

Promoting Open Educational Resources (OER) in Theological/Religious Education in Nigeria

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Abstract : One of the biggest challenges facing Theological/Religious Education in Nigeria is access to quality learning materials. For instance at the Trinity (Union) Theological College, Umuahia, it was difficult for lecturers to access suitable and qualitative materials for instruction especially the ones that would suit the African context and stimulate a deep rooted interest among the students. Some textbooks written by foreign authors were readily available in the School Library, but were lacking in the College bookshops for students to own copies. Even when the College was able to order some of the books from abroad, it did not usher in the needed enthusiasm expected from the students because they were either very expensive or very difficult to understand during private studies. So it became necessary to develop contextual materials which were affordable and understandable, though with little success. The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)'s innovation in the development and sharing of learning resources through its Open Course ware is a welcome development and of great assistance to students. Apart from NOUN students who could easily access the materials, many others from various theological/religious institutes across the nation have benefited immensely. So, the thesis of this paper is that the promotion of open educational resources in theological/religious education in Nigeria would facilitate a better informed/equipped religious leadership, which would in turn impact its adherents for a healthier society and national development. Adopting a narrative and historical approach within the context of Nigeria's educational system, the paper discusses: educational traditions in Nigeria; challenges facing theological/religious education in Nigeria; and benefits of open educational resources. The study goes further to making recommendations on how OER could positively influence theological/religious education in Nigeria. It is expected that theologians, religious educators, and ODL practitioners would find this work very useful.

Keywords : OER, theological education, religious education, Nigeria

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