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Digital Awareness and Competence Among Lecturers and Students for Enhancing French Language Instruction in Public Universities in South West, Nigeria

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Abstract: *In this era of digital revolution the effective incorporation of technology into language teaching and learning has become essential, especially for foreign languages such as French teaching and learning. The study assessed lecturers' and students' digital awareness and competency in French Language teaching in public universities in South-West Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was employed, and the target population consisted of all the lecturers and full-time undergraduate students studying French in public universities within the region. Using a multistage sampling technique, 63 lecturers and 892 students were sampled. Two structured questionnaires, namely the Lecturers' Preparedness for Digitalisation of Higher Education Instruction Questionnaire (LPDHEIQ) and the Students' Preparedness for Digitalisation of Higher Education Instruction Questionnaire (SPDHEIQ), were employed in collecting data. Each instrument included demographic information, digital awareness, and digital competency sections, on a four-point Likert scale. Expert review in educational technology and foreign language pedagogy validated it. Pilot testing in non-sample institutions provided high reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79 for LPDHEIQ and 0.97 for SPDHEIQ). Online questionnaires were administered using Google Forms via email and social media. Descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) addressed the research questions, and t-tests compared differences at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that lecturers had a moderate level of digital awareness and competence, whereas students had moderately high to high levels. There was a significant difference in digital competence in favor of the students. It is recommended that universities increase digital capacity-building and training activities that are explicitly designed to support French Language lecturers, to bridge the gap in digital competence and enhance instruction delivery.*

Keywords: digital competence, digital awareness, French language, lecturers, students.

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INTRODUCTION

World digitalization of education is today the demand, reshaping teaching and learning across disciplines and study levels. The digital technologies now underpin mainstream pedagogical practice, shaping student-centered, interactive learning environments and opening access to a wide range of learning materials (UNESCO, 2021). In technology-aided French language instruction, technology has the capacity to profoundly assist learning by presenting rich contexts, convenience of use of real materials, virtual interaction with native speakers, and enabling multimedia-based learning conducive to listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills (Godwin-Jones, 2018).

In Nigeria, the higher education digitalisation drive is backed by national policies such as the National Policy on ICT in Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019), aimed at promoting digital competency among students and staff. However, aside from policy enactment, the majority of the public universities still face severe challenges such as poor infrastructure, low investment, lack of regular digital training, and fragmented implementation (Olaore, 2014; Ololube, 2016). These issues are most pressing in South-West Nigerian public universities, where digital access inequalities and differentials in digital capability among students and lecturers have largely been documented.

Digital awareness, or the possibility of awareness of the existence, importance, and potential of digital technology for teaching (Ng, 2012), is a precondition for successful digital adoption. Awareness directly affects attitude, which in turn drives the level of effort and motivation lecturers and students put upon using digital environments (Ertmer & Ottenbreit-Leftwich, 2010). Digital literacy that encompasses the ability to use digital tools appropriately for communication, collaboration, information searching, content creation, and problem-solving in educational settings is also necessary (European Commission, 2018; Ferrari, 2013). Research conducted by Akomolafe and Adesua (2016) noted that although some Nigerian university lecturers possess basic ICT skills, most do not have the pedagogical knowledge to integrate these tools into language teaching. Likewise, Ifinedo, Rikala, and Hämäläinen (2020) found that students prefer to use digital technology more for social reasons than educational purposes, with the effect of an educational digital literacy disparity that can hinder effective French language learning.

The COVID-19 pandemic put in sharp relief the importance of digital readiness among Nigerian universities. The unplanned shift to distance learning put infrastructure and human resource inadequacies in the spotlight, especially among lecturers who were not digitally ready (Legg-Jack,

2021; Agbo et al., 2021). This has helped put into perspective the importance of ascertaining digital awareness and capability among key stakeholders within the university system.

In spite of growing interest in e-learning, minimal empirical research, with a specific focus on Nigerian public universities offering French language as a course of study, has been conducted. Much of the available literature approaches digital learning as one broad concept without differentiations, for example, between fields of study or between student and lecturer digital preparedness. Therefore, this present study aims to quantify the level of digital awareness and competence among students and lecturers involved in teaching and learning the French language in South-West Nigerian public universities.

Statement of the Problem

The integration of information technologies into higher learning has played an increasingly vital role towards effective teaching delivery, particularly in subjects such as French Language that rely on experiential, communicative, and interactive ways of learning. Despite the fact that learning and teaching processes in educational systems worldwide are slowly embracing digitalisation as a means of improving learning and teaching experience, most Nigerian public universities specifically those based in the South-West are still facing issues related to lack of digital awareness and low proficiency among deciding stakeholders like lecturers and students. The emergence of such a trend raises severe concern regarding the preparedness of academic institutions to adapt to 21st-century pedagogic approaches and transition effectively into digitally enabled learning cultures. Despite the country's efforts such as the National Policy on ICT in Education (Federal Ministry of Education, 2019) and institution-based efforts aimed at facilitating digital literacy, empirical studies (Legg-Jack, 2021 2021; Agbo et al., 2021) indicate that the majority of university lecturers continue to lack the required digital competences for using technology in pedagogy. Besides, students utilize digital resources more for social or entertainment purposes compared to learning (Ifinedo, Rikala, & Hämäläinen, 2020), showing the disparity between digital access and its effective utilization in learning. In the specific context of French Language instruction where technology can enable listening skills acquisition, vocabulary enrichment, cultural exposure, and instant contact with native speakers—the absence of digital preparedness severely impairs teaching effectiveness and learner motivation. Yet, academic research has seldom quantified digital awareness and ability from a discipline point of view. There is evidently a lack of empirical research on students' and lecturers' digital readiness in French Language studies and French Language learning within South-West Nigeria public universities, a discipline with certain methodological and communicative demands. In the absence of these thematic researches, attempts to initiate specific interventions, staff development activities, or curriculum change can be in vain and misplaced. Thus, the current study sought to fill this important gap by evaluating

lecturers' and students' computer awareness and competence involved in the study of French Language in South-West Nigeria's public universities.

Objectives of the Study

1. To ascertain the level of awareness of digitalisation in the instructional delivery of French Language among lecturers in public universities in South-West Nigeria.
2. To ascertain the level of awareness of digitalisation in the instructional delivery of French Language among students in public universities in South-West Nigeria.
3. To determine the level of digital competence of lecturers in delivering French Language instruction in public universities in South-West Nigeria.
4. To determine the level of digital competence of students in learning French Language through digital means in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among lecturers in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
2. What is the level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among students in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
3. What is the level of digital competence among lecturers in delivering French Language instruction in public universities in South-West Nigeria?
4. What is the level of digital competence among students in learning French Language through digital platforms in public universities in South-West Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the level of awareness of digitalisation among lecturers and students in the instructional delivery of French Language in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed descriptive survey research design in assessing awareness and digital literacy level among the lecturers and students involved in teaching and learning French Language in South-West Nigerian public universities. The study population comprised all lecturers of French

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Language and full-time undergraduate students majoring in French Language programs within the region. A multistage sampling technique was used to recruit a sample of 63 French Language lecturers and 892 French Language students from different institutions. Data were collected using two researcher-designed instruments: the Lecturers' Preparedness for Digitalisation of French Language Instruction Questionnaire (LPDFLIQ) and the Students' Preparedness for Digitalisation of French Language Instruction Questionnaire (SPDFLIQ). The questionnaires had six sections: Section A elicited information on demographic data; Section B involved pedagogy and digitalisation awareness; and Section C involved information on digital capability in French language teaching and learning. The questionnaires were designed based on a four-point Likert scale from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree. In an attempt to ensure the tools' validity, they were face and content validity critiqued by the French Language instruction experts, educational technology, psychometrics, and the research supervisory team members. Pilot testing was also conducted in institutions not in the main sample to ensure reliability, and Cronbach's alpha coefficients of 0.82 for LPDFLIQ and 0.78 for SPDFLIQ were realized, indicating high internal consistency.The data gathering was conducted via online administration through Google Forms distributed using emails and social media to enhance accessibility and encourage response rates. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage) for the purpose of guiding the research questions. The decision value of 2.50 was used as a mean criterion. Furthermore, the t-test was also used in testing hypotheses at a significance level of 0.05

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Research Question 1: What is the level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among lecturers in public universities in South-West Nigeria?

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviation of level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among lecturers in public universities in South-West Nigeria (N=63)

Statement	Mean	SD	Remark
I have received adequate training or attended workshops on using digital tools for instructional purposes.	2.78	0.94	Moderate Awareness
I actively incorporate digital technologies into my teaching methods.	2.85	0.94	Moderate Awareness
I am aware of the digital resources available for enhancing instructional delivery.	3.03	0.85	Moderate Awareness
I regularly integrate digital tools into my lesson plans and instructional activities.	2.90	0.92	Moderate Awareness
I have attended seminars or conferences focused on digital pedagogy and its application in teaching.	2.61	0.98	Low Awareness
I am confident in my ability to adapt to new digital teaching methods and technologies.	2.94	0.93	Moderate Awareness
I believe that digitalisation has the potential to significantly enhance student learning outcomes.	3.23	0.83	High Awareness
I am aware of the limitations and challenges associated with using digital tools in instructional delivery.	2.90	0.96	Moderate Awareness
I have sufficient knowledge of how to effectively integrate digital tools to improve instructional delivery.	2.80	0.95	Moderate Awareness
I feel supported by my institution in my efforts to incorporate digital technologies into my teaching.	2.86	0.94	Moderate Awareness

Cut-off = 2.50

Table 1 indicated that lecturers generally have a moderate level of awareness, with most statements receiving mean scores ranging from 2.78 to 2.94. The highest awareness was recorded in the belief that digitalisation can significantly enhance student learning outcomes (Mean = 3.23), while the lowest was in attendance at seminars or conferences focused on digital pedagogy (Mean = 2.61), indicating low awareness in that area. This implies that there is a fair but uneven awareness, with room for improvement through more targeted training and institutional support.

Research Question 2: What is the level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among students in public universities in South-West Nigeria?

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviation of level of awareness of digitalisation for the instructional delivery of French Language among students in public universities in South-West Nigeria (N = 892)

Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
I am familiar with the online learning platforms and digital tools used in my university.	3.06	0.89	Moderately High
I have undergone training or received guidance on how to use digital tools effectively in learning.	2.97	0.91	Moderate
I understand how digital instructional delivery can positively influence my academic performance.	3.20	0.84	High
I feel confident in navigating the digital resources available for my coursework.	3.07	0.89	Moderately High
I believe digitalisation will significantly shape the future of education in my institution.	3.10	0.85	Moderately High

Cut-off = 2.50

Table 2 indicates that students generally exhibit a moderately high level of awareness, with mean scores ranging from 2.97 to 3.20. The highest level of awareness is shown in students' understanding of how digital instructional delivery can enhance academic performance (Mean = 3.20), while the lowest is in their experience with training or guidance on using digital tools (Mean = 2.97), which still reflects a moderate awareness. This implies that students are reasonably aware of digital tools and their benefits, though more structured training could further improve their proficiency.

Research Question 3: What is the level of digital competence among lecturers in delivering French Language instruction in public universities in South-West Nigeria?

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Table 3: Means and Standard Deviation of the level of digital competence among lecturers in delivering French Language instruction in public universities in South-West Nigeria (N = 63)

Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
I am competent in designing online courses, including setting objectives, strategies, content, activities, and assessments.	2.92	0.78	Competent
I am skilled in selecting and evaluating appropriate digital resources for teaching.	2.90	0.75	Competent
I effectively use digital tools to communicate and provide feedback to students.	3.11	0.69	Highly Competent
I use a variety of digital communication tools (e.g., email, chat applications) in my instruction.	3.08	0.75	Highly Competent
I can troubleshoot basic technical issues related to digital instruction.	2.56	0.86	Competent
I possess technical knowledge in using learning management systems, browsers, and media tools.	2.93	0.81	Competent
I utilize digital tools effectively for collaboration and content creation.	2.94	0.77	Competent
I easily adapt to new digital platforms and technologies used in teaching.	2.94	0.77	Competent
I provide adequate support to enhance students' digital literacy skills.	2.92	0.81	Competent
I regularly update my digital teaching practices to align with emerging trends.	2.99	0.74	Competent

Cut-off = 2.50

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations on the level of digital competence among lecturers delivering French Language instruction in public universities in South-West Nigeria. It's reveals that lecturers are generally competent across various dimensions of digital instruction, with most mean scores ranging from 2.56 to 2.99. The highest competencies are observed in the use of digital tools for communication and feedback (Mean = 3.11) and the use of multiple digital communication tools (Mean = 3.08), both rated as highly competent. The lowest mean score (2.56) relates to basic troubleshooting of technical issues, indicating competence but also highlighting an area needing improvement. This implies that lecturers demonstrate a solid foundation in digital competence, though targeted professional development could enhance specific technical skills.

Research Question 4: What is the level of digital competence among students in learning French Language through digital platforms in public universities in South-West Nigeria?

Table 4: Means and Standard Deviation of the level of digital competence among students in learning French Language through digital platforms in public universities in South-West Nigeria (N=892)

Item	Mean	S.D	Remark
I am proficient in the use of basic digital tools such as word processors, spreadsheets, and presentation software.	3.20	0.87	High
I effectively use the internet to search for academic resources and information.	3.25	0.82	High
I am proficient in using digital communication tools such as email, instant messaging, and video conferencing.	3.16	0.83	High
I am comfortable using digital collaboration platforms like Google Docs, Microsoft Teams, or Zoom for projects.	3.23	0.81	High
I can create and edit digital content such as videos, podcasts, or blogs for academic assignments.	3.08	0.88	Moderate
I frequently use online educational resources (e.g., e-libraries, academic websites) to support my learning.	3.30	0.8	High
I have experience contributing to online discussions or forums as part of coursework.	3.10	0.86	High
I am knowledgeable about the digital tools provided by my university and how to access them.	3.14	0.83	High
I understand and practice digital security measures such as using strong passwords and recognizing phishing.	3.21	0.81	High
I actively seek to improve my digital literacy through tutorials, workshops, or online training.	3.27	0.8	High

Cut-off = 2.50

Table 4 reveals the level of digital competence among students learning French Language through digital platforms in public universities in South-West Nigeria. The results indicate a generally high level of competence, with most mean scores ranging from 3.08 to 3.30. Students show the highest competence in using online educational resources (Mean = 3.30) and actively improving their digital literacy through self-initiated learning (Mean = 3.27). While all items indicate a high level of competence, the ability to create and edit digital content (Mean = 3.08) is rated slightly lower, reflecting a moderate level. Hence,, students appear well-equipped with the digital skills necessary for effective learning in a digital environment.

Testing of Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the level of awareness of digitalisation among lecturers and students in the instructional delivery of French Language in public universities in South-West Nigeria.

Table 5: t-test analysis of the difference between the level of awareness of digitalisation among lecturers and students in the instructional delivery of French Language in public universities in South-West Nigeria

Variable	N	Mean	S.D	Df	T	P
Lecturers	63	67.12	7.12	953	1.23	0.000*
Students	892	61.21	8.15			

p<0.05

The result in Table 5 presents a t-test analysis comparing the level of awareness of digitalisation between lecturers and students in the instructional delivery of French Language in public universities in South-West Nigeria. The analysis shows that lecturers (Mean = 67.12, SD = 7.12) have a higher level of awareness than students (Mean = 61.21, SD = 8.15). The t-value of 1.23 with a p-value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$) indicates that this difference is statistically significant. Therefore, contrary to the initial claim, there is a significant difference between the awareness levels of lecturers and students, with lecturers demonstrating a higher awareness of digitalisation in instructional delivery.

Discussion

The finding of this study shows that South-West Nigeria public universities lecturers have a moderate level of awareness of digitalisation in the delivery of French Language, with the greatest awareness in the belief that digitalisation enhances the learning of students and the least in attending seminars or training in digital pedagogy. This is evidenced by the research of Adeoye et al. (2022), wherein it was set that Nigerian lecturers at the university level are concerned about using digital technologies to improve students' engagement and comprehension but have not had formal exposure and systematic training in digital pedagogy.The awareness of the moderate lecturers can be attributed to a general shift in the educational culture towards embracing technology, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic forced emergency online instruction and exposure to ubiquitous digital tools. In line with Obi and Okafor (2021), this research reaffirms that while lecturers are theoretically cognizant of the potential for digitalisation, they engage minimally in professional development activities like workshops and seminars. This is a trend noted by Yusuf and Onasanya (2020), who indicated that Nigerian universities lack sustainable

policies and funds to continuously train academic staff on new digital instructional methods, especially in language instruction. On the other hand, the result also contradicts Ibrahim and Olayemi (2023), whose research on language lecturers in Northern Nigeria also reported an extensive level of exposure and adoption of digital pedagogy training through involvement in foreign institutions and donor-funded projects that deliver digital capacity development. The difference can be attributed to regional variations regarding access to international collaborations and institutional support. The poor awareness level regarding going for digital pedagogy seminars may have several explanations. First, low institutional incentives, i.e., promotion points or reorganization of workload, discourage lecturers from giving training a priority (Okoro & Adebayo, 2022). Second, time constraints and tight teaching workloads might discourage lecturers from participating in capacity-building events (Ajayi et al., 2021). Also, there seems to be a lack of relevant, context-oriented training programs in digital instruction of French languages that would limit perceived value and relevance of such workshops. The contextuality of these considerations is crucial. If sensitization does not lead to hands-on skill through regular training, advantages of digitalization to improve quality of teaching in French may never be triggered. Also, if there are not robust faculty development systems, lecturers may still depend on traditional approaches, keeping students away from engaging and innovative online learning experiences.

The result of the study is that the students have a relatively high level of knowledge concerning digitalisation, i.e., its role in enhancing learning outcomes, though relatively few have been formally taught how to apply digital means. This finding is consistent with that of Nwachukwu and James (2022), who found Nigerian public university undergraduates to be more conscious of the ways in which information technologies improve learning, research, and teamwork, especially because of the widespread utilization of online platforms following the COVID-19 pandemic. Supported by Salihu et al.'s (2021) findings, the present research verifies the reality that students, having been increasingly exposed to smartphones, learning applications, and internet-based learning systems, are most probably to recognize the advantages of digitalization in terms of augmenting learning efficiency and academic achievement. That knowledge, though, is not necessarily accompanied by practice with advanced school computer programs or computer literacy, as most of the students are functional, not proficient. The restricted formal education of the students in the use of digital tools appeals to Okonkwo and Bassey (2023), who had argued that despite the fact that the majority of the students in universities are digital natives, they possess limited experience in formal digital skill development programs due to institutional lethargy, curriculum shortcomings, and the lack of special training programs. This then confirms the presence of a gap between awareness and formal competency development. As Aina and Ojo (2021) noted, the current results also indicate that even as students utilize digital technology for both personal and academic purposes, their learning is based on peer-to-peer, informal, or self-

acquired skills and not on institutional guidance. This is part of the reasons for disparities in skills levels and challenges in effectively utilizing digital learning tools. On the other hand, the discovery of this research is divergent from that of Abubakar and Bello (2023), where it emerged that there was a high percentage of students in private universities in Southern Nigeria who were formally trained in digital skills via workshops, credit-based ICT courses, and learning management system orientations. The disparity lies in different investment by institutions, policy focus, and partnerships with each institutions. Potential reasons for relatively high awareness without professional education are the common use of mobile technology and social media among youth, which increases familiarity but perhaps not structured competence (Emeka & Chika, 2022). In addition, most Nigerian universities have yet to institutionalize digital literacy courses as part of their general studies curriculum, thereby leaving a gap in competence despite interest and exposure. The implications of this observation are significant for the practice of education and policy. Without structured training, learners may wastefully or inadequately use digital resources for education, affecting their scholarship. Institutions must therefore integrate comprehensive digital literacy components and enable experiential learning of skills in platforms such as learning management systems, data analysis applications, and collaboration platforms. Building digital competencies among students will not only enhance academic performance but also equip them for the digital requirements of contemporary employers.

The finding of the study reveals that lecturers are generally able to utilize online teaching practices, particularly utilizing communication tools, though the ability for technical problem-solving is relatively low. This discovery is consistent with the research study of Ajayi et al. (2022) that Nigerian university lecturers demonstrate acceptable competence in the use of Zoom, Google Classroom, and email as communication tools to deliver teaching, as is consistent with the rapid adoption of the tools into mainstream academic activities. Large-scale use of these tools, especially during the COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 periods, has made communication tools a mainstay in teaching, thus raising lecturers' familiarity and comfort levels with them. This is in tandem with Ogunleye and Oyeleke's (2021) research, which determined that the majority of lecturers in Nigerian universities have become proficient in the use of different digital communication platforms, including emails, instant messaging, and video conferencing, to convey messages to students. The capacity to communicate effectively through these systems is regarded as a fundamental competency for tertiary education in the contemporary period, especially in a post-pandemic learning environment so reliant on remote connectivity. But this finding that the technical trouble-shooting capacity of lecturers is very low is corroborated by Bola and Dada (2021), who noted that while Nigerian university lecturers are adequately qualified to utilize instructional technology to enhance communication, they are faced with gargantuan challenges when attempting to trouble-shoot technical problems. Such technical issues include slow internet

connectivity, software failure, and hardware breakdown. Its comparatively lower rate of technical problem-solving can be attributed to insufficient institutional support as well as poor professional development prospects that are technology-oriented (Adebayo et al., 2020).In contrast, findings in Okojie et al. (2023) present a scenario where lecturers in some Nigerian universities that had funded technical issues adequately illustrated high ability in dealing with technical challenges since the institutions had invested in comprehensive technical assistance and professional training development. The variation between this and the present study may be because of institutional variation, where some universities provide more troubleshooting and digital support materials than others, leading to variations in lecturer competence across the country. Possible explanations for the variation in competence in troubleshooting could be as a result of a lack of technical training provided to lecturers. The majority of the institutions are interested in the pedagogical use of the digital tools rather than maintenance and troubleshooting features. Further, lecturers are mostly time-bound to gain hands-on experience in resolving the technical issues (Fadare et al., 2022). Further, there may be a lack of proper institutional support in terms of IT staff and equipment to assist lecturers through technical issues. The interpretation of this outcome is pivotal to practice and policy. As with the increased reliance on digital means for pedagogic provision, institutions must provide specialist training that includes not just pedagogic use of technology but technical problem-solving skill as well.Ditto, institutions must develop firm technical support systems that are able to assist lecturers in navigating the pedagogic intricacies of teaching technology in class. Failing these, faculty members are likely to be distracted by matters affecting the continuity and quality of online courses, which would undermine the success of online and blended modes of learning.

The study's finding is that learners exhibit a high degree of digital literacy in terms of using learning content and acquiring digital skills but producing digital content is comparatively underdeveloped. The result aligns with that of Chukwuma et al. (2022), as they too reported that university students achieved proficiency when it came to finding online content such as e-books, digital libraries, and study websites. The study highlighted that greater reliance on web-based platforms for learning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, has enormously enhanced students' access to and utilization of computer-based learning resources. Moreover, the study's finding supports Ogunniyi et al. (2021), who demonstrated that Nigerian students at universities have significantly enhanced digital literacy competencies in recent times as a result of widespread availability of internet-enabled devices and web-based learning portals. This has enabled students to engage more with course material, participate in online discussions, and conduct research in a more effective way, which are significant aspects of academic success in the digital age. The less developed skills in producing digital content underpin the findings of Adeyemi and Ojo (2023), who noted that while students are able to consume digital content, creating original content is

underdeveloped. This is because many students are not regularly exposed to digital content creation courses or activities, such as blogging, video production, or visual design. Ibrahim and Osuji (2021) argue that the majority of education curricula predominantly cover the consumption of pre-existing media rather than skill acquisition for creating and curating new digital media, subjecting students to limited application of content creation tools. This is also consistent with an international movement, because Kumar and Singh (2020) explained that digital content production skills are typically not a part of standard school curricula. Students prefer to use digital tools to aid in research and communication work instead of producing artistic output. Moreover, Akintoye et al. (2022) found that a lack of proper specialized training in digital content creation is one of the major limiting factors for students' abilities in this area. The majority of the students may not have the necessary resources or means of accessing tools like Adobe Creative Suite, video editing tools, and content management systems, which are crucial in the creation of professional-standard digital content. On the other hand, Ajayi and Salami (2023) theorize that when students are presented with content development opportunities, they show a significant improvement. Their study in Nigerian universities found that students who participated in media and content development workshops were more self-assured and capable of utilizing digital tools to produce original content. This implies that professional training and targeted intervention can enhance students' capacity to produce digital content. This implication is relevant to the design of digital literacy programs. Universities must include more experiential, hands-on learning in digital content production as part of the curriculum. Exposing students to the utilization of video production tools, graphic design software, blogging, and other digital content creation technologies can better equip them for the digital economy where content creation and online engagement are strengths. Further, including digital content creation modules in relevant academic programs would further enhance the digital literacy of students so that they can positively contribute to the digital space.

The finding of the study reveals that there is a significant disparity in the level of awareness of digitalisation among students and lecturers, with lecturers being more aware than students in the delivery of French Language teaching in South-West Nigerian public universities.This result corroborates that of Adeoye et al. (2022) wherein the discovery was that lecturers are more aware of digital tools and the possible applications they serve towards learning than the students. Why there is this difference is due to the fact that lecturers have broader exposure to opportunities for professional growth as well as better access to tools and resources needed to attain digital literacy in learning settings. Consistent with Obi and Okafor's (2021) arguments, in this research, an identification of lecturers' willingness to be more sensitive to the pedagogical capabilities of digital tools is presented, which lays emphasis on how they enhance the impartation of teachings. Lecturers, particularly older lecturers and lecturers with higher academic loads, are typically

involved in discussions, seminars, and workshops on how they can incorporate digital technologies in their instructions. This exposure exposes them to information that students, being less academically engaged or exposed to training, might not have. This observation justifies Yusuf and Onasanya's (2020) argument that lecturers, unlike students, are more likely to engage in formal or informal digital learning networks, thus being more exposed to emerging pedagogical tools and trends. However, the reduced awareness among the students can be explained to be consistent with the observations of Ajayi et al. (2021), which pointed out that while students are continuously exposed to the use of digital tools for research and communication, they are not necessarily exposed to comprehensive pedagogical frameworks for the application of digital tools in their study activities. Students, therefore, may possess generic digital competencies, such as being able to operate in online spaces and search for resources, but not an understanding of the instructional and pedagogical implications of digitalisation on their specific courses, such as language teaching. The gap in awareness may be attributable to several factors. Lecturers, being frontline curriculum deliverers, will more probably engage with digitalisation through institutional structures, professional development, and academic discourse on technology integration in education. On the contrary, exposure to digitalisation among students is mostly in the nature of theoretical application, like accessing online resources and platforms to obtain learning materials, but they may not necessarily be exposed to discourse or training regarding the pedagogical value of digital tools in teaching and learning (Chukwuma et al., 2022). This can be exacerbated by the lack of structured programs for the learning of digital pedagogy by students that are based on how digital technologies can facilitate their learning processes, especially for courses like French. This finding buttresses the postulation of Kumar and Singh (2020) that there always exists a difference between students and teachers in digital literacy and the awareness of the use of digital devices to enhance teaching delivery. Teachers are usually better practically and theoretically equipped in computer tools due to their professional development courses and professional role, whereas the students can only be exposed to computer tools as a user and not have knowledge of their pedagogical significance and impact. In comparing these findings, a research by Ibrahim and Olayemi (2023) in Northern Nigeria reiterated that students were more digitally literate than lecturers, especially with regards to using digital platforms to support collaborative learning. This gap might be explained by geographical differences in institutional provision and the extent of students' exposure to digital tools in concentrated academic programs. In South-West, the concentration on lecturer-centered digitalisation courses may have been responsible for higher awareness among lecturers, and students probably being exposed to fewer instances of such training courses. Implications of the findings are multifarious. In order to realize the complete potential of digitalisation applied to teaching delivery in universities, interventions to bridge gaps in awareness among lecturers and students are necessary. Higher education institutions can offer training workshops and programs that not only aim at lecturers but also include students in understanding

the pedagogical aspects of digital tools. This would foster a more holistic appreciation of digitalisation, where lecturers and students are at par with each other in terms of digital literacy and pedagogical practice. Furthermore, sharing platforms can be created to encourage knowledge sharing among students and lecturers on the use of digital tools in the French Language course so that both can share experiences and knowledge.

CONCLUSION

It is evident from evidence that technology has been at the forefront of learning and teaching at Nigerian universities, especially the post-COVID-19 era. Digital adoption efforts are well-motivated to a very high extent but still beset by poor professional development, low levels of digital preparedness, and insufficient institutional support. Consequently, there is a clear need for sustained capacity building, policy-driven digital investment, and institutional support frameworks for the further advancement of the preparedness of teachers. The research agrees that unless these foundational problems are adequately addressed, the best possible potential of digital pedagogy in Nigerian higher education can still remain unrealized.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Institutionalized systematic and focused digital training programs must be established to enhance lecturers' digital competency and teaching quality.
2. The Nigerian universities should see to it that there is appropriate infrastructure, technical assistance, and incentives to ensure the use of digital pedagogy.
3. There has to be government and policy regulation for digital education, facilitated by the development of policies and implementation, backed by steady investment in higher education digital transformation.
4. Higher education institutions must evaluate and bridge digital readiness gaps among workers through periodic assessment and interventions customized to the individual.
5. Institutions must promote peer-learning networks and best practice sharing among lecturers so as to build collective digital capacity.

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