

Creativity and Innovation in Christian Religious Studies Education: Key to the 21st Century Transformation of the Global Economy

Bogotons, I. Oliver (Ph.D) Oluwawunsi, O. Adekola

Christian Religious Studies Sections

Faculty of Education

Ahmadu Bello University

bogotonsoliver@gmail.com

&

Oluwawunsi, O. Adekola

Department of Arts Education

Faculty of Education

University of Ilorin

oluwawunsiadekola@yahoo.com

Abstract

This paper explained the concepts of creativity and innovation together with the concepts of education in general and CRS education in particular within the framework of the new 9-3-4 educational policy. It also discussed the concept of the global economy and established a connection between Christian Religious Studies (CRS) education and global economy. 60 public and private school CRS teachers were selected within Ibadan metropolis out of the total CRS teacher population of 440 through stratified random sampling method. Three research questions and their corresponding hypotheses were answered and tested respectively. The findings revealed that religious ethics, ethics of the teaching profession, spiritual formation, professionalization of CRS into CRS course curriculum are creative measures; while recruiting more CRS teachers, provision of infrastructure and technology, and evaluation of CRS programme, and increased enrolment strategies for recruiting prospective students to embrace the course as their choice of career are innovative measures. Possible obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education, according to the findings, are poor planning and funding for CRS education, poor implementation of 9-3-4 policy, poor societal regard for CRS education, moral corruption and bankruptcy among Christians, and non-ICT or internet compliant syndrome among CRS teachers and students. Also, the findings indicated that population explosion, economic growth/recession, science and technology revolution/change, especially computer revolution, and socio-cultural and political change are the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education. It was recommended, among other things, that stakeholders in CRS education should ensure proper planning and funding for CRS education, efficient implementation of 9-3-4 policy, improve the image of CRS education in the society as well as moral development of CRS teachers and students, and trained them in the use of ICT and internet.

Keywords: Christian Religious Studies; Global Economy; Creativity; Innovation.

Introduction

Education is the process of transmitting information/ideas that can enhance all round development of a person in terms of intellect (cognition), emotion (affection) and skill (psychomotor). Uyagu (2012) opines that education describes the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted and faculties trained and skills developed. Citing Denga (2004), Ringim (2012) asserted that education is seen as a complete development of the individual from cognitive, affective, and psychomotor perspectives in a positive direction. Education involves a process of teaching, training and learning that lead to acquisition of new information, values, attitude and skills so as to produce people who will be useful members of society (Adeniyi, 2012). In Nigerian context, Religious Studies Education (RSE) can be properly defined as a deliberate, systematic and sustained effort at developing cognitive, affective and psychomotive domains of students through academic study of religions.

Christian Religious studies (CRS) education is that branch of education that examines religious beliefs, teachings and practices for moral, social, civic, spiritual, personal, religious and academic development of students. The foregoing definition is derived from the objectives of studying the subject/course at the three tiers of education in this country. The objectives of studying CRS, according to Kwasua (2013) and Oluwawunsi, Titus and Abimbola (2013), are moral, social, civic, religious, spiritual/personal and academic objectives which align with the justifications for its inclusion among school subjects. The score card of CRS at the moment reveal the need for creativity and innovation of the course at the three tiers of education namely primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Generally speaking, the new 9-3-4 curriculum is a creativity and innovation in itself with multiplying creative and innovative effects on CRS. For instance, the subject is now compulsory for students from primary school to junior secondary school. Moreover, other innovations include the general core subjects of English, General Mathematics, Computer studies/ICT, Civic education and a Trade/entrepreneurship subject (out of 35 trade subjects) for all students irrespective of whether they are science, humanities (arts), commercial or technology students. For humanities (Arts) related career in particular, the core field subjects are Nigerian Languages, literature in English, Geography, Government, RSE (namely Christian religious studies, CRS; and Islamic religious studies, IRS) History, Arts, Music, French, Economic and Arabic. Students of humanities (Arts), in addition to the general core subjects have the privilege of taking three or four core field subjects out of the foregoing, thus making a total of either 8 or 9 subjects at the secondary level. With this innovations, CRS (at the secondary level) is not only made functional and ICT based but also a gateway to humanities (arts) related careers such as Law, Philosophy, Mass Communication, Languages (Local/Foreign), Dramatic Art, Creative Art, Archeology, Guidance and Counselling, etc. To start with, malady of CRS, at the three tiers/levels of education, is the elevation of its academic objective over and above moral, social, civic, religious, spiritual and personal objectives. In other words, CRS, at the moment, is essentially concentrated on a mere academic study of religions almost to the neglect of moral, ethical and civic development of pre-service or student-teachers. Some creative or innovative measures are necessary to correct this trend.

Creativity is from creation which is refers to the act of making something that is new or bringing something into existence that did not exist before (Hornby,2005). Creativity refers to the skill and ability needed to produce something new. Innovations are strategies for improving the quality of an existing phenomenon towards development. Innovation implies

doing the same thing in different ways by means of better procedures/methods. Hence, innovation naturally results in enhancement of the phenomenon. Creativity and innovation, in the context of this paper, refer to invention of a phenomenon that is novel as well as measures to increasing its efficacy, efficiency and relevance. When applied to CRS education, creativity and innovation means introduction of new ideas and techniques as well as improvement of existing ones towards enhancing the subject (CRS).

The general purpose of this paper is to discuss some creative and innovative measures or strategies that can enhance CRS's ability to contribute to 21st century transformation of the global economy. In pursuance of this, the specific purposes are to discuss the concept of the global economy, established a connection between CRS education and global economy, introduce some creative and innovative measures/strategies required in CRS education for transforming the global economy and, finally, establish some obstacles to successful introduction of creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy in the 21st century and challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education.

Global economy is part of the phenomenon of globalization. Globalization involves 'cross-boundary transactions, global exchanges in the world of communications, industry, culture, travel, food, popular entertainment, even apparel'. This proves that globalization is deeply economical in nature. Global economy refers to "the process by which the experience of everyday life, marked by the consumption of commodities and ideas, is becoming standardized around the world, especially since the late 20th century" (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2005). Globalization or global integration, especially in terms of economy, has accelerated since the middle of the eighteenth century. More specifically, "since 1750, but more significantly, since the 1950s, global economic integration has accelerated" (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2014). Corroborating this, Palmer, Colton and Kramer, (2002) observe that from 1990s and beyond the 'new economy was an information economy characterized by the computer technology revolution, the internet'. They note that "the two most important developments in the computer revolution of the 1990 were the Internet and the World Wide Webs". Hence, globalization can be viewed from physical, social, economical and political perspectives. When viewed from economic perspective, it is called global economic integration.

The Christian religion in general and Christian Religious Studies(CRS)education in particular has strong link with global economy. First, discoveries and inventions during scientific and industrial revolutions has Christian root in that Christianity was the fertile ground in which they grew. Palmer (1991) in Oluwawunsi and Bongotons (2011) confirmed this thus: "under the aegis of the church, the science, law, philosophy and arts were able to grow". Corroborating this, the authors cited Brunner (1948) whosubmitted that human actions and achievements "are directly or indirectly products of Christian thinking, feeling and purposing". In line with this, they also cited Cox (1968) who posited that "it is doubtful whether technology in its modern form would ever have been possible without the biblical faith. The impact of the biblical faith culminating in the gospel of Jesus Christ constitutes an indispensable precondition without which contemporary scientific technology is unthinkable".Second, as canvassed by Max Weber in Oluwawunsi and Bongotons (2011), capitalism as global economic system is fostered and promoted by Christianity. Hence,

Christianity has produced and promoted global economic change. It is evident that what has been planted and watered by Christianity is now a great threat to it.

To further give direction to this study, this paper shall answer and test the following research questions and hypotheses respectively in order to suggest appropriate creative and innovative measures/strategies required in CRS education for transforming the global economy.

Research Questions

1. What creative and innovative measures are needed in CRS education for transforming the global economy?
2. What are the obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy?
3. What are the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education?

Null Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary school CRS teachers on creative and innovative measures needed in CRS education for transforming the global economy.
2. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary school CRS teachers on obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy.
3. There is no significant difference between public and private secondary school CRS teachers on the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education.

Methodology

The study used a survey research design. The study was carried out in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. The population for the study is all CRS teachers and students in secondary schools Ibadan land. Population of CRS teachers in public and private Secondary schools in Ibadan obtained from the State post primary schools Teaching Service Commission (TESCOM) planning research and statistics department is 440, consisting of 184 public and 256 private school CRS teachers. From this population, only 60 CRS teachers, consisting of 30 public and 30 private schools CRS teachers, were used as sample via stratified random sampling technique among 50 secondary schools (that is, 25 public and 25 private schools). A 12-item questionnaire vetted by experts in CRS education was used for data gathering. It is structured along Likert scale type with a four-point response options of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD) with corresponding values of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was pilot-tested among 20 CRS teachers (10 public and 10 private CRS teachers) in Ilorin metropolis. Through split-half method and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation coefficient, the reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.81. For the actual study, 65 copies of the questionnaire were administered to CRS teachers in Ibadan through Direct Delivery Technique (DDT) with the help of 7 research assistants. However, only 60 copies were retrieved, analyzed and used for this study. Other copies suffered mortality. Data collected were analyzed using mean ratings (with criterion mean of 2.50) and t-test (at 5% level of significance) for the research questions and hypotheses respectively. Mean rating less than 2.50 (that is, the criterion mean) indicate final decision of disagreement while mean rating above it indicate final decision of agreement on an item.

Results

Research Question 1: What creative and innovative measures are needed in CRS education for transforming the global economy?

Table 1: Mean Responses of public and private secondary school CRS teachers on creative and innovative measures that are needed in CRS education for transforming the global economy

N=60

s/no	Item Description	Mean Response	
		Public	private
Creative measure in CRS for transforming the global economy			
1.	Introduction of religious ethics into CRS course curriculum to boost moral development of students.	3.17	3.08
2.	Introduction of ethics of the teaching profession (or teacher code of conduct) into higher CRS course curriculum to boost ethical development of graduate CRS teachers.	3.26	3.02
3.	Introduction of ‘Spiritual Formation’ to boost spiritual development of students.	3.28	3.18
4.	Professionalization of CRS teaching profession to ensure that only professionally/academic qualified teachers teaches the subject.	3.16	3.02
Innovative measure in CRS for transforming the global economy			
5.	Recruiting more CRS teachers	3.27	3.15
6.	Retraining of Existing CRS Teachers	3.33	3.12
7.	Provision of Infrastructure and Technology (especially ICT)	3.28	3.01
8.	Efficient Monitoring and Evaluation	3.20	3.27
9.	Increased Enrolment Strategies for prospective students	3.14	3.45

Item by item analysis of table 1 reveals that no mean values falls below the criterion mean of 2.5, hence, respondents agreed that the above items are indeed creative and innovative measures required in CRS education for the transformation of the global economy.

Research Question 2: What are the possible obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy?

Table 2: Mean Responses of public and private secondary school CRS teachers on possible obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy

N=60

s/no	Item Description	Mean Response	
		Public	private
Obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education			
1.	Poor planning and funding for CRS education	3.17	2.85
2.	Poor implementation of 9-3-4 policy	3.26	3.02
3.	Poor Societal Regard for CRS education	3.38	3.17
4.	Moral corruption and bankruptcy among Christians.	3.42	3.16
5.	Non-ICT or internet compliant syndrome among CRS teachers and students.	3.12	2.89

Item by item analysis of table 2 reveals that no mean values falls below the criterion mean of 2.5, hence, respondents agreed that the above items are indeed obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education.

Research Question 3: What are the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education?

Table 3: Mean Responses of public and private secondary school CRS teachers on the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education

N=60

s/no	Item Description	Mean Response	
		Public	private
Challenges of transforming the global economy via CRS			
1.	Population explosion	3.57	3.15
2.	Economic growth/recession	3.26	3.02
3.	Science and technology revolution/change, especially computer revolution	3.38	3.22
4.	Socio- cultural and Political change	3.62	3.16
5.	Global religious differences and the attendant religious confusions	2.76	2.65

Item by item analysis of table 3 reveals that no mean values falls below the criterion mean of 2.5, hence, respondents agreed that the above items are indeed the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education.

Null Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Table 4: The t-test analysis of the significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private secondary school CRS teachers on creative and innovative strategies for transforming the global economy (H_{01}), obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy (H_{02}), and the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education (H_{03})

Null Hypotheses	N	Mean	S.D	D/F	T CAL	T CRIT	Decision
H_{01} Public	30	3.23	0.09	58	1.70	2.00	NS
Private	30	3.14	0.14				
H_{02} Public	30	3.27	0.12	58	3.87	2.00	S
Private	30	3.00	0.13				
H_{03} Public	30	3.23	0.33	58	0.93	2.00	NS
Private	30	3.04	0.21				

Key: N= Number of responses=51; D/F=Degree of freedom; TCAL= T calculated
T CRIT= T critical (Table t); NS=Not significant; N=Significant

Data in the above table show that the decisions for the three tested hypotheses H_{01} , H_{02} , and H_{03} are NS, S and NS respectively. Hence, there is no significance difference between the mean ratings of public and private school CRS teachers on creative and

innovative strategies for transforming the global economy (H_{01} is retained), but there is significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private school CRS teachers on obstacles to meaningful creativity and innovation in CRS education for transforming the global economy (H_{02} is rejected), and there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of public and private school CRS teachers on the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education (H_{03} is retained)

Summary of Major Findings

Creative and innovative measures that are needed in CRS education for transforming the global economy are introduction of courses like religious ethics, ethics of the teaching profession, spiritual formation, professionalization of CRS into CRS course curriculum; and recruiting more CRS teachers, retraining of existing CRS teachers, provision of infrastructure and technology, efficient monitoring and evaluation of CRS programme, and increased enrolment strategies for recruiting prospective students to embrace the course as their choice of career.

Possible obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education, according to the findings, are poor planning and funding for CRS education, poor implementation of 9-3-4 policy, poor societal regard for CRS education, moral corruption and bankruptcy among Christians, and non-ICT or internet compliant syndrome among CRS teachers and students.

Challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education are population explosion, economic growth/recession, science and technology revolution/change, especially computer revolution, and socio-cultural and political change.

Public and private school CRS teachers expressed same views on creative and innovative measure needed in CRS education as well as on the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education. But public school CRS teacher expressed stronger views than their private counterparts on the obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education.

Discussion of Findings

Qualitative analysis of the creative and innovative measures as stated above can be found in the work of Oluwawunsi, Bongotons and Titus (2014), and likewise the above possible obstacles. On creativity and innovation in CRS education, they contended that existing CRS teachers should be retrained in order to improve their spiritual, personal and professional/academic characteristics/skills. They further stated that sustainable creativity and innovations in CRS education can be achieved via effective monitoring and evaluation of CRS programme. They also asserted that application of ICT as computer based learning presentation and research in the field of CRS education is a welcome innovation in this era of technology. They added that ICT is a tool for repositioning CRS for access and quality in this globalised world. But basic requirements for computer-based or online learning, according to them, are access to computers in schools, communities, and households, as well as affordable internet service with constant electric power supply. Oluwawunsi, Bongotons and Titus (2014), submitted that technology, precisely ICT, can be used to address the problem of weak instructional methods and enhance good instructional delivery process of CRS programme. Corroborating this, Hadiza and Abdulrahman (2013) who investigated the role of ICT in the teaching and learning of social studies in school, submitted that ICT is an effective means of delivery of instruction in teaching and learning of social studies. They further asserted that ICT can facilitate instruction in the implementation of social studies curricular by concretizing learning,

motivating interest in learning and exposing wide range of content materials for the improvement of social studies instruction in secondary schools. These assertions are applicable to CRS education also. Oluwawunsi and Torpev (2013) investigated the strategies for arousing students' interest in CRS as a career choice and found that individualized and societal re-orientation strategies are efficacious approaches by which students can be encouraged to opt for career in CRS.

On possible obstacles to creativity and innovation in CRS education, the authors maintained that proper planning and funding are responsible for the success of every good educational policy or programme, CRS inclusive. They asserted that implementation has been a serious handicap to most genuine efforts aimed at developing the educational system in Nigeria; and that many religious/moral educators and students are morally corrupt or bankrupt.

In another contribution of Oluwawunsi and Bongotons (2011), the above challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education have been corroborated. Among other things, they asserted that population explosion, economic growth/recession, science and technology revolution/change, especially computer revolution, and socio-cultural and political change have both positive and negative implications for CRS education. Despite these global economic challenges, CRS education, according to them, holds bright prospects for transforming the global economy. The prospects of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education, according to them, include its efficacy to regulate individual's perception, judgment and actions in this age of global economic change; reshape and regulate world trade or global market through formulation of appropriate ethical principles; sanitize the socio-cultural life of mankind at the family, clan, tribes, communities and national levels; encourage right applications of scientific technology and discourage its wrong use, facilitate and enrich international cooperation, promote global diversity of traditions, cultures and religions; minimize negative effects of globalization such as poverty, environmental pollution and damage, ozone depletion, global warming, etc, on mankind; and encourage good governance and national development/ wellbeing.

Most importantly, Oluwawunsi and Bongotons (2011) affirmed that CRS/education has the possibilities and prospects transforming the global economy in that it can be used to raise standard of morality, prevent family disintegration and improve the spiritual quality of homes and families, promote female education and gender equality, promote economic and social justice as well as good governance in Nigeria; encourage Christian participation in politics, promote responsible, moral and compassionate citizenship, and curb the problem of juvenile delinquencies in Nigeria. They also affirmed that CRS education can foster a better understanding of the society and promote social cohesion and integration in Nigeria, promote inter-faith dialogue for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, curb false doctrines and introduce dynamic orthodoxy. Certainly, these possibilities and prospects can transform the global economy.

Conclusion

By way of introduction, this paper has explained the concepts of creativity and innovation together with the concepts of education in general and CRS education in particular within the framework of the new 9-3-4 educational policy. It has also discussed the concept of the global economy and established a connection between CRS education and global economy. Three research questions and their corresponding hypotheses have been answered

and tested respectively and the findings have been discussed. Moreover, the prospects of a re-invigorated CRS education as a key to 21st century transformation of the global economy have been emphasised.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are pertinent.

1. Stakeholders in CRS education should implement the creative and innovative measures needed in CRS for the 21st century transformation of the global economy.
2. Stakeholders in CRS education should ensure proper planning and funding for CRS education, efficient implementation of 9-3-4 policy, improve the image of CRS education in the society as well as moral development of CRS teachers and students, and trained them in the use of ICT and internet.
3. To curb the challenges of transforming the global economy via a re-invigorated CRS education, moral and spiritual development of CRS students should be emphasised over and above their academic development. Also, retraining for skill improvement in spiritual, personal and professional qualities of CRS teachers should be a priority.

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