

Impact of Internet Usage on Students' Academic Performance in Some Selected Senior Secondary Schools in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State

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Abstract

This Study looks into the usage of the internet and its impact on the academic performance of students in some selected Senior Secondary Schools in Epe Local government Area of Lagos State. A questionnaire was used to gather data from 105 SS I and SSII students through random sampling and was then analysed using descriptive statistics and an independent samples t-test. The result revealed that Internet outlets for SSS I & II students include school ICT labs, mobile phones, Internet facilities for families, and public cyber cafes. Also, internet access influences academic growth among students, as those with internet access have shown a higher improvement in academic performance than those without, while different internet use, on the other hand, has no impact on academic performance, as shown in the results. Similarly, the presence of several sources of internet connectivity does not guarantee immediate access to all of them. Therefore, it was recommended that all the Heads of schools, sessions, etc. should liaise with other stakeholders (i.e. Educational district, SUBEB, PFA, etc.) to provide internet facilities with management support. It was also recommended that to support student practical classes, the School ICT Laboratories should be well equipped with internet facilities and students should be taught how to use search engines to search online for academic materials.

This is vital because the provision of school internet facilities plays a very important role in enhancing academic performance.

Keywords: Internet usage, Students, Academic performances, Senior Secondary School

Introduction

The increasing availability and usage of the internet have revolutionized various aspects of our lives, including education. With the advent of the internet, students now have access to a vast amount of information and resources that can enhance their academic performance. There are concerns about the impact of internet usage on students' academic performance, particularly in senior secondary schools. This study aims to investigate the relationship between internet usage and students' academic performance in selected senior secondary schools in the Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria. The internet has become an integral part of the daily lives of students, offering them numerous opportunities to explore, learn, and interact with others (Wang & Xu, 2021).

However, excessive and problematic internet usage can have detrimental effects on students' academic performance (Fineberg et al., 2022). Problematic usage of the internet refers to excessive, compulsive, and uncontrolled internet use that interferes with daily activities and obligations (Fineberg et al., 2022). It is essential to understand the impact of internet usage on academic performance to develop strategies that maximize the benefits while minimizing the negative consequences. One of the concerns associated with internet usage is academic procrastination, which has become increasingly prevalent among students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic (Ulgener et al., 2020). Academic procrastination refers to the tendency to delay or postpone academic tasks, leading to poor time management and reduced academic performance (Ulgener et al., 2020).

The internet provides a multitude of distractions, such as social media platforms and online gaming, which can significantly contribute to academic procrastination and hinder students' ability to engage in effective studying. Moreover, internet usage can influence students' perceptions of social fairness, which can impact their motivation and engagement in academics (Zhu et al., 2020). Research has shown that individuals who perceive social fairness are more likely to exhibit higher levels of work motivation and engagement (Zhu et al., 2020). However, excessive internet usage can expose students to various forms of online content that may

influence their perceptions of social fairness negatively. It is important to examine how internet usage affects students' perceptions of social fairness and how these perceptions, in turn, influence their academic performance.

Furthermore, the effects of internet usage on students' academic performance can extend beyond their immediate academic environment. For instance, the internet has facilitated the emergence of electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which plays a crucial role in shaping consumers' opinions and decisions (Bilal et al., 2020). Understanding how internet usage behavior affects students' engagement with eWOM can provide insights into their information-seeking and decision-making processes. This knowledge can be valuable in developing strategies to enhance students' critical thinking and decision-making skills. In addition to the individual factors, the influence of internet usage on students' academic performance can also be understood within the broader context of societal development.

In the case of Africa, particularly the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), internet usage has been identified as a driver of innovation and human development (Ejemeyovwi et al., 2019). Access to the internet enables students to engage in online learning, access educational resources, and connect with global academic communities. Therefore, investigating the nexus between internet usage, innovation, and human development in the context of ECOWAS can provide insights into the potential benefits of internet usage on students' academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are to examine the impact of internet usage on students' academic performance in selected senior secondary schools in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Determine the extent of internet usage among students in selected senior secondary schools in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State.
2. Investigate the relationship between internet usage and academic performance of students in selected senior secondary schools.
3. Examine the moderating effects of age, income, and internet usage on students' academic performance.
4. Identify the benefits and drawbacks of internet usage on students' academic performance.
5. Explore the role of personality traits in internet usage among students.

Research Questions

1. What are the origins of students' utilization of the Internet in the selected senior secondary schools?
2. What is the frequency of internet use by students in the selected senior secondary school?
3. What is the side effect of internet usage on students' academic performance in the selected senior secondary school?

Hypotheses

1. Ho1: There will be no significant mean difference between the mean scores of students who have internet access and those who do not.
2. Ho2: There will be no significant mean difference between the mean scores of students who use internet services and those who do not use them.

Statement of the Problem

Though it is challenging for students to perform their academic duties in the 21st century without using the internet (Ameyaw & Asante, 2016; Shitta, 2002), Ghanaian scholars have scarcely discussed the importance and effect of internet use on student academic success in literature (Yebowaah, 2018). Though, Singh et al. (2013) noted that some learners use the Internet for non-academic activities like gaming and social networking routines, and, learners use the Internet for amusement rather than academic goals (Olatokun, 2008; Ngoumandjoka, 2012), which might cause school achievement to suffer, several researchers have indicated that learners at SSS use the internet for several activities, including mapping, downloading materials, viewing online lectures, playing online games and making purchases online for academic work (Akin- Adramola, 2014; Hako, Tobias, & Erastus, 2021; Narh-Kert, Osei & Oteng, 2022). According to recent studies, students' academic success is for educational purposes (e.g., Ameyaw & Asante, 2016; Mami & Hatami-Zad, 2014; Carter, 2016) and learners in senior secondary school who have complete control over their internet usage have generally mirrored this in their academic achievement (Yebowaah, 2018). However, research on internet usage among SSS students in the Epe local government area is lacking. Therefore, this study looks at internet usage and its influence on secondary school students in the Epe Local Government Area in Lagos.

Significance of the Study

Students and society at large would benefit from the skills associated with the use of the Internet. This is because, even after their course of research, the skills will be a part of them and help them cope with real-life issues and look for online tools. It also helps them plan after school for life. This Study would make way for more research in relevant fields to be undertaken, contributing to information, enhancing practice, informing policy, and helping teachers consider new ways of teaching and learning. In addition, the results would be relevant in many ways to different stakeholders. For example, the Study would help to uncover the value of internet usage and its effect on students' academic success is a good learning environment to help educators and learners develop the abilities to expand their thinking about the teaching and learning skills required to provide quality education.

Literature Review

The use of the internet draws users' eyes to the world's vastness around them. The internet gathers various types of data that college students and senior high school students use (Akin-Adaeamola, 2014; Yebowaah, 2018). Internet use will continue to grow if users are no longer denied accessibility (Olatokun, 2008). People's ability to access data sites such as social networking sites, online sports, and cybersex, according to recent data, is made possible by the internet (Yebowaah, 2018). Most students have internet access on their mobile phones because of internet accessibility, according to research conducted by Ellore et al. (2014) on the effect of internet use on academic success and face-to-face conversation. Students will expand their intellectual horizons due to this (Akin-Adaeamola, 2014; Yebowaah, 2018). Laptop use and online resource accessibility are crucial for learners (Akande & Bamise, 2017).

According to Yesilyurt et al. (2014), possessing a computer at home with internet connectivity is just as critical for learners' academic performance as having self-learning skills. Olatokun (2008) found that most learners felt the Internet was much better and more accessible than their school libraries, based on their accessibility and use of the Internet by senior high school students in Nigeria. According to the Study, learners see the internet as a source of general knowledge. It aids in developing their reading habits, which leads to their better academic performance. According to Akin-Adaeamola (2014) and Siraj et al. (2015), students regard the Internet as a supplementary information source, leading to higher academic performance. According to Ogedebe, most students (2012) get relevant information, such as educational materials, get relevant information from the Internet. This indicates that students are using the Internet to improve their academic performance. Sahin et al. (2010) used university students to

investigate internet outlets and argued that reliable internet resources are critical for academic Study, especially in higher-level guides that require a literature tutorial assessment.

Based on Ngoumandjoka (2012), it can be concluded that the Internet is generally utilized for leisure activities instead of for instructional ones. Singh et al. (2013) indicated that students are increasingly inclined to utilize the internet. Still, they spend most of their time using it for non-academic activities such as email, gaming, and social networking. As a result, this led to setbacks in their academic plans. This explains the contradictory research findings on the influence of internet use on student academic progress. Akin-Adaramola (2014) in a study found that students' top activities are chatting, followed by uploading and viewing multimedia videos, browsing the internet, using the internet to find knowledge for schoolwork, searching for various websites such as sports, online news, games, and shopping online.

The demographic variables of students are assumed to impact internet use and academic performance as a result. A demographic comparison found that adult males were more cooperative Assessment showed that male college students spent more time on the Internet (Ellore et al., 2014). The cell phone, recognized by Rabiou, Muhammed, Umaru, and Ahmed (2016) as one of the devices used to access the internet, appears to affect academic success. They found that smartphones significantly influence academic performance among senior school students, both male and female. Again, Kim (2011) investigated the impact of internet usage on intellectual satisfaction and behavioral improvement among South Korean teenage girls, finding that girls are more likely than boys to use the internet to watch online educational coaching and blogs. Kim found that boys typically use the internet to play sports.

Similarly, a study of the socio-economic context, internet access, and performance of students found no strong association between the socio-economic background of students and internet access (Adegoke, 2013). According to the reports, students from low-income families use their friends' phones to access the internet, their friends pay for them at cyber cafés, and in certain situations, and they can afford to pay for themselves at the cybercafé. However, according to some other studies, students would pay for internet access (Osunade, 2003). Adegokea (2013) discovered that socioeconomic records have a substantial impact on a student's satisfaction, while internet usage does not affect a student's academic achievement. Instead, the two combined socio-economic backgrounds and internet usage contributed significantly to educational outcomes.

Time Spent on the Internet

Studies now show that adolescents use the internet for different purposes stem from an adolescent interest in leisure activities (Bragdon & Dowler, 2016; Ogedebe, 2012; Singh et al., 2013). There is abundant evidence demonstrating that internet use has significant repercussions for everything from school grades to personal relationships (Rickert, 2001). The students who spend most of their time using technology for academic and work-related purposes are the upper class. The ones who spend slightly more time using cell phones, online chatting, and social networking are the lower class. Research conducted by Bragdon and Dowler (2016) showed that the use of technology and academic achievement varies according to class status. According to Olatokun (2008), about four-fifths of secondary school students in Nigeria have been regularly using the internet in their daily lives for the previous four to five years. Tertiary students in Nigeria (according to Ogedebe, 2012) check the internet after hours, preferring it to be done at night rather than during the day. It is a widely accepted fact that most students spend about 42.8 hours a week on their electronics (Bragdon & Dowler, 2016).

An analysis of Facebook and academic success was carried out by Krishne and Karpinski (2009). Facebook users, however, have reported lower GPAs and often spend fewer hours per week learning than non-users. According to Singh et al. (2013), students tend to waste time on the Internet due to a non-focused approach (mailing, gaming, and social networking). Despite significant problems with internet addiction, Siraj et al. concluded that high internet use has more significant academic consequences because senior high school students can enter the world of information.

Impact of the Internet

Ngoumandjoka (2012) divided internet users into heavy and moderate users. Academic work, he believes, is the primary reason students use the internet on campus. The more scholarly work is shared online, the more it will positively affect academic grades. People who engage in safe social activities with friends and teachers or use internet tools for route work tend to achieve more excellent academic performance (Torres-Diaz et al., 2016). Aitokhuehi et al. (2014) discovered that internet-savvy students perform better than those who do not. Samuel (2010) found similar results when studying the influence of internet use among Nigerian secondary students.

In comparison to their counterparts in other parts world, his research discovered that internet use among public colleges in Lagos is low. The Internet has now become a familiar object in most people's lives. However, because of its addictiveness, someone who uses it frequently is at risk of negative repercussions. The main risk of utilizing the Internet for social networking and emailing, according to Singh et al. (2013), is psychological difficulties.

Türel and Muhammet Toraman (2015) reported that as students' academic performance improves, their internet addiction decreases. This suggests that students' use of the internet has an impact on their academic success. Austin and Totaro (2011) grouped internet users into light, common, and extreme categories. They discovered that university students who use the internet at school and home (moderate use) earn higher grades than those who do not (Aitokhuehi et al., 2014; Kakkar, 2015). Despite the many issues surrounding extreme internet usage, Siraj et al. (2015) concluded that internet use leads to increased academic performance because students can enter the world of information to boost their knowledge. Student's social skills and academic success are protected by their use of the Internet (Mami and Hatami-Zad, 2014). The general internet dependency degree of male, vocational school, and verbal discipline college students was more significant than more academically clever students. This lends credence to the notion that how students use the internet might substantially impact their academic achievement (Aitokhuehi et al., 2014; Türel& Muhammet Toraman, 2015). Thus, students should be taught how to use computer tools to double-check their understanding of their academic work.

Challenges in Accessing the Internet

Inadequate, accessibility potential threats, and issues such as pornography, fraud, and other issues, according to Olatokun (2008), are the most significant barriers to total internet usage. Although research has shown that students prefer Internet services over other forms of media, they have been challenged (Siraj et al., 2015). Teachers or lecturers may refer students to internet sites for more specific information if they always have access to the internet (Osunnade, 2003). Students at SHS have been found to have insufficient access to the internet. Aside from entry, it's disappointing to see that some students can't even use a computer no matter how many years they've spent in school (Samual, 2010). In the interim, outdated books can be replaced with the Internet as a source of information (Osunade, 2003). Accordingly, Yesilyurt et al. (2014) opined that students' academic achievement, on the other hand, is linked to their ability to use computers and connect to the Internet. As there is a significant gap

between students who have access to the Internet and those who do not, senior high school students should be allowed to explore the Internet for information to become digitally literate since the positive outcomes outweigh the negative ones.

Methodology

Research Design

To achieve the study goal and precise goals, a descriptive survey research design was used to assess students' internet use and academic performance in Senior Secondary Schools. Students class scores on three subject (Maths, English and Biology, been general subjects) areas were collected to determine their performance in the subjects. Therefore, the purpose of the survey was to investigate access to the internet and how the use of the Internet affects students' academic performance.

Population of the Study

The target population for this research consists of schools in Epe Local Government Area in Lagos State. The population of the study was 1,300 students which were selected from SSI and SSII class in the 2021/2022 academic year.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The sample consisted of students from SSI and SSII because they have been in the class (Senior Secondary School) for two academic years with robust experience than the students in junior school. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the students who participated in the research. In all, 150 students responded to the questionnaire.

Instruments

Questionnaire as an instrument was designed and administered to the students to assess them on the usage of the internet and its effect on academic performance. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section was on students' background information, gender, age, course of study, class, residential status, sex-based type of school, and the current average score for demographic details, as indicated in section A. Section B consisted of 9 statements about access to the internet by students. A dichotomy question, Yes or No, closed, and open-ended questions were given to students. Section C, given a 4 scale of daily, weekly, monthly, and not at all to choose, consisted of 13 statements on the frequency of internet usage and academic performance.

Data Collection Procedure

Data (scores from the three subjects) were obtained from the teachers in different classes as well as the responses from their senior secondary school students in July 2023 using questionnaires. Respondents were identified through their various teachers, and copies of the questionnaires were distributed to them.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviation. The means contributed to the analyses of the t-test to show differences.

Results and Discussion

The research shows the context of the respondents' significant attributes. The critical variables under consideration include gender and course of study.

Table I: Demographic Information for Students

Variable	N	F	Percentage
Gender	Male	90	60.0
	Female	60	40.0
Course of Study	Science	37	24.7
	Arts	61	40.7
	Commercial	5	3.3
	Civic Education	20	13.3
	Home Economics	19	12.7
	Governments	4	2.7
	Word processing	4	2.7
Class	SSI	70	46.7
	SS II	80	53.3
Population of students	School One	350	27.0
	School Two	500	38.0
	School Three	450	35.0

From Table 1, out of 150 respondents investigated, 60.0% were male, and 40.0% were female. This shows that male tends to use the internet more than female. The students studied various courses, including Science, Arts, Commercial, Civic Education, Home Economics Government, and Word processing.” The majority of students (40.7%) study Arts, whereas the least, 2.7% Study Government and Word processing. It was also observed that SS 1 students were 70, which represents 46.7.% and SS II students were 80, representing (53.3%). The total

number of students in each of the three schools, A, B, and C, were 350 (27.8%), 500 (38.0%), and 450 (35.0%).

Research Question 1: What are the origins of students' access to the Internet in the selected senior secondary schools?

The data were presented in percentages to aid in answering this research question. The results are shown in Table 2, which lists the most relevant internet sources that respondents can access.

Table 2: Students' Access and Frequency Usage of the Internet

Variable	F	Percentage
Availability of ICT laboratory in the school	142	94.7
Availability of Internet facility in the school	103	68.7
Adequate facilities to access the internet	80	53.3
Access to the public cyber cafe internet	55	36.7
Availability of a mobile phone by the students	139	92.7
Mobile phone access to the Internet	137	91.3

The findings in Table 2 above suggest that many schools have ICT Laboratories in their schools. This is true since many of the schools listed have ICT Laboratories on which students can rely. However, the fact that 68.7 % of them indicated that internet facilities are available in school, and some laboratories are not operational. Furthermore, many students do not have access to the Internet, which means they would be unable to use it efficiently for their academic work. This supports Olatokum's (2008) findings, which found that inadequate internet connectivity is a problem among students in Nigeria. Personal mobile phones and public cyber cafe internet are the most common ways to access the internet, which are 92.7% and 36.7% of all users, respectively. The findings indicated that students with cell phones have internet networks installed, allowing them to access the internet. This supports Ellore et al. (2004)'s claim that cell phones have expanded students' internet access. The desire to use cell phones to access the internet is global. The respondents were asked to describe their regular use of the internet from a variety of sources.

Research Question 2: What is the frequency of internet use by students in the selected senior secondary schools?

The results of research question 2 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Frequency of Internet Usage

Sources of Internet	Daily (%)	Weekly (%)	Monthly (%)	Not at All (%)	Total
School ICT Laboratory	60(40.0%)	34(22.7%)	13(8.6%)	43(28.7%)	150
Mobile phone	120(80.0%)	22(14.7%)	5(3.33%)	3(2.0%)	150
Household Internet facility	42(28.0%)	18(12.0%)	6(4.0%)	84(56.0%)	150
Public Internet cafe	10(6.67%)	16(10.67%)	24(16.0%)	100(66.7%)	150

Table 3 above shows how the internet available to them was used. 40.0% use their ICT Laboratories internet in school daily, 22.7% use it weekly, 8.6% use it monthly, and 28.7% not at all. Using mobile phones for the internet, 80.0% indicated they use it daily, 14.7% use it weekly, 3.33% use it monthly, and 2.0% not at all. For access to household internet facilities, 28.0% use it daily, 12.0% use it weekly, 4.0% use it monthly, and 56.0% not all. In public internet cafés, 6.67% use it daily, 10.67% use it weekly, 16.0% use it monthly, and 566.7 do not at all. According to the results, regular internet use is higher with mobile phones and those who use the internet weekly use their school ICT laboratories. These results support Bragdon and Dowler's (2016) evidence that students with smartphones spend more time on the internet.

Internet Use and Academic Performance

Research Question 3: What is the consequence of internet usage on student's academic success in the selected senior high school?

The findings are presented in Tables 4 and 5. The Study's results provide the impact of internet access on academic performance among students. Percentages, means, standard deviation, and independent samples t-tests were used in the analysis. From Table 4, 95.3% and 91.3 % of the respondents indicated that they have internet access in their school labs and mobile phones. For household internet and public internet accessibility, 62% indicated that they had no internet access in each case.

Table 4: Internet Access and Academic Performance

Sources of Internet	N	%	Mean	SD	T	Sig. Level
School ICT Laboratory						
Yes	143	95.3	1.042	.201	1.226	.027
No	7	4.67	1.142	.377		
Internet on Mobile Phone						
Yes	137	91.3	1.064	.246	2.194	.001
No	13	8.7	1.085	.487		
Household Internet						
Yes	57	38.0	1.612	.488	0.538	.141
No	93	62.0	1.714	.487		
Access to the public Internet						
Yes	57	38.0	1.612	.488	0.538	.592
No	93	52.0	1.714	.487		

H₀₁: There will be no significant mean difference between the mean scores of students who have internet access and those who do not. Also, the analysis in Table 4 stated that there is a difference between internet use and academic performance. Given the two-tailed t-test, the P values for the following internet access include; P = 0.027 with ICT laboratories in school, (t (150) = 1.22, M=1.042, SD= 0.201), compared to those without ICT laboratories in school has M = 1.142, SD = 0.377), mobile phone access to internet (t (150) = 2.194, P = 0.001, M = 1.064, SD = 0.246), compared to those without access (M = 1.285, SD = 0.487), household internet facility, P = 0.141, (t (150) = 0.538, (M = 1.612, SD = 0.488) and those without access (M = 1.714, SD = 0.487) on household internet facility. Access to public internet café at home, P = 0.592, (t (150) = 0.538, (M = 1.612, SD = 0.488), compared to those without access (M = 1.714, SD = 0.487). From the analysis, it is observed that there are differences in the academic performance of students with access to the Internet in their school labs or on their mobile phones. However, for those students with access to household internet and public places, and those without, there are no differences in their academic performance.

Table 5 also shows the outcome of internet use on the academic performance of senior secondary school students. Regarding the search for library resources, 66.6% indicated that they used the internet to search for library resources, whereas only 36% confirmed using social media to search for resources.

Table 5: Internet Usage and Academic Performance

Sources of Internet	N	%	Mean	SD	T	Sig. Level
Search for library resources						
Yes	100	66.6	1.333	.472	3.696	0.08
No	50	33.3	1.857	.377		
Social media						
Yes	51	36.0	1.037	.190	0.748	.139
No	94	60.6	1.065	.249		

Ho2: There will be no significant mean difference between the mean scores of students who use internet services and those who do not use them.

About internet use and academic performance, it is reported as ($t(150) = 3.696, P = 0.08$) on access to library resources, ($M = 1.33, SD = 0.472$) compared with those without ($M = 1.86, SD = 0.377$). For social media, ($t(145) = .784, P = 0.139$), mean of ($M = 1.037, SD = 0.190$) compared with those without ($M = 1.065, SD = 0.249$). This shows that internet use to search library resources and social media does not necessarily influence academic performance.

Table 5 depicts students' internet usage and academic performance. First and foremost, many schools have ICT laboratories that are not in use (Table 4). In the survey, 95.3 percent of students reported the availability of ICT labs, although only 68 percent suggested that their school has internet access. This demonstrates that most schools have ICT labs but no internet access. Table 3 shows that having access to the Internet improves senior secondary school students' academic performance instead of those who do not have access to the Internet. Students who have access to the internet may perform better because they have access to a wider range of information. The results back the findings of several longitudinal research on the positive effect of the Internet on academic performance (Aitokhuehi et al. 2014; Kakkar, 2015; Ngoumandjoka, 2012; Torres – Diaz et al., 2016). The study's findings examined how various internet uses influence students' performance. The internet is used for a variety of purposes, including social media and searching for library services. The assessment was carried out with descriptive statistics, and the analyses of the independent samples were carried out with T-tests as shown in the table above. According to the table, students who use the internet for social media have a mean score of 1.03 and a standard deviation of 0.19.

In contrast, students who do not use the internet for social media have a mean score of 1.06 and a standard deviation of 0.24. Even at 10%, the test value of 0.748 is not essential. This means that the sample mean is less than the hypothesized mean, indicating that the null hypothesis is false. The mean and standard deviation for access to library services is 1.33 and 0.472, respectively. The test value of 3.69 indicates that various internet uses have no major impact on students' academic success. This implies that whether a student uses the internet for social media or to search for library content does not necessarily affect their academic results. According to Olatokun (2008), various internet uses provide daily grasp and, as a result, enhance reading skills; however, Siraj et al. (2015) argue that internet sources are a supplementary learning supply from unique sources that lead to students' academic success. This justification may explain why different internet uses do not affect a general daily norm of student academic performance.

Conclusion

Access to the internet improves academic standards among students, as those with internet access showed more significant progress in their academic performance than those who did not, though the presence of numerous connections to 'internet portals' does not imply immediate access to all of them. Students in some Senior Secondary Schools are unable to access the internet due to a lack of resources. Furthermore, due to school preferences, especially those focused on the internet, proper internet access is restricted among some senior high school students. On the other hand, students who are focused on the internet engage in home and public internet, which have little bearing on academic performance. From the foregoing, it is clear that students who have access to the internet have used it in various ways but most especially use it to facilitate and support their academic achievement.

Recommendations

The following recommendations based on this study's was highlighted below:

- 1) It is recommended that Heads of Schools/management should liaise with other stakeholders and support management to provide internet facilities. This is significant because internet facilities in schools are crucial in supporting academic performance.
- 2) The School ICT Laboratories should be well equipped with internet facilities to assist student's academic excellence.
- 3) Students should be taught how to search for academic information or materials online.

- 4) There should be effective supervision of students on internet use by teachers and parents so that students do not solely concentrate on social media.

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Religious Education and Challenges of Nation Building in Nigeria

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1. Introduction

Religious education has evolved over time, adapting to the changing needs and contexts of different societies. In ancient civilizations, religious education primarily focused on transmitting religious rituals, myths, and traditions from one generation to another. With the rise of organized religions, religious education became more structured, often taking place within religious institutions such as temples, churches, and mosques. In modern times, religious education has expanded to include both formal and informal settings, such as schools, universities, and community organizations.

Religious education plays a significant role in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and behaviours in Nigeria. It has been argued that religious education can contribute to national development by fostering moral values, promoting social cohesion, and contributing to economic growth. However, the impact of religious education on national development in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted issue. Religious education in Nigeria has long been recognized as a means to instill moral values in individuals. Religious teachings often emphasize principles such as compassion, honesty, and respect for others. These values are crucial for the development of ethical citizens who can contribute positively to Nigerian society. Studies have shown that individuals who receive religious education in Nigeria are more likely to exhibit prosocial behaviours, engage in charitable activities, and adhere to ethical standards.

Religious education can also play a vital role in promoting social cohesion within the diverse Nigerian society. By providing individuals with an understanding of different religious traditions and fostering interfaith dialogue, religious education in Nigeria can help bridge cultural and religious divides. It encourages mutual respect, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity, thereby fostering social harmony and reducing conflicts based on religious differences. Religious education in Nigeria can indirectly contribute to economic growth by nurturing individuals with a strong work ethic, discipline, and a sense of responsibility. These qualities are often emphasized in religious teachings and can positively impact individuals'

attitudes towards work, entrepreneurship, and economic development. Furthermore, religious institutions in Nigeria often engage in charitable activities, providing social services and contributing to poverty alleviation, which can indirectly stimulate economic growth.

While religious education in Nigeria has the potential to positively impact national development, it is not without challenges and controversies. One major concern is the potential for religious education to promote exclusivity and intolerance. If religious education in Nigeria is not implemented inclusively and fails to promote respect for other faiths, it can reinforce divisions and hinder social cohesion. Additionally, the content and curriculum of religious education in Nigeria must be carefully designed to ensure it aligns with national educational goals and does not undermine scientific knowledge or critical thinking.

The objectives of religious education vary across different contexts and religious traditions. However, common goals include fostering religious literacy, promoting spiritual development, and nurturing moral and ethical values. Religious education seeks to provide individuals with a comprehensive understanding of their own religious tradition, as well as an appreciation for the diversity of religious beliefs and practices worldwide. Religious education has a rich historical background and continues to be of significant importance in contemporary society. By fostering religious literacy, promoting interfaith dialogue, and nurturing moral and ethical values, religious education contributes to the development of individuals who are knowledgeable, respectful, and engaged members of their communities. As societies become increasingly diverse and interconnected, the significance of religious education in promoting understanding and harmony cannot be overstated.

2. Methodology

This paper adopts a qualitative research approach, drawing on existing literature and scholarly articles to explore the roles of religious education in promoting moral values, teaching ethical principles and virtues, fostering empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, as well as creating a sense of community, social cohesion, and national development. The research includes a comprehensive review of relevant studies, theoretical frameworks, and empirical evidence. The subthemes are numbered and discussed in each division.

3. Methods and Significance of Religious Education

Religious education employs various methods to achieve its objectives. These methods may include scripture study, theological reflection, experiential learning, and dialogue-based approaches. Scripture study involves the examination of sacred texts to deepen understanding and interpretation. Theological reflection encourages critical thinking and the exploration of religious concepts and doctrines. Experiential learning incorporates rituals, ceremonies, and religious practices to enhance spiritual growth. Dialogue-based approaches promote interfaith understanding and cooperation by encouraging respectful conversations and interactions among individuals from different religious backgrounds.

Religious education plays a crucial role in promoting religious literacy, enabling individuals to understand and appreciate the beliefs, practices, and values of different religious traditions. This knowledge fosters tolerance, respect, and empathy, contributing to a more inclusive and harmonious society. Secondly, religious education facilitates interfaith dialogue by providing individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to engage in meaningful conversations with people from diverse religious backgrounds. Such dialogue promotes mutual understanding, cooperation, and the building of bridges between different faith communities. Thirdly, religious education often emphasizes the development of moral and ethical values, encouraging individuals to reflect upon their actions and make ethical choices. By exploring religious teachings on compassion, justice, and integrity, religious education helps shape individuals' moral compass and guides their behaviour towards the common good.

4. Concept of National Development

National development is a multifaceted concept that encompasses various dimensions, including economic, social, political, and environmental aspects. This session aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the importance of national development and its multidimensional nature. It explores the interdependence of these dimensions and their collective impact on a nation's progress. The economic dimension of national development focuses on achieving sustained economic growth, reducing poverty, and improving living standards. It involves promoting entrepreneurship, attracting investments, developing infrastructure, and fostering innovation. Economic development is crucial for creating employment opportunities, generating revenue, and enhancing a nation's competitiveness in the global market. The social dimension of national development emphasizes the well-being and quality of life of a nation's citizens. It includes access to education, healthcare, housing, and social services. Social

development aims to reduce inequality, promote social cohesion, and ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, regardless of their background or circumstances.

The political dimension of national development focuses on establishing democratic governance, upholding the rule of law, and protecting human rights. It involves promoting political stability, ensuring transparent and accountable institutions, and fostering citizen participation. Political development is essential for creating an enabling environment for economic and social progress. The environmental dimension of national development recognizes the importance of sustainable practices and the preservation of natural resources. It involves promoting environmental conservation, mitigating climate change, and adopting green technologies. Environmental development is crucial for ensuring the long-term viability and resilience of a nation's ecosystems and addressing global environmental challenges. The dimensions of national development are interconnected and mutually reinforcing. Economic development can contribute to social progress by creating employment opportunities and reducing poverty. Social development, in turn, can enhance human capital and productivity, leading to economic growth. Political stability and good governance are essential for attracting investments and fostering social cohesion. Environmental sustainability is crucial for ensuring the long-term viability of economic and social development.

National development is vital for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth. It enables countries to address poverty, inequality, and social exclusion, while also ensuring the responsible use of natural resources and protecting the environment for future generations. National development plays a crucial role in reducing poverty and improving human development indicators, such as education, healthcare, and life expectancy. It provides opportunities for individuals to fulfill their potential and lead dignified lives. National development enhances a country's global competitiveness by fostering innovation, improving infrastructure, and attracting investments. It also strengthens a nation's resilience to external shocks and challenges, such as economic crises or natural disasters.

National development is a multidimensional concept that encompasses economic, social, political, and environmental aspects. The interdependence of these dimensions highlights the need for a holistic approach to development. By promoting sustainable and inclusive growth, reducing poverty, and enhancing human development, national development contributes to the well-being and progress of a nation. It is essential for policymakers to recognize the

multidimensional nature of national development and adopt strategies that address the diverse needs and aspirations of their citizens.

5. Religious Education and Economic Development

Religious education can have both positive and negative implications for economic development. On one hand, it can promote values such as honesty, integrity, and a strong work ethic, which are essential for economic growth. On the other hand, religious teachings may discourage certain economic activities or hinder the adoption of modern business practices. This section examines the relationship between religious education and economic development, considering both the potential benefits and challenges. Religious education often plays a crucial role in shaping social norms, values, and behaviors within a society. It can contribute to social cohesion, promote ethical behaviour, and foster a sense of community. However, religious education can also reinforce social divisions, intolerance, and discrimination. This section explores the influence of religious education on social development, considering its impact on social cohesion, inclusivity, and social justice.

Religious education can have significant implications for political development. It can shape individuals' political beliefs, attitudes, and participation. Religious teachings may influence political ideologies, governance structures, and policies. There is a significant relationship between religious education and political development, considering the potential impact on democratic values, political stability, and citizen engagement. Religious education is closely intertwined with cultural development. It shapes cultural values, traditions, and practices within a society. Religious teachings often influence art, literature, music, and other cultural expressions. Furthermore there is significant influence of religious education on cultural development, considering its impact on cultural diversity, heritage preservation, and intercultural dialogue. The influence of religious education on national development is complex and multifaceted. It can contribute to positive outcomes such as moral development, social cohesion, and cultural preservation. However, it can also pose challenges such as religious intolerance, social divisions, and cultural conflicts. This section discusses the implications of religious education for national development, highlighting the need for a balanced approach that respects religious freedom while promoting inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

Religious education has a significant influence on national development, impacting various dimensions of economic, social, political, and cultural progress. While it can contribute to

positive outcomes, it also poses challenges that need to be addressed. Policymakers and educators should recognize the importance of religious education in shaping societies and adopt strategies that promote inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for diversity. By harnessing the potential of religious education while mitigating its negative implications, nations can foster sustainable and inclusive development.

6. Religious Education's Role in Shaping National Identity

Religious education has been found to contribute significantly to the formation of national identity. Studies have shown that religious education can instill a sense of patriotism, cultural pride, and national unity among individuals (Jackson, 2015). It provides a framework for understanding and appreciating the cultural and historical roots of a nation (Baker, 2018). Religious education also promotes a sense of moral responsibility and ethical values that are often closely tied to a nation's identity (Smith, 2010). However, the role of religious education in shaping national identity is not without challenges. Critics argue that it can lead to the exclusion of minority religious groups and reinforce religious discrimination (Hart, 2012). Moreover, religious education may limit critical thinking and hinder the development of a pluralistic society (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting national identity and respecting diversity. Religious education has been recognized as a powerful tool for shaping national identity. It plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of belonging, promoting shared values, and reinforcing cultural heritage.

The findings from existing literature suggest that religious education has played a significant role in shaping national identity in various countries. Examples include:

- i. Israel: Religious education in Israel, particularly through the study of Jewish history and traditions, has been instrumental in fostering a strong sense of Jewish national identity. It has helped preserve Jewish cultural heritage and promote a shared understanding of the nation's history and values (Baker, 2018).
- ii. India: Religious education in India, with a focus on Hinduism, has played a crucial role in shaping the country's national identity. It has contributed to the preservation of Hindu cultural traditions, values, and rituals, which are deeply intertwined with the Indian identity (Smith, 2010).

- iii. Saudi Arabia: Islamic religious education in Saudi Arabia has been central to the formation of the country's national identity. It has helped establish a strong sense of Islamic identity and fostered a shared understanding of Islamic values and principles (Jackson, 2015).

While religious education has been influential in shaping national identity, it is essential to address the challenges associated with its role. It is crucial to ensure that religious education respects diversity and promotes inclusivity. This can be achieved by incorporating teachings from multiple religious traditions, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering dialogue among different religious groups.

7. Religious Education and Moral Values

Religious education plays a crucial role in promoting moral values, teaching ethical principles and virtues, fostering empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, as well as creating a sense of community and social cohesion. This section aims to explore the various roles of religious education in shaping individuals' character and behaviour, and its impact on society as a whole. Religious education has been found to be an effective means of promoting moral values and teaching ethical principles. It provides individuals with a moral framework that guides their decision-making and behavior (Eisenberg, 2017). Religious teachings often emphasize virtues such as honesty, kindness, justice, and forgiveness, which are essential for the development of a strong moral character (Nucci, 2014). Furthermore, religious education fosters empathy and compassion by teaching individuals to care for others and to treat them with kindness and respect (Eisenberg, 2017). It encourages individuals to develop a sense of social responsibility and to actively contribute to the well-being of their communities (Nucci, 2014). Religious education also creates a sense of community and social cohesion by bringing people together around shared beliefs, values, and rituals (Putnam, 2000).

However, the role of religious education in promoting these values is not without challenges. Critics argue that it can lead to the exclusion of individuals who do not adhere to the dominant religious tradition and can reinforce religious discrimination (Hart, 2012). Moreover, religious education may limit critical thinking and hinder the development of a pluralistic society (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting moral values and respecting diversity. Existing literatures suggest that religious education plays a significant role in promoting moral values, teaching ethical principles and virtues, fostering empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, as well as creating a sense of community and social cohesion. Examples include:

i. Christian Education: Christian religious education emphasizes moral values such as love, forgiveness, and compassion. It teaches ethical principles based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, such as the Golden Rule (Do unto others as you would have them do unto you). Christian education also fosters a sense of community through regular worship, fellowship, and service activities (Eisenberg, 2017).

ii. Islamic Education: Islamic religious education promotes moral values such as honesty, justice, and generosity. It teaches ethical principles based on the teachings of the Quran and the Hadith, such as the importance of honesty in business transactions and the obligation to help those in need. Islamic education also fosters a sense of community through regular prayers, communal gatherings, and acts of charity (Nucci, 2014).

iii. Buddhist Education: Buddhist religious education emphasizes moral values such as compassion, mindfulness, and non-violence. It teaches ethical principles based on the teachings of the Buddha, such as the importance of treating all living beings with kindness and respect. Buddhist education also fosters a sense of community through meditation practices, communal rituals, and acts of service (Putnam, 2000).

While religious education has been influential in promoting these values, it is essential to address the challenges associated with its role. It is crucial to ensure that religious education respects diversity and promotes inclusivity. This can be achieved by incorporating teachings from multiple religious traditions, encouraging critical thinking, and fostering dialogue among different religious groups. Religious education plays a vital role in promoting moral values, teaching ethical principles and virtues, fostering empathy, compassion, and social responsibility, as well as creating a sense of community and social cohesion. It provides individuals with a moral framework, guides their behavior, and contributes to the well-being of society as a whole. However, it is crucial to address the challenges associated with its role, such as exclusion and limited critical thinking. A balanced approach to religious education that respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking is essential for promoting these values in a positive and inclusive manner.

8. Impact of Religious Education on the Education System

Religious education has a significant impact on the education system, as it plays a crucial role in integrating religious values into the curriculum, promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning, and enhancing students' understanding of cultural diversity and tolerance. This paper aims to explore the potential benefits and challenges associated with incorporating

religious education into the education system. Religious education has been found to have a positive impact on the education system by integrating religious values into the curriculum. It provides students with a moral framework that guides their decision-making and behavior (Eisenberg, 2017). Religious teachings often emphasize virtues such as honesty, kindness, justice, and compassion, which are essential for the development of a strong moral character (Nucci, 2014).

Furthermore, religious education promotes critical thinking and moral reasoning by encouraging students to engage in thoughtful reflection and analysis of religious texts and teachings (Jackson, 2015). It challenges students to question and evaluate their own beliefs and values, as well as those of others, fostering a deeper understanding of different perspectives and promoting intellectual growth (Hart, 2012). Moreover, religious education enhances students' understanding of cultural diversity and tolerance by exposing them to different religious traditions and beliefs. It encourages students to appreciate and respect the cultural and religious diversity within their communities and the wider world (Putnam, 2000). By promoting interfaith dialogue and understanding, religious education contributes to the development of a more inclusive and tolerant society.

However, the integration of religious education into the education system is not without challenges. Critics argue that it can lead to the exclusion of individuals who do not adhere to the dominant religious tradition and can reinforce religious discrimination (Hart, 2012). Moreover, religious education may limit critical thinking and hinder the development of a pluralistic society (Jackson, 2015). Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting religious values and respecting diversity. The findings from existing literature suggest that religious education has a significant impact on the education system by integrating religious values into the curriculum, promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning, and enhancing students' understanding of cultural diversity and tolerance. Examples include:

i. Integration of Religious Values: Religious education provides an opportunity to integrate religious values into the curriculum, promoting moral development and character education. By incorporating religious teachings into various subjects, such as literature, history, and social studies, students gain a deeper understanding of the ethical dimensions of different topics (Eisenberg, 2017).

ii. Promotion of Critical Thinking and Moral Reasoning: Religious education encourages students to engage in critical thinking and moral reasoning by analyzing religious texts,

exploring ethical dilemmas, and evaluating different perspectives. It challenges students to question their own beliefs and values, fostering intellectual growth and the development of a well-rounded worldview (Jackson, 2015).

iii. Enhancing Understanding of Cultural Diversity and Tolerance: Religious education exposes students to different religious traditions and beliefs, promoting an understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. It encourages students to respect and value the beliefs and practices of others, fostering tolerance and interfaith dialogue (Putnam, 2000).

While religious education has been influential in promoting these values, it is essential to address the challenges associated with its integration into the education system. It is crucial to ensure that religious education respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking. This can be achieved by incorporating teachings from multiple religious traditions, providing opportunities for dialogue and reflection, and fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Religious education has a significant impact on the education system by integrating religious values into the curriculum, promoting critical thinking and moral reasoning, and enhancing students' understanding of cultural diversity and tolerance. It provides students with a moral framework, guides their behavior, and contributes to the development of a more inclusive and tolerant society. However, it is crucial to address the challenges associated with its integration, such as exclusion and limited critical thinking. A balanced approach to religious education that respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking is essential for maximizing its potential benefits in the education system.

9. Religious Education Has a Significant Impact on Socioeconomic and Political Development

Religious education has been found to have a significant impact on socioeconomic and political development. It plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' values, beliefs, and behaviors, which in turn influence their contributions to society (Grimmitt, 2000). Religious teachings often emphasize virtues such as compassion, justice, and equality, which are essential for fostering a sense of social responsibility and promoting economic and social development (Grimmitt, 2000).

Furthermore, religious education can contribute to social cohesion by promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity. It provides individuals with the knowledge

and skills to engage in interfaith dialogue, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation among different religious communities (Grimmitt, 2000). This, in turn, can lead to greater social harmony and stability.

Moreover, religious education can play a role in political development by promoting civic engagement, ethical leadership, and respect for human rights. It provides individuals with a moral framework that guides their political participation and decision-making (Grimmitt, 2000). By instilling values such as justice, equality, and human dignity, religious education can contribute to the establishment of democratic institutions and the protection of human rights.

However, the integration of religious education into the development agenda is not without challenges. Critics argue that it can lead to the exclusion of individuals who do not adhere to the dominant religious tradition and can reinforce religious discrimination (Grimmitt, 2000). Moreover, religious education may limit critical thinking and hinder the development of a pluralistic society. Therefore, it is crucial to strike a balance between promoting religious values and respecting diversity.

The findings from existing literature suggest that religious education has a significant impact on socioeconomic and political development. Examples include:

i. Economic Growth: Religious education can contribute to economic growth by promoting values such as honesty, integrity, and hard work. These values can foster a strong work ethic, entrepreneurship, and innovation, which are essential for economic development (Grimmitt, 2000).

ii. Social Cohesion: Religious education plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion by fostering understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity. It provides individuals with the knowledge and skills to engage in interfaith dialogue, leading to greater social harmony and cooperation (Grimmitt, 2000).

iii. Political Stability: Religious education can contribute to political stability by promoting civic engagement, ethical leadership, and respect for human rights. It provides individuals with a moral framework that guides their political participation and decision-making, leading to the establishment of democratic institutions and the protection of human rights (Grimmitt, 2000).

While religious education has been influential in promoting these aspects of development, it is essential to address the challenges associated with its integration. It is crucial to ensure that religious education respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking.

This can be achieved by incorporating teachings from multiple religious traditions, providing opportunities for dialogue and reflection, and fostering a safe and inclusive learning environment.

Socioeconomic and political developments are closely intertwined with the role of religious education. Religious education has a significant impact on various aspects of development, including economic growth, social cohesion, political stability, and human rights. It promotes values and virtues that are essential for fostering a sense of social responsibility, unity, and cooperation. However, it is crucial to address the challenges associated with its integration, such as exclusion and limited critical thinking. A balanced approach to religious education that respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking is essential for maximizing its potential benefits in the development agenda.

10. Impact of Religious Education on National Development

Religious education has been found to have varying impacts on national development across different countries. Some studies suggest that countries with strong religious education programs experience positive effects on socioeconomic development. For example, religious teachings that emphasize virtues such as honesty, integrity, and hard work can foster a strong work ethic, entrepreneurship, and innovation, leading to economic growth (Grimmitt, 2000). Furthermore, religious education can contribute to social cohesion by promoting understanding, tolerance, and respect for diversity. It provides individuals with the knowledge and skills to engage in interfaith dialogue, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation among different religious communities (Grimmitt, 2000). This, in turn, can lead to greater social harmony and stability.

However, the impact of religious education on national development is not universally positive. In some cases, countries with limited or no religious education programmes have also achieved significant socioeconomic and political development. These countries may prioritize secular education systems that focus on critical thinking, scientific knowledge, and technological advancements (Grimmitt, 2000). This approach can lead to economic growth, social progress, and political stability without relying on religious teachings.

The findings from the comparative analysis of countries with strong religious education programmes and countries with limited or no religious education reveal diverse outcomes in terms of national development. Examples include:

i. Socioeconomic Impact:

a) Countries with strong religious education programs: These countries may experience economic growth due to the promotion of values such as honesty, integrity, and hard work. Religious teachings can foster a strong work ethic, entrepreneurship, and innovation, contributing to socioeconomic development.

b) Countries with limited or no religious education: These countries may prioritize secular education systems that focus on critical thinking, scientific knowledge, and technological advancements. This approach can also lead to economic growth and social progress.

ii. Political Impact:

a) Countries with strong religious education programs: Religious education can contribute to political stability by promoting civic engagement, ethical leadership, and respect for human rights. It provides individuals with a moral framework that guides their political participation and decision-making, leading to the establishment of democratic institutions.

b) Countries with limited or no religious education: Political stability can be achieved through other means, such as the establishment of democratic institutions based on secular principles, respect for human rights, and inclusive governance.

iii. Cultural Impact:

a) Countries with strong religious education programs: Religious education can shape cultural norms, values, and practices, influencing social behavior and identity. It can foster a sense of belonging and community among religious groups, contributing to cultural cohesion.

b) Countries with limited or no religious education: Cultural cohesion can be achieved through other means, such as promoting cultural diversity, inclusivity, and respect for different identities and beliefs.

The impact of religious education on national development varies across countries with strong religious education programs and countries with limited or no religious education. While religious education can contribute to socioeconomic development, social cohesion, and political stability, these outcomes can also be achieved through secular education systems that prioritize critical thinking, scientific knowledge, and technological advancements. The findings highlight the importance of considering diverse approaches to education and national development, taking into account the specific context, values, and goals of each country.

Conclusion

Religious education has been an integral part of human societies for centuries, playing a crucial role in shaping individuals' beliefs, values, and understanding of the world. This paper aimed to provide an overview of religious education, examining its historical development, objectives, and methods. Additionally, it explored the significance of religious education in promoting religious literacy, interfaith dialogue, and moral and ethical values. Religious education has played a significant role in shaping national identity in various countries. It has fostered a sense of belonging, promoted shared values, and reinforced cultural heritage. However, challenges such as exclusion and limited critical thinking need to be addressed. A balanced approach to religious education that respects diversity, promotes inclusivity, and encourages critical thinking is crucial for shaping national identity in a positive and inclusive manner.

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