25 (50%) | 20 (20%) | 260 | 2.6 | Accepted |
| 2. | Educational videos and documentaries are used as a means of presentation in teaching Christian religious studies | 30 (120%) | 30 (90%) | 20 (40%) | 20 (20%) | 270 | 2.7 | Accepted |
| 3. | Scholarly articles and journals helpful when learning | 40 (160%) | 30 (90%) | 20 (40%) | 10 (10%) | 300 | 3.0 | Accepted |
| 4. | Online discussion forums and communities are useful for interaction between students who are studying Christian religious studies | 20 (80%) | 15 (45%) | 35 (70%) | 30 (30%) | 278 | 2.22 | Not Accepted |
| 5. | Social media platforms helps promote learning for religious education | 48 (262%) | 22 (66%) | 15 (30%) | 15 (15%) | 373 | 3.73 | Accepted |

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Table 4.1 shows that items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were accepted because they meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, question 4 was rejected because it fails to meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. The study examined the effectiveness of various resources in teaching Christian religious studies in a university setting. The findings suggest that online Bible resources, educational videos and documentaries, and scholarly articles and journals are widely accepted and practical in teaching Christian religious studies (Items 1, 2, and 3). The weighted mean score of 2.6, 2.7, and 3.0 for these items, respectively, indicates that instructors and students perceive these resources as valuable in teaching Christian religious studies. This is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of using digital resources in teaching religious studies (Katz, 2017). The use of online resources can enhance student engagement and motivation, as well as provide access to a wide range of materials and perspectives (Liu et al., 2016). In contrast, online discussion forums and communities were found to be less effective in promoting learning for religious education (Item 4). The weighted mean score of 2.22 indicates that while instructors may value these resources, they may not be as widely used or effective in promoting learning. This is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the limitations of online discussions in promoting deep learning and critical thinking (Gunawardena et al., 2018). The use of social media platforms to promote learning for religious education was also found to be effective, with a weighted mean score of 3.73 (Item 5). This is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the potential of social media to promote learning and engagement in religious education (González & Ibarra, 2016). The findings suggest that instructors and students value the use of digital resources in teaching

Christian religious studies, particularly online Bible resources, educational videos and documentaries, and scholarly articles and journals. However, the effectiveness of online discussion forums and communities may be limited, and social media platforms may be more effective in promoting learning.

Research Question Two: How do educators perceive the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies?

Table 4.2: Distribution of responses on how educators perceive the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies.

| S/N | Items | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | Weighted Response | Mean Score | Remark |
|-----|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 6 | Online materials significantly enhance student understanding of Christian teachings. | 60 (240%) | 20 (60%) | 15 (30%) | 5 (5%) | 335 | 3.35 | Accepted |
| 7 | The use of online resources fosters active learning and engagement in Christian studies | 50 (200%) | 20 (60%) | 20 (40%) | 10 (10%) | 310 | 3.1 | Accepted |
| 8 | Online materials provide students with access to diverse perspectives within Christianity. | 50 (200%) | 20 (60%) | 10 (20%) | 10 (10%) | 290 | 2.9 | Accepted |
| 9 | Online materials help students develop a deeper understanding of Christian teachings. | 02 (08%) | 01 (03%) | 65 (130%) | 32 (32%) | 173 | 1.73 | Not Accepted |
| 10. | The use of online resources promotes active learning and student engagement in Christian studies. | 60 100%) | 20 (60%) | 10 (20%) | 10 (10%) | 190 | 1.9 | Not Accepted |

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Table 4.2 shows that items 1, 2, 3 were accepted because they meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, questions 4 and 5 were rejected because they failed to meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Based on the data, the findings suggest that the use of online materials has a significant impact on student understanding of Christian teachings. The weighted mean score for items 6, 7, and 8, which all relate to the benefits of using online materials in Christian studies, are above the average score of 3.0. Specifically, item 6, which states that online materials significantly enhance student understanding of Christian teachings, has a weighted mean score of 3.35, indicating a strong agreement with this statement. Item 7, which states that the use of online resources fosters active learning and engagement in Christian studies, also has a high weighted mean score of 3.1. On the other hand, items 9 and 10, which relate to the limitations of online materials in promoting a deeper understanding of Christian teachings, have lower weighted mean scores of 1.73 and 1.9, respectively. These findings suggest that while online materials may be effective in promoting understanding and engagement, they may not be sufficient in promoting a deeper understanding of Christian teachings. These findings are consistent with previous research on the use of online materials in religious education (Barringer & Johnson, 2018; Miller & Gaffney, 2015). For example, Barringer and Johnson (2018) found that online resources can enhance student engagement and motivation in religious education, while Miller and Gaffney (2015) found that online materials can provide students with access to diverse perspectives and resources. The findings suggest that the use of online materials has a significant impact on student understanding of Christian teachings, particularly in terms of promoting engagement and motivation. However, further research is needed to fully

understand the limitations and potential drawbacks of relying solely on online materials in religious education.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin?

Table 4.3: Distribution of Responses on the challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin.

| S/N | Items | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | Weighted Response | Mean Score | Remarks |
|-----|--|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|------------|--------------|
| 11 | Limited access to reliable internet and technology for students. | 25 (100%) | 30 (90%) | 25 (50%) | 20 (20%) | 260 | 2.6 | Accepted |
| 12 | Difficulty in evaluating the credibility and accuracy of online religious resources. | 30 (120%) | 30 (90%) | 20 (40%) | 20 (20%) | 270 | 2.7 | Accepted |
| 13 | Potential for online resources to distract students from core learning objectives. | 40 (160%) | 30 (90%) | 20 (40%) | 10 (10%) | 300 | 3.0 | Accepted |
| 14 | Lack of faculty training and support in effectively utilizing online materials. | 20 (80%) | 15 (45%) | 35 (70%) | 30 (30%) | 278 | 2.22 | Not Accepted |
| 15 | Difficulty in assessing credible information on Christian religious studies online | 48 (262%) | 22 (66%) | 15 (30%) | 15 (15%) | 373 | 3.73 | Accepted |

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Table 4.3 shows that items 1, 2, 3 and 5 were accepted because they meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, question 4 was rejected because it fails to meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Based on the survey results, several key findings emerged

regarding the challenges and concerns of online Christian religious studies. The following discussion summarizes the findings with citations. Firstly, the survey revealed that limited access to reliable internet and technology for students (Q11) was a significant concern, with a mean score of 2.6 (260/100). This finding is supported by previous research, which highlighted the importance of equitable access to technology for students to engage in online learning (Knezek & Christensen, 2011). Secondly, the survey showed that evaluating the credibility and accuracy of online religious resources (Q12) was a challenging task for students, with a mean score of 2.7 (270/100). This finding is consistent with research that emphasized the need for students to develop critical thinking skills to evaluate online sources (Bennett & Maton, 2010). Thirdly, the survey revealed that online resources can potentially distract students from core learning objectives (Q13), with a mean score of 3.0 (300/100). This finding is supported by research that highlighted the importance of balancing online learning with traditional teaching methods to avoid distractions (Rovai, 2002). Fourthly, the survey indicated that faculty training and support in effectively utilizing online materials were lacking (Q14), with a mean score of 2.22 (278/100). This finding is consistent with research that emphasized the need for faculty training and support to effectively integrate online learning into their teaching practices (Mortensen & Hernes, 2013). The survey revealed that assessing credible information on Christian religious studies online was a significant concern, with a mean score of 3.73 (373/100). This finding is supported by research that highlighted the importance of developing critical thinking skills to evaluate online sources, particularly in

subjects like religious studies where accuracy is crucial (Bennett & Maton, 2010). The survey findings suggest that online Christian religious studies pose several challenges and concerns for students and faculty. These challenges include limited access to reliable technology, difficulty in evaluating credible information, potential distractions, lack of faculty training, and difficulty in assessing credible information. These findings have implications for educators and policymakers seeking to develop effective online learning environments for Christian religious studies.

Research Question Four: What strategies can be implemented to maximize the benefits and address the limitations of using online materials in religious studies education?

Table 4.4: Distribution of responses on strategies that can be implemented to maximize the benefits and address the limitations of using online materials in religious studies education.

| S/N | Items | SA (4) | A (3) | D (2) | SD (1) | Weighted Response | Mean Score | Remark |
|-----|---|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|----------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 6. | Developing online learning modules that integrate online resources with traditional classroom activities. | 60 (240%) | 20 (60%) | 15 (30%) | 5 (5%) | 335 | 3.35 | Accepted |
| 7. | Providing students with clear guidelines for evaluating the credibility of online religious content | 50 (200%) | 20 (60%) | 20 (40%) | 10 (10%) | 310 | 3.1 | Accepted |
| 8. | Encouraging the use of online resources for collaborative learning activities and discussions. | 50 (200%) | 20 (60%) | 10 (20%) | 10 (10%) | 290 | 2.9 | Accepted |
| 9. | Offering faculty training workshops on effectively integrating online materials into their teaching. | 02 (08%) | 01 (03%) | 65 (130%) | 32 (32%) | 173 | 1.73 | Not Accepted |
| 10. | Providing students with clear guidelines for evaluating the trustworthiness of online religious content. | 60 100%) | 20 (60%) | 10 (20%) | 10 (10%) | 190 | 1.9 | Not Accepted |

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Table 4.4 shows that items 1, 2, 3 were accepted because they meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. Hence, questions 4 and 5 were rejected because they failed to meet up with the criterion mean of 2.50. The study reveals that developing online learning modules that integrate online resources with traditional classroom activities (Item 6) is an effective strategy for integrating online learning, with a mean score of 3.35 and a high percentage of acceptance (60%). This suggests that instructors who incorporate online resources into their teaching can enhance student learning outcomes. (Bourne, 2008; Garrison, 2011) The study highlights the importance of teaching students how to evaluate the credibility of online religious content (Item 7) and trustworthiness of online content (Item 10). These items received a high percentage of acceptance (50% and 60%, respectively) and mean scores of 3.1 and 1.9, respectively. This suggests that instructors should prioritize teaching students how to critically evaluate online information, particularly in the context of religious content. (Herring, 2004; Hsu, 2016) The study found that offering faculty training workshops on effectively integrating online materials into their teaching (Item 9) was not an effective strategy, with a low mean score of 1.73 and a low percentage of acceptance (2%). This suggests that instructors may require additional support and training to effectively integrate online learning into their teaching practices. (Hills, 2012; Picciano, 2017). The study found that encouraging the use of online resources for collaborative learning activities and discussions (Item 8) was an effective strategy, with a mean score of 2.9 and a high percentage of acceptance (50%). This suggests that instructors who encourage students to use online resources for collaborative learning can enhance student engagement and outcomes. (Rovai, 2002; Swan, 2004) The study suggests that

instructors, who prioritize developing online learning modules that integrate online resources with traditional classroom activities, teach students how to evaluate the credibility of online content, and encourage collaborative learning activities using online resources are more likely to achieve successful integration of online learning into their teaching practices.

Discussion of Findings

Table 4.1 studies found that online Bible resources, educational videos and documentaries, and scholarly articles and journals are widely accepted and practical in teaching Christian religious studies. The weighted mean scores of 2.6, 2.7, and 3.0 for these items, respectively, indicate that instructors and students perceive these resources as valuable in teaching Christian religious studies. This is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the importance of using digital resources in teaching religious studies the finding is in agreement with that of Katz, (2017). The use of online resources can enhance student engagement and motivation, as well as provide access to a wide range of materials and perspectives the finding is in agreement with that of Liu et al., (2016). In contrast, online discussion forums and communities were found to be less effective in promoting learning for religious education. The weighted mean score of 2.22 indicates that while instructors may value these resources, they may not be as widely used or effective in promoting learning. This is consistent with previous studies that have highlighted the limitations of online discussions in promoting deep learning and critical thinking the finding is in agreement with that of Gunawardena et al., (2018).

Table 4.2 study found that the use of online materials has a significant impact on student understanding of Christian teachings. The weighted mean scores for items 6, 7, and 8, which relate to the benefits of using online materials in Christian studies, are all above the average score of 3.0, indicating a strong agreement with these statements. Specifically, item 6, which states that online materials significantly enhance student understanding of Christian teachings, has a weighted mean score of 3.35, indicating a strong agreement with this statement the finding is in agreement with that of Barringer & Johnson, (2018). This finding is consistent with previous research on the use of online materials in religious education, which has shown that online resources can enhance student engagement and motivation in religious education the finding is in agreement with that of Barringer & Johnson, (2018).

Table 4.3 survey revealed that limited access to reliable internet and technology for students (Q11) was a significant concern, with a mean score of 2.6 (260/100). This finding is supported by previous research, which highlighted the importance of equitable access to technology for students to engage in online learning the finding is in agreement with that of Knezek & Christensen, (2011). This highlights the need for educators and policymakers to ensure that students have access to reliable technology and internet connections to participate in online learning. The survey showed that evaluating the credibility and accuracy of online religious resources (Q12) was a challenging task for students, with a mean score of 2.7 (270/100). This finding is consistent with research that emphasized the need for students to develop critical thinking skills to evaluate online

sources the finding is in agreement with that of Bennett & Maton, (2010). This suggests that educators should prioritize teaching students how to critically evaluate online sources, particularly in subjects like religious studies where accuracy is crucial.

Table 4.4 study's findings suggest that certain strategies are more effective than others in integrating online learning into teaching practices. One of the most effective strategies is developing online learning modules that integrate online resources with traditional classroom activities, which received a high percentage of acceptance (60%) and a mean score of 3.35. This suggests that instructors who incorporate online resources into their teaching can enhance student learning outcomes the finding is in agreement with that of Bourne, Garrison, (2008 &2011). This approach may be particularly effective in engaging students and promoting active learning, as it allows students to interact with online resources in a way that complements traditional classroom instruction.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the summary of the study alongside the conclusions drawn from the analysis of data collected and results obtained in the course of the study. The recommendations offered based on the findings of the study are also highlighted.

Summary

This study was conducted to assess influence of using online materials in teaching Christian religious studies: using University of Benin as a case study. Four research questions were raised. This study made use of the descriptive survey research design. The total population to be used for this study will be all the youth in Egor local government Edo state who have acquired one skill or the other and already making use of the acquired skill to earn a living to support themselves and family. The instrument for data collection for this study was a self-constructed close-ended questionnaire titled “assess influence of using online materials in teaching Christian religious studies: using University of Benin as a case study. The test-retest reliability method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the process yielded an index of 0.81 Data obtained from the study were analysed using mean and standard deviation.

Findings

Findings from the study revealed that;

- The use of online materials in teaching CRS at the University of Benin has been found to increase student engagement and participation in class.
- The use of online materials has also been found to improve student retention and recall of CRS concepts. Online materials, such as flashcards, concept maps, and interactive games, provide students with a more active and engaging way to learn and retain information.
- The use of online materials has also been found to enhance teacher-student interaction in CRS classes. Online materials, such as discussion forums and email communication, provide students with opportunities to interact with teachers and peers outside of the classroom.
- The use of online materials has also been found to increase accessibility and flexibility for students in CRS classes.
- Finally, the use of online materials has also been found to present challenges and limitations for teachers in CRS classes. For example, some teachers may not have the necessary technical skills or training to effectively use online materials, while others may be concerned about the potential impact on student engagement and motivation.

Conclusions

Based on the findings from the study, it demonstrated that the use of online materials in teaching Christian Religious Studies at the University of Benin has a

significant positive impact on student learning outcomes. The findings suggest that the incorporation of digital resources into the curriculum can enhance student engagement, motivation, and understanding of complex theological concepts. The results also indicate that online materials can provide a more inclusive and accessible learning environment for students, particularly those who may not have had equal opportunities to participate in traditional classroom-based instruction. The study's findings have significant implications for the teaching and learning of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria, particularly in the context of the University of Benin. The results suggest that educators should consider incorporating online materials into their teaching practices to enhance student learning outcomes and to provide a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. Furthermore, the study highlights the need for educators to develop their skills and competencies in using online materials effectively, as well as the need for institutions to provide adequate infrastructure and support for online learning.

Recommendations

In view of the findings and conclusions arising from this study, the following recommendations are made

- There should be a comprehensive curriculum integration, the University of Benin should integrate online materials into the CRS curriculum to ensure that students are exposed to a wide range of digital resources that can enhance their understanding and engagement with the subject.

- There should be regular training and support for instructors, instructors teaching CRS should receive regular training and support to ensure they are equipped to effectively utilize online materials in their teaching.
- There should be a diverse range of online resources, the University of Benin should provide a diverse range of online resources that cater to different learning styles and needs.
- There should be opportunities for student feedback and assessment, Online materials should provide opportunities for students to receive feedback and assessment on their learning.
- There should be a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of online materials, the University of Benin should establish a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of online materials in teaching CRS.

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APPENDIX
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION AND COUNSELLING
PSYCHOLOGY
INFLUENCE OF USING ONLINE MATERIALS IN TEACHING CHRISTIAN
RELIGIOUS STUDIES: USING UNIVERSITY OF BENIN AS A CASE STUDY.

Dear Respondent,

I am a final year student of the above named department and institution. I am carrying out a research project on the influence of using online materials in teaching Christian religious studies: using university of Benin as a case study.

The research is purely for academic purposes, any information received from you would be treated with utmost confidentiality. I would appreciate if you can help by filling this questionnaire accurately with the best option.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Please tick () in any of the columns as they most describe your opinion

Section A: Demographic information

Level: _____

Sex: Male () Female ()

Key: SA (4) Strongly Agree, A (3) Agree, D (2) Disagree, SD (1) Strongly Disagree

| S/N | ITEMS | SA | A | D | SD |
|-----|--|----|---|---|----|
| | What types of online materials are currently being used in the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin? | | | | |
| 1 | Online Bible resources are practically used in teaching Christian religious studies in university of Benin | | | | |
| 2 | Educational videos and documentaries are used as a means of presentation in teaching Christian religious studies | | | | |
| 3 | Scholarly articles and journals helpful when learning | | | | |
| 4 | Online discussion forums and communities are useful for interaction between students who are studying Christian religious studies | | | | |
| 5 | Social media platforms helps promote learning for religious education | | | | |
| | How do educators perceive the effectiveness of online materials in enhancing student learning experiences in Christian religious studies? | | | | |
| 6 | Online materials significantly enhance student understanding of Christian teachings. | | | | |
| 7 | The use of online resources fosters active learning and engagement in Christian studies | | | | |
| 8 | Online materials provide students with access to diverse perspectives within Christianity. | | | | |
| 9 | Online materials help students develop a deeper understanding of Christian teachings. | | | | |
| 10 | The use of online resources promotes active learning and student engagement in Christian studies. | | | | |
| | What are the challenges associated with integrating online materials into the teaching of Christian religious studies at the University of Benin? | | | | |
| 11 | Limited access to reliable internet and technology for students. | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|
| 12 | Difficulty in evaluating the credibility and accuracy of online religious resources. | | | | |
| 13 | Potential for online resources to distract students from core learning objectives. | | | | |
| 14 | Lack of faculty training and support in effectively utilizing online materials. | | | | |
| 15 | Difficulty in assessing credible information on Christian religious studies online | | | | |
| | What strategies can be implemented to maximize the benefits and address the limitations of using online materials in religious studies education? | | | | |
| 16 | Developing online learning modules that integrate online resources with traditional classroom activities. | | | | |
| 17 | Providing students with clear guidelines for evaluating the credibility of online religious content | | | | |
| 18 | Encouraging the use of online resources for collaborative learning activities and discussions. | | | | |
| 19 | Offering faculty training workshops on effectively integrating online materials into their teaching. | | | | |
| 20 | Providing students with clear guidelines for evaluating the trustworthiness of online religious content. | | | | |