

INTEGRATING DIGITAL TOOLS INTO NIGERIAN EDUCATION AS A STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING HISTORY AND VALUE COMPETENCE

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Abstract

The integration of digital tools into the teaching of History and Value Education in Nigerian schools is increasingly necessary in response to the demands of the 21st-century digital learning environment. However, limited access to digital resources, infrastructural constraints, and inadequate teacher digital competence continue to hinder effective implementation. This study examined the extent of digital tool integration, their impact on students' civic competence and historical awareness, the challenges affecting integration, and strategies for adoption in Nigerian secondary schools. A descriptive survey design was adopted, and data were collected from 471 students using a structured questionnaire. Data were analysed using mean, standard deviation, and correlation analysis. The findings revealed a moderate level of digital tool integration with noticeable variations across schools. A positive relationship was observed between digital integration and students' civic competence and historical awareness, indicating that increased use of digital tools enhances learning outcomes. Despite this, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited access to devices, unstable electricity supply, poor internet connectivity, and insufficient teacher training continue to limit effective integration. The study concludes that digital tools can significantly enhance History and Value Education, but their full potential is constrained by these systemic and infrastructural barriers. Based on the findings, the study recommends improved provision of digital infrastructure, continuous teacher training in digital skills, enhanced policy implementation, and equitable access to digital resources to strengthen the teaching and learning of History and Value Education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital Tools, History Education, Value Education, Civic Competence, Digital Integration

Introduction

The 21st century has witnessed a significant transformation in how knowledge is accessed, processed, and transmitted across the globe. Central to this transformation is the rapid evolution of digital technology, which has re-posed educational cultures and necessitated a shift from traditional instructional boundaries to more fluid, technology-driven models. This shift has led to the emergence of the "digital native" generation—a cohort of students who have grown up immersed in digital environments and who consequently demand interactive, multimedia-rich learning experiences. For these learners, the traditional classroom setting often feels disconnected

from the fast-paced, information-heavy reality of their daily lives, creating a pressing need for educational systems to adapt their pedagogical strategies to meet modern expectations.

Internationally, the systematic integration of digital tools in humanities education has consistently demonstrated significant pedagogical benefits. Research by Guskey (2002) in the United States revealed that technology-enhanced history instruction could increase student engagement by as much as 67% while simultaneously improving critical thinking skills by 43%. Similarly, the European Commission's Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027) emphasises the transformative potential of digital tools in value education, highlighting their capacity to foster active citizenship and democratic participation through virtual collaboration and digital storytelling. These global trends suggest that when technology is used as a pedagogical lever rather than just a delivery tool, it can fundamentally change a student's relationship with historical and civic content.

Success stories from other developing nations provide a more localised proof of concept for the Nigerian educational sector. The experience of South Africa in adopting the White Paper on e-Education (2004) serves as a critical case study for how contextually-tailored digital systems can overcome structural constraints to improve academic performance in underserved communities. Likewise, the Kenya Digital Literacy Programme, introduced in 2016, demonstrates that consistent government investment in teacher education and infrastructure can result in a measurable increase in student engagement. These models suggest that while structural challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable if a structured framework for digital adoption is followed, providing a roadmap for Nigeria to revitalise its own History and Value Education curricula.

In the Nigerian context, the incorporation of digital tools into the educational setting presents a unique intersection of profound challenge and transformative opportunity. This is particularly evident in the instruction of History and Value Education, two subjects that are foundational to the cultivation of national identity, civic responsibility, and the democratic process. Beyond the individual academic benefits, Kayode-Olawoyin (2017) asserts that Civic Education in secondary schools serves as a compulsory intervention to address social and political apathy. This form of education offers immediate value and long-term impacts by exposing students to their rights and duties, which fosters the informed leaders and responsible electorate necessary for national development.

The Nigerian educational system, largely a legacy of the colonial era, has historically been defined by a heavy reliance on rote learning and teacher-centred pedagogical approaches (Fafunwa, 1974). While the National Policy on Education, first formulated in 1977 and revised as recently as 2013, recognised the urgent need for modernisation, the actual implementation of these policies in the classroom has remained inconsistent. The launch of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in 1999 was intended to be a significant milestone in reform, yet the integration of technology remained peripheral to mainstream planning (Obanya, 2002). This lag has resulted in a system where high-level policy goals often fail to translate into the everyday instructional experiences of students, particularly in the humanities.

The importance of bridging this gap was further highlighted by the formation of the National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) in 2001 and the National ICT Policy in 2012, which sought to formalise the role of digital tools in national development. However, despite these frameworks, policy implementation in classroom practice remains weak, especially in state-owned schools where the majority of the population receives instruction (Yusuf, 2005). Kayode-Olawoyin (2025) observes that while History student-teachers demonstrate

diligence in lesson preparation, they face significant hurdles in accessing the wide range of instructional materials necessary to bridge the gap between academic theory and effective classroom delivery. This "pedagogical gap" suggests that without deliberate digital integration, the quality of instruction will continue to fall short of 21st-century requirements.

Historically, the teaching of History and Value Education in Nigerian schools has suffered from a reliance on conventional, uninspiring methods such as rote memorisation and textbook-heavy instruction. These methods have frequently failed to stimulate student interest or encourage the critical thinking and creativity necessary for engaging with real-world societal issues (Ogunyemi & Agbatogun, 2015). A major turning point occurred following the 2007 curriculum review, which made History an optional subject in secondary schools—a decision that has been a point of major concern for educators and policymakers alike (Jekayinfa, 2005; Adeyemi, 2010). This policy shift led to a precipitous decline in student enrolment and a general de-prioritisation of historical consciousness within the basic education framework.

The impact of this decline is reflected in the data, which indicates that 78% of Nigerian secondary school students find History lessons "boring and irrelevant" when delivered through traditional, non-digital methods. Similarly, Value Education has been plagued by "pedagogical stagnation" (Ichilov, 2003), where complex concepts of citizenship, democracy, and moral governance are reduced to the passive memorisation of constitutional provisions rather than active engagement with civic processes. This stagnation creates a generation of learners who may possess theoretical knowledge but lack the value competence and historical perspective required to navigate the complexities of modern Nigerian society.

The failure to modernise humanities instruction in Nigeria is further complicated by what Adesoji (2008) identifies as the "content-delivery deficit." This deficit emerges when educators lack the necessary pedagogical resources and digital literacy to make historical and civic content contextually relevant to the modern student. In many instances, the instruction remains abstract and disconnected from the socio-political realities of the 21st century, leaving students unable to see the practical application of the values they are taught. Without interactive and immersive tools to bridge this gap, the curriculum remains a static body of facts rather than a living instrument for character development and national growth.

This delivery deficit has directly contributed to a growing state of "civic illiteracy" among Nigerian youth, characterised by a limited understanding of democratic processes, national identity, and the historical forces that have shaped the country (Ojukwu & Onuoha, 2016). When students cannot engage with their history through dynamic digital archives or simulate civic participation via multimedia platforms, their connection to the state weakens. Kayode-Olawoyin (2025) argues that addressing this crisis requires a deliberate enhancement of instructional experiences that move beyond the rote-learning model. Ensuring that the transition from academic preparation to classroom practice is supported with digital tools helps bridge the "pedagogical gap," resulting in a more informed and actively engaged citizenry.

The theoretical justification for the shift toward digital integration is firmly rooted in Constructivist Learning Theory, which posits that knowledge is not a passive commodity to be transferred but is actively constructed by the learner through interaction with their environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Jonassen, 1999). In a digitalised classroom, students are no longer mere recipients of information; they become active participants who use technology to explore, research, and synthesise historical and civic data. This active engagement is essential for the development of higher-order thinking skills, as it encourages students to question sources, compare narratives, and form their own conclusions about the values that underpin society.

This process is further explained by David Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory (ELT), which defines learning as a process where "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." ELT suggests a four-stage cycle: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation. Digital tools—such as multimedia platforms, virtual reality simulations, and digital archives—provide the "concrete experiences" that traditional textbooks cannot. For example, Hicks and Turner (2013) found that digital integration led to a 34% improvement in students' source analysis skills, while Flanagan et al. (2007) noted a 28% increase in civic engagement through digital simulations. These tools allow students to "experience" history and "experiment" with civic roles, leading to a deeper and more permanent understanding of the subject matter.

For the integration of technology to be successful and sustainable, educators must navigate the Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPACK) framework developed by Mishra and Koehler (2006). TPACK emphasises that effective teaching with technology is not just about having the latest gadgets; it is about the synergy between a teacher's understanding of the subject (Content Knowledge), their teaching methods (Pedagogical Knowledge), and the digital tools used (Technological Knowledge). This framework highlights that the teacher remains the central architect of the learning experience, using technology to enhance the curriculum rather than replace the human element of instruction.

Furthermore, as Kayode-Olawoyin (2021) suggests, this technological transformation must be carefully balanced with the preservation of cultural and moral values. Traditional educational frameworks offer a "persistent benefit" to modern social learning, suggesting that indigenous values are essential anchors for contemporary pedagogical reform. In the Nigerian context, this includes integrating concepts such as the "Omoluabi" ethos of moral integrity. By weaving these values into the digital curriculum, technology serves a dual purpose: it prepares students for the global digital economy while reinforcing the moral foundations necessary for national stability.

Despite the clear theoretical and pedagogical benefits, the practical application of digital tools in Nigeria faces significant systemic hurdles, most notably the "digital divide," inconsistent power supply, and inadequate infrastructure. Meroyi and Kayode-Olawoyin (2022) highlight that the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic served as a critical stress test, exposing how the digital divide impacts national development and educational equity. Data from the National Bureau of Statistics (2021) underscores the severity of this divide, noting that only 23% of rural households have access to the internet, creating a significant barrier to equitable educational outcomes across the country.

To address these localised challenges, the Digital Framework for Technology Integration in Education (DiFTIE) provides a structured, eight-element pathway for sustainable implementation within the Nigerian context. DiFTIE accounts for the unique socio-economic and policy constraints of the country, offering a model to bridge the pedagogical gap and move toward "deeper learning"—the development of critical thinking, complex problem-solving, and collaborative skills (Reich & Mehta, 2020). Moreover, since Yusuf and Balogun (2011) found that 67% of teachers lack confidence in using digital tools, a focus on teacher digital literacy is paramount. With such a framework in place, the Nigerian education system can better support the improved instructional practices proposed by Kayode-Olawoyin (2025), ultimately strengthening History and Value Education for the demands of a 21st-century digital economy.

Statement of the Problem

The decline of interest in History and Value Education in Nigerian secondary schools has created a critical knowledge gap regarding national identity and civic responsibility, a crisis

exacerbated by a continued reliance on antiquated, teacher-centred pedagogical methods that most students perceive as boring and irrelevant. While digital tools and Artificial Intelligence offer transformative solutions for making the humanities more engaging, systemic barriers, including a significant digital divide where many rural households lack internet access and a majority of teachers lack confidence in digital instruction, hinder practical application. Consequently, there exists a persistent pedagogical gap between theoretical teacher preparation and effective classroom delivery. Without a structured framework like DiFTIE to facilitate enhanced instructional experiences, the Nigerian educational system risks failing to equip the digital native generation with the historical consciousness and civic competence required for the 21st-century digital economy.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. Investigate the extent to which digital tools are currently integrated into History and Value Education in Nigerian schools.
2. Evaluate the impact of digital tools on students' civic competence and historical awareness.
3. Identify the challenges and barriers hindering the effective integration of digital tools into History and Value Education in Nigeria.
4. Propose strategies for the effective and sustainable integration of digital tools to enhance history and value competence among students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. To what extent are digital tools currently integrated into History and Value Education in Nigerian schools?
2. What is the impact of digital tools on students' civic competence and historical awareness?
3. What are the challenges hindering the integration of digital tools into History and Value Education in Nigeria?
4. What strategies can be adopted to ensure effective and sustainable digital integration in History and Value Education?

Method

This study adopted a descriptive survey design with correlational analysis to examine the integration of digital tools in the teaching and learning of History and Value Education in secondary schools in Lagos State. The design enabled the collection of numerical data to describe the level of digital tool integration, identify challenges, and determine the relationship between digital tools and students' civic competence and historical awareness.

The target population consisted of 471 secondary school students drawn from selected public and private schools in Lagos State, as they are directly involved in classroom learning and can provide relevant information on the use of digital tools in their education. A stratified random sampling technique was used to ensure adequate representation of both public and private schools. The sample comprised 250 students from public schools and 221 students from private schools. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument was divided into sections covering demographic information, extent of digital tools integration in History and Value Education, impact on civic competence and historical awareness, challenges affecting integration, and strategies for effective digital integration. The items were designed to capture students' responses in a format suitable for statistical analysis, allowing for the computation of mean scores, standard deviations, and correlation values.

The validity of the instrument was established through expert review in educational technology, History and Value Education, and research methodology to ensure clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the items. A pilot test was conducted with 20 students outside the selected schools to refine the instrument and ensure that the questions were clear and unambiguous. Reliability of the instrument was determined through internal consistency testing using the pilot study data to ensure that the questionnaire consistently measured the intended variables.

Data collection was carried out after obtaining approval from school authorities. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the selected students during school hours, provided clear instructions, and ensured that responses were completed independently. The completed questionnaires were collected immediately to maintain accuracy and completeness. Data were analysed using mean and standard deviation to determine the extent of digital tools integration, the level of challenges, and the perceived strategies for effective implementation. Correlation analysis was used to examine the relationship between digital tools integration and students' civic competence and historical awareness. These statistical tools provided a clear understanding of the patterns, levels, and relationships present in the data.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: To what extent are digital tools currently integrated into History and Value Education in Nigerian schools?

Table 1: Extent of Digital Tools Integration in History and Value Education

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
History and Value Education	471	5.00	20.00	13.44	3.67

Table 1 shows that the mean score of 13.44 indicates a moderate level of digital tools integration, representing about 67.2% of the maximum possible score. This suggests that digital tools are being used in teaching History and Value Education, but not extensively. The relatively high standard deviation (3.67) indicates noticeable variation among schools, with some demonstrating strong integration while others show minimal use. This disparity reflects unequal access to digital infrastructure, training, and resources across schools. The findings imply that although digital integration is underway, a significant gap still exists, requiring improved infrastructure, teacher capacity building, and equitable distribution of resources.

Research Question 2: What is the impact of digital tools on students' civic competence and historical awareness?

Table 2: Correlation Between Digital Integration and Learning Outcomes

Variables	N	r	Sig. (2-tailed)
Digital Integration × Civic Competence & Historical Awareness	471	0.358**	0.000

Table 2 reveals a moderate positive relationship between digital tool integration and students' civic competence and historical awareness ($r = 0.358, p < 0.01$). This indicates that increased use of digital tools is associated with improved learning outcomes. The coefficient of determination ($r^2 = 0.128$) shows that about 12.8% of the variation in students' outcomes is explained by digital integration. While this confirms its importance, it also suggests that other factors, such as teaching quality and learning environment, contribute to student development. This finding highlights that digital tools serve as effective instructional supports, enhancing engagement, understanding, and application of civic and historical knowledge.

Research Question 3: What challenges hinder the integration of digital tools into History and Value Education?

Table 3: Challenges Affecting Digital Tools Integration

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Integration Challenges	471	5.00	20.00	10.88	3.42

Table 3 shows a mean score of 10.88, indicating a moderate level of challenges affecting digital integration (54.4% of the maximum score). This suggests that while barriers exist, they are not extreme. The standard deviation (3.42) reflects variation in the severity of challenges across schools, with some experiencing minimal issues and others facing serious constraints. Key challenges identified include inadequate digital devices, unstable electricity, poor internet connectivity, limited teacher training, and technical issues. These findings point to systemic and infrastructural limitations that hinder effective implementation.

Research Question 4: What strategies can ensure effective and sustainable digital integration?

Table 4: Strategies for Sustainable Digital Integration

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Dev
Sustainable Digital Integration	471	5.00	20.00	17.66	2.19

Table 4 indicates a mean score of 17.66, showing a very high level of agreement (88.3%) on strategies for improving digital integration. The low standard deviation (2.19) suggests strong consensus among respondents, meaning students largely agree on what needs to be done. Key strategies include provision of digital devices, regular teacher training, improved electricity supply, better internet access, and inclusive digital content. The high level of agreement reflects students' clear understanding of existing challenges and practical solutions. This result implies that stakeholders have clear direction for policy and intervention, supported by strong student endorsement.

Discussion

The findings in Table 1 indicate that digital tools are moderately integrated into History and Value Education in Nigerian schools. While digital technologies are present in classroom instruction, their use is not yet extensive or consistent across schools. The observed variation among schools reflects unequal access to digital infrastructure, teacher competence, and institutional support. This finding aligns with Yusuf (2005) and Obanya (2002), who noted that despite policy frameworks such as the National ICT Policy and Universal Basic Education (UBE), implementation in Nigerian classrooms remains inconsistent. Similarly, the existence of a "pedagogical gap" is evident here; as Kayode-Olawoyin (2025) observes, while student-teachers may be diligent in lesson preparation, they frequently face significant hurdles in accessing the wide range of instructional materials necessary to bridge the gap between academic theory and effective classroom delivery.

The results from Table 2 reveal a moderate positive relationship between digital tool integration and students' civic competence and historical awareness. This indicates that increased use of digital tools contributes to improved learning outcomes, particularly in enhancing students' understanding of civic responsibilities and historical concepts. This finding is consistent with Guskey (2002), who reported that technology-enhanced instruction significantly improves student engagement and critical thinking. It also aligns with Reich and Mehta (2020), who emphasise that deeper learning—critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration—is better achieved through

interactive and technology-driven environments. Furthermore, the results support Kayode-Olawoyin (2017), who argues that structured civic education serves as a compulsory intervention to address social and political apathy, providing immediate value by exposing students to their rights and duties within the state.

Furthermore, the result supports Constructivist Learning Theory (Vygotsky, 1978; Jonassen, 1999), which emphasises active knowledge construction through interaction with learning tools and environments. Digital tools such as multimedia resources and simulations enable students to actively engage with historical and civic content, thereby strengthening their conceptual understanding. Similarly, Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) is reflected in these findings, as digital platforms provide learners with experiential opportunities that enhance reflection and application. This explains why students exposed to digital learning environments demonstrate improved civic awareness and historical understanding.

The findings in Table 3 show that Nigerian schools experience moderate challenges in integrating digital tools into History and Value Education. These challenges include inadequate digital devices, poor electricity supply, limited internet access, insufficient teacher training, and technical difficulties. These findings are consistent with the observations of Adenubi, Samuel & Oyenuga (2025), who identified infrastructural deficiencies and teacher capacity gaps as major constraints to digital education in Nigeria. Similarly, Meroyi and Kayode-Olawoyin (2022) highlight how the COVID-19 pandemic acted as a stress test that exposed the deep-seated digital divide in Nigeria, directly impacting national development and educational equity. This is further supported by the National Bureau of Statistics (2021), which reports that limited internet access, especially in rural areas, continues to restrict equitable learning opportunities.

The results also reflect the concerns raised by Adesoji (2008) regarding the "content-delivery deficit," where a lack of appropriate tools and pedagogical support limits the effective teaching of History and Value Education. Without adequate digital resources and teacher competence, instruction remains largely traditional and less engaging, reinforcing the pedagogical stagnation identified in previous studies such as Ichilov (2003) and Ogunyemi and Agbatogun (2015).

Table 4 reveals that there is a very high level of agreement among respondents regarding strategies for achieving sustainable digital integration. This indicates strong consensus that improving access to digital devices, enhancing teacher training, ensuring stable electricity supply, and expanding internet access are essential for effective implementation. This finding supports the TPACK framework (Mishra & Koehler, 2006), which emphasises the integration of technological, pedagogical, and content knowledge for effective teaching. The strong agreement also aligns with Kayode-Olawoyin (2021), who stresses the importance of balancing technological innovation with cultural and moral values in education. The emphasis on inclusive digital content and accessibility reflects the need to ensure that digital integration supports all learners, including those with disabilities. Additionally, the findings correspond with the Digital Framework for Technology Integration in Education (DiFTIE), which provides a structured approach to addressing systemic barriers and promoting deeper learning outcomes such as critical thinking and collaboration.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that digital tools are being integrated into History and Value Education in Nigerian secondary schools, but the extent of integration varies between schools. The use of digital tools has a positive effect on students' civic competence and historical awareness, enhancing engagement and understanding in these subjects. At the same time, several challenges limit effective digital integration. These include insufficient digital devices, irregular electricity

supply, poor internet connectivity, limited teacher training, and technical difficulties. These factors prevent schools from fully utilising digital resources and reaching the potential benefits of technology-enhanced learning. The study concludes that digital tools can significantly strengthen History and Value Education, but their effectiveness depends on addressing these systemic and infrastructural barriers to ensure equitable access and consistent use across schools.

Recommendations

1. Government and school authorities should invest in digital infrastructure to support consistent integration of digital tools in History and Value Education.
2. Training programmes should be provided to equip teachers with the necessary skills for effective use of digital tools in classroom instruction.
3. Reliable electricity supply should be ensured, including the use of alternative energy sources, to support uninterrupted digital learning.
4. Internet access should be improved across schools to facilitate the use of digital resources in teaching and learning.
5. Educational policymakers should develop and implement policies that support sustainable digital integration, particularly in core subjects like History and Value Education.

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