

**Historical Consciousness and Pedagogy:
Adapting the Junior Schools' History Education Curriculum
to Children's Digital Culture in Nigeria**

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Submitted to

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in "History in the Public Sphere" (HIPS)

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Vienna, Austria – Tokyo, Japan, 2024

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ABSTRACT

This research aimed to address the “crisis of relevance” confronting history education in Nigeria due to schoolchildren’s apathy towards history education by exploring how aligning history pedagogy with children’s digital cultural engagement can inspire pupils’ interest in learning history and promote historical consciousness. It adopted an interdisciplinary research approach comprising a historical research framework and the Global Kids Online (GKL) children-centred research template to explore the **three main research questions**.

The study, using archival documents and interviews with three (3) professors of historical studies, uncovered significant factors that shaped the removal and return of history education in Nigeria, which is the focus of the **first research question**. The research found that the Berlin Conference of 1884, the Nigerian civil war, and Western complicity were key drivers for the erasure of Nigerian history from schools’ curricula. It further demonstrates that the Historical Society of Nigeria played a pivotal role within the public sphere, facilitating public debates, seminars, advocacy, conferences, and academic publications that led to the reintroduction of the history subject into the lower school system.

The **second research question** analysed the nature of children’s digital cultural engagement to understand the educational opportunities that can be appropriated to enhance historical pedagogy and consciousness. Through an in-depth analysis of this question using a semi-structured survey and virtual Zoom interviews with eight (8) pupils and two (2) history education teachers, the study demonstrates that the children have a robust digital culture and actively engage with historical content online, leveraging Historyville and Nigerian Nostalgia 1960–1980, hosted on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, etc., to complete their history homework.

The **third research question**, which evaluates the pedagogical implications of children’s digital cultural experience for history education, is **the core research objective**—the analytical outcome of **research Q1 and Q2**. This study argues that given the undeniable impacts of digital media and technology on education and the growing children’s digital footprints, a hybrid pedagogical approach that incorporates children’s digital agency and visualises and medialises historical narrative could significantly influence students’ perceptions of history in a positive direction. This approach has the potential to not only encourage them to create and share historical content, but also empower them in their own learning process by making them active participants in their education. Moreover, it could enhance history pedagogy and make history learning interactive, inclusive, engaging, and retentive, thereby revolutionizing history education in Nigeria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & APPRECIATIONS

I offer my sincerest thanks to my Almighty God for His mercy, grace, love, favour, and kindness that I have experienced throughout this postgraduate study. Thank you, Jesus Christ! Thank you, Jesus Christ, you are above all things! You are the KING of Kings!

I would like to sincerely thank my lead supervisor, Professor Cristina Ponte, for the incredible support and guidance she provided me during this research. Prof. Cristina's insightful feedback and suggestions enhanced the quality of my research, and her prompt email responses and friendly demeanour consistently motivated me, even during periods of low motivation. I would like to give a special appreciation to Professor Maria de Lurdes, who doubles as my third reader and my academic mentor in this HIPS MA and beyond. I remain eternally grateful to you for your profound and wholesome support and very significant interventions that have guaranteed my successful completion of this MA programme.

I am grateful to the Department of History, Central European University for the generous research grant that enabled me to conduct the fieldwork of this study. I would also like to acknowledge and thank the immediate past HIPS Director, Professor Balázs Trencsényi, and the CEU coordinator, Monika Nagy, whose critical intervention made it possible for me to enrol in this MA. Similarly, I am immensely grateful to Professor Pedro Cardim and Professor Pedro Oliveira from NOVA University, whose support, guidance, and council ensured that I settled in quickly in Lisbon.

My special thanks go to Professor and Mrs. Akachi Odoemene, my mentor, brother, friend, father, etc. Sir, the holistic support you and your family provided contributed to this achievement. In every sense, “thank you” appears inadequate to express the depth of my gratitude to you. But, from the very fibre of my being, I say, ‘thank you’ and be assured of my loyalty.

I am equally grateful to Professor Dominic Akpan and his wife for his invaluable academic and moral support that culminated in the success of this MA. Sosongo Ette Ufok! Yak Abasi Udiong Fien Etit! I owe Dr Raimi Lasisi, my benefactor, a debt of appreciation for his unquantifiable support and for always inspiring me. Thank you, sir, I have enjoyed good mentorship and friendship from you. I do not take it for granted.

I wish to extend my heartfelt and special gratitude to Mr. Emmanuel Ibeogu, my counsellor, friend, brother and more. I especially appreciate Mrs. Iheoma Joy Ibeogu, one of my best women yet. Mr. and Mrs. Ibeogu have positively impacted my life and academic trajectory in exceptional ways that I cannot explain. I have attained this height in my life generally and in my intellectual journey because I stood on the shoulders you collectively provided. Your contributions always humble me. Dee Dalu! Chukwu Gozie Unu Ofuma!

I would like to thank Ms. Blessing Elechi, whose indelible and immeasurable assistance has had an impact on my academic career and life. I am eternally grateful to you, Blezo. I remain infinitely appreciative of Mrs. Esther Bassey. She, her children and hubby deserve my special mention in this thesis acknowledgement for the support I have received since I arrived in Vienna in 2022 for this postgraduate study. I would like to posthumously appreciate my late friends John Benson and Alex Okoro. I am indeed grateful for your respective support and selflessness, which contributed a lot to what I have achieved. I wish you both were alive to celebrate this feat with me. May God Continue to Rest Your Souls in Peace!

I am particularly appreciative of Barrister Rex Ulaeto, whose mentorship and spiritual adoption helped me to chart a course that has culminated in this feat. Thank you, sir, I am eternally grateful to you. I am most grateful to Mummy Grace Faluyi whose recent support and love for me were reassuring and provided me with hope amidst hopelessness, particularly when I was concluding this programme. Mummy, from the depth of my heart, I say God bless you.

I remain eternally grateful to my love, Ms. Sarah Edim, whose holistic sacrifice, critical advice, and emotional support have immeasurably enriched my life, as well as the eventual completion of this MA course. Indeed, your love and care, your beauty within and without, is the sunlight that illuminates every day of my life; it makes every challenge during this MA course surmountable and every success sweeter. I am blessed to have you. And I will always love you, Sarah.

My very special thanks go to my siblings, who are my backbone and one of the greatest support systems that I have. Thank you for all your love, genuine prayers, unconditional support, and counsel. Your support constantly inspires me to strive for excellence and press for higher feats, even in the face of daunting discouragement. You all never stopped believing in my capacity

and dreams, even when circumstances sometimes caused me to doubt them. But I am always motivated by your trust and hope in me. To you all, I say Sosongo, Abasi Idiong Mbufu!

To my beloved mother, Mrs. Elizabeth Mfon, I am grateful for her abiding love and enduring prayers. You taught me the value of hard work, integrity, and commitment. Because your unconditional contribution to my life is beyond words, **I dedicate this thesis to you, Mummy.** Your love for God, your wisdom, the puritan style training I received from you, and your simplicity of character continued to provide the Godly roadmap and inspiration that I leveraged until I completed this MA.

Finally, I would like to appreciate myself. I acknowledge the hard work and inconveniences that my body, mind, and soul have endured during this MA. **Unyime-Young**, you deserve a big hug. Thank you for not disappointing yourself and keeping faith. I will take some time off to nurture, care for, and love myself, to reenergize so that I can give more to the world.

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Chapter 1: Introduction and Background to the Study

This chapter introduces the thesis topic and hinges of the study by providing a brief background underpinning the research key words. It also discusses the study's problem statement, research aim, questions, objectives, significance, the connection of the study with the concept of public sphere and the dissertation structure by describing the content of each chapter.

1.1 Background to the Study

Digital media and technologies have transformed the educational sector immensely, especially by enhancing knowledge production, distribution, and criticism. The European Commission (2017) acknowledges that digital media and technologies are well-integrated and increasingly fundamental to pupils' education and lifelong learning. In other words, the advent of digital media and technology has triggered unprecedented pedagogical transformations and changes. These changes have impacted how historical knowledge is interpreted and transmitted and have raised fundamental questions about the essence of history education and how to facilitate history education in schools in what Buddeberg and Hornberg (2017) describe as the era of digital acceleration. The concerns and pitfalls of existing or conventional history teaching methods significantly explain the rationale behind the establishment of EuroClio, the European Association of History Educators, and the regular convergence of its members to brainstorm how to meaningfully improve history education to achieve students' immersive learning of the subject (De Julio, 2019).

The fundamental question of how to effectively impart historical consciousness to young people in a manner that will resonate with their realities so that history education adequately prepares them to significantly pilot their lives and civically contribute to their society is of utmost necessity. This question holds significant importance, especially in light of the growing apathy among young people towards the study of history and the growing concern among history educators to make history education more relevant for students (De Julio, 2019).

Studies have demonstrated that students struggle to appreciate the relevance or purpose of learning history and how it relates to their daily lives, and they often consider it boring, if not useless, in the most extreme cases (Haydn & Harris, 2010; Van Straaten et al., 2015, 2018; De Julio, 2019). Therefore, most students are not enthusiastic about learning history because it

does not align with their personal preferences. Instead, in some cases, the subject's mandatory nature compels them to learn it.

On the other hand, most of them understand the relevance of history and are passionate about learning it. Nevertheless, they feel disconnected and disenchanted with its pedagogical approach (Grever et al., 2011; Virta, 2016). According to Barton (2002), students often find history to be an unpopular subject due to the traditional pedagogical and learning approach, which emphasizes transmission-oriented instruction, poorly written textbooks, memorization and recall of sometimes factually incorrect historical information, and the justification of uncritical historical nationalism and patriotism.

While the traditional pedagogical approach to history education is still very relevant, it is gradually losing its essence in terms of whetting and sustaining the appetite of students for historical consciousness. Therefore, it makes sense to modify it to a more interactive and engaging approach that aligns with the digital culture of 21st century students, who mostly rely on or leverage digital and innovative technology for their learning. Moreover, a pedagogical approach that will generally engender skill-based knowledge, the acquisition of digital skills, practical learning, critical thinking, adaptable problem-solving ability, ethical reasoning, creativity, effective communication, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural understanding, media and technology literacy, and lifelong learning, among other things.

1.1.1 - Cursory Overview of Historical Consciousness

Historical consciousness is a globally renowned theory that explores history as a linear and progressive force (Carroll & Littlejohn, 2022), whose relative interpretations, significance, and application in a contemporary sense remain an open-ended discourse. It assesses how individuals cognitively identify their own experiences and memories through analysis of historical events. Historical consciousness, as a pedagogical concept, is associated with how to enable pupils to comprehend the intersection between the past, present, and future (Carroll & Littlejohn, 2022; Popa, 2022). It is an influential idea that is necessary to help students explore the fusion of time, space, culture, and identity and understand how these factors are relative and constructed in historical narratives.

Understanding the nuanced interplay between time, space, and interpretation enables students to examine historical discourses around them and make sense of them at the individual and community levels. Thorp (2014) argued that beyond helping students explore their past within

the framework of its temporality, geographical context, and identity construction of historical events and narratives, historical consciousness further facilitates the continuity, sustainability, and survival of historical narratives through teaching.

European historical consciousness focuses on fostering national identity and prestige. However, Nafziger (2020) contends that though the goal of European historical studies is to promote national identity, some historical analysis either romanticises, elevates, justifies, or absolves Europeans of their complicity in colonialism and its implications. Conversely, ethnography, the slave trade, colonial experience, anti-colonial struggles, the apartheid regime, and racial discrimination strongly shape historical consciousness in the African context (Gibson Nyikadzino, 2021). The scholarly resistance against Hugh Trevor-Roper's infamous and subjective statement, "Africa is a dark continent without history...the history of Africa is the history of Europeans in Africa," also shapes historical consciousness in the African context.

The goal of Nigerian historical consciousness is not different from the general African outlook. The schools' curricula are replete with precolonial histories and resistance against colonial incursions, among others (Nafziger, 2020). Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country constantly striving for national cohesion and nation-building. As a result, the people's collective historical awareness can serve as a springboard of national pride and evoke nation-building.

However, global, regional, and national research indicates that implementing this concept of historical consciousness and demonstrating its application in teaching history, particularly in middle and high schools, appears challenging (De Julio, 2019; Popa, 2022). The 21st century has witnessed several commendable efforts to apply the concept of historical consciousness through a traditional pedagogical approach. However, the traditional pedagogical approach unarguably has its pitfalls due to overreliance on voluminous text, which might be why students are disinterested in the subject. The advent of new digital technology, which has impressively revolutionised learning and information sharing in a manner hitherto unknown, may have added a new vista and layer of challenge to this approach. As a result, this study aims to investigate how to promote historical consciousness by utilising the educational opportunities inherent in students' digital culture and online engagements and preferences.

1.2 History Education and the Question of its Relevance

Scholars have advanced several positions to address the question of the relevance of history education. People generally conceptualize history as a way to gain self-awareness by exploring human life in the past (Popa, 2021). The author contends that this type of conceptualization negates and deemphasizes the actual value of learning history. The author argues that the value of learning history lies in conveying historical knowledge, enabling students to formulate critical ideas and skills to analyse and engage with historical material and interpretations (Ibid.). Additionally, it enables students to comprehend how history influences the world they inhabit and how they actively contribute to ongoing historical processes. For instance, Barton (2012), as cited in Popa (2021), states that the United States designs history to achieve several learning objectives, such as critical thinking, making valued judgements on what is wrong or right, mastering content knowledge, and identifying with the national interest. These compelling learning outcomes in history education place an unavoidable demand on teachers to sensibly decide what to teach and how to teach it (Ibid).

From Nigeria's perspective, the embedded value of learning history may include but is not limited to, inculcating critical thinking abilities like those of the United States. Ogbogbo (2015) added that learning history allow students to critically examine and appreciate Nigeria's complex composition and the cohesion that characterised precolonial inter-group relations. It can also engender nation-building and political awareness in students. Nevertheless, the leading challenge in making history subjects more resonating with students is the disconnect between the methods of teaching or knowledge delivery and expected learning objectives. Buttressing this, Van Straaten et al. (2018) believe that curricular documents emphasize the relevance of teaching students to comprehend the past, establish connections with the present and future, and develop historical thinking skills. However, the teaching and knowledge transmission method does not always support these goals.

Since the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) successfully championed the reinstatement of history education in school curricula in 2018 after several decades of its removal, both curriculum designers, history educators and scholars have recognised the educational aims of making students comprehend the value of history, its applicability, and the connection between the present and future based on insight into the past. However, achieving these aims with conventional pedagogy seems overwhelming and leaves much to be desired as history education in Nigeria continues to experience a crisis of relevance. Hence, the essence of this

thesis dissertation centres on exploring the possibility of adapting conventional pedagogy to students' digital experiences in Nigeria.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, history education is currently experiencing a "crisis of relevance" (Odoemene, 2021) because of students' unfavourable perception, which consequently leads to a decline in their interest in the subject. Students offered history as one of their critical subjects until a government policy removed it from school curricula (Ogbogbo, 2015). The 'politicised' claim that the subject is boring and uninteresting because of the traditional methods of reading lengthy texts and memorising dates served as justification for its removal from schools' curricula (Ibid.). A successive generation of students discreetly adopted this as compelling justification for their lack of interest in the subject. However, the efforts and advocacy of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) restored history education to the school's curriculum in 2018. HSN used its "Bring Back History" movement to vigorously interface with successive governments to return history education in schools and restore its significance (Ogbogbo, 2015; Odoemene, 2021).

According to Nafziger (2020), the postcolonial policy of removing historical content from school curricula has impacted students' perceptions and the formation of their historical consciousness. He asserts that most Nigerian youths had their historical consciousness in the absence of formal history education in schools. The author further averred that appropriately aligning historical educational objectives and transmitting them in sync with contemporary realities orchestrated by digital technologies can essentially inspire their interest in the subject.

In this connection, this thesis aims to address this problem by exploring how children's digital culture and technological innovation can be appropriated to enhance the existing history curriculum and engender historical consciousness in students. In all contexts, including Nigeria, the ideal essence of history education is attaining historical consciousness. Nonetheless, the challenge is about translating historical consciousness from the realm of ideological postulation to a relatable educational curriculum.

1.4 Aim of the Study and Research Questions

Against this backdrop, this dissertation explores the pedagogical significance of children's digital culture and experience in history education in junior high schools in Nigeria. It assesses how aligning history curriculum with children's online activities may impact students' perception and interest in the subject and their historical consciousness.

1.4.1 Research Questions

The dissertation's overarching questions are as follows:

RQ1: What factors shaped the removal and return of history education in Nigeria?

The research will assess the historical, political, economic, and socio-cultural factors that necessitated the removal and eventual reinstatement of history education in schools' curricula.

RQ2: What is the nature of children's digital culture in Nigeria, and what are the pressing questions?

This question will explore how children access the digital sphere, examining the devices they use and internet connectivity. It will also examine children's activities in the digital space, including the risks they encounter online and the opportunities of their online experience. These represent the core elements of children's digital culture.

RQ3: What is the pedagogical significance of children's digital culture and experience?

The inquiry delves into the educational significance of children's online activities and their potential to enhance the history curriculum in the digital era. Make history education interactive and engaging for students, thereby promoting historical consciousness.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives guides this study:

1. To explore the trajectory of history education in Nigeria and establish the necessity for its removal from the school curriculum and restoration.
2. To investigate children's digital culture and engagement with educational resources and social networking sites in Nigeria.

3. To evaluate the significance of children's digital culture and engagements with history education curriculum and historical consciousness.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is significant for several reasons. First, the research significantly seeks to examine children's digital culture and how it promotes or undermines their rights to access, protection, provision, and participation as written in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This insight provides the possibility of leveraging the skills and opportunities inherent in children's online engagements to promote historical knowledge. Likewise, the study is significant because it aims to transform students' negative perceptions of history and inspire their interest in historical knowledge by aligning the history curriculum with their digital experiences and preferences.

The study's outcomes will prospectively influence and shape educational policymaking, innovation, and curriculum development. It aligns with more significant initiatives to innovate modes of teaching historical knowledge and develop dynamic and learner-centred history curricula. This study is critical because it argues for not only adapting the conventional curriculum to new digital technology, but also appropriately translating educational objectives to learning experiences that resonate with students. In the final analysis, the research will provide evidence-based suggestions for incorporating digital components into the existing curriculum for 21st-century learners.

1.7 History Education and the Nigerian Public Sphere

According to Jürgen Habermas (1974), the public sphere is a social realm where citizens engage in critical and rational dialogue to form public opinion. He argues that a public sphere is constituted when individuals have the freedom to associate, express and transmit information or publish their opinions on issues of public interest through organised channels of communication such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and television, which serve as the public sphere's media. Situating this study within Habermas theoretical framework entails gaining insights into how public opinions and discourses were formed and how different actors and communication media shaped educational policies and processes that led to the removal of history education from school curricula, its reinstatement, and the promotion of historical consciousness.

The removal of history from primary and secondary school curricula was met with substantial public outcry and criticism, especially from academics. The policy decision sparked conversation in the Nigerian public sphere due to its perceived implications for collective memory, nation-building and historical consciousness (Ajayi, 1984; Ogbogbo, 2015; Odoemene, 2021). The public debate and outcry against the removal of history, facilitated by the Historical Society of Nigeria and amplified by media channels such as radio, television, and newspapers, exemplified how the public sphere fostered dialogue, public engagement, and communicative action that would shape historical education in Nigeria.

The reintroduction of the history subject into the lower school system is an achievement of public debate driven by the determined advocacy of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN). The Historical Society of Nigeria has played a crucial role in shaping the public debate on history education. Acting as a catalyst within the public sphere, they facilitated public discussion through seminars, conferences, and publications. They leveraged the media to emphasise the significance of restoring historical education in the country's curricula. Therefore, the reintroduction of history was not solely the government decision but rather a result of strong advocacy and public engagement with other stakeholders – policymakers, educators, members of the parliaments, etc. – demonstrating Habermas's concept of the public sphere as a space for democratic discourse.

Aligning junior school history curriculum to children's digital culture implies leveraging their online experiences, footprints, and digital literacy, as well as integrating digital tools and platforms with traditional teaching methods to inspire and enhance children's interest in learning history. Arguably, in the digital age, there is space for expanding the scope of Habermas concept of the public sphere' communication media beyond the traditional media to include social media platforms. In this sense, digital media can be considered a public sphere extension where people engage in discourses, share information, and form public opinion. While this new public sphere offers chances for an inclusive and participatory mode of communication, it also holds great opportunities for visualising and medialising historical narratives.

Thus, adapting the traditional history curriculum to children's engagement across different social media platforms is not only an effort to modernise history education in the public sphere, but also resonates with Habermas's notion of the public sphere engendering critical interaction with historical content to foster historical consciousness.

1.8 Structure of the Dissertation

Following this introductory chapter, the subsequent chapters are structured as follows:

Chapter two provides a critical review of existing academic literature and a synthesis of the concept of historical consciousness vis-à-vis history education. This chapter equally considers the philosophical questions surrounding history and historical consciousness, the question of history as an uninteresting subject and the imperative of optimising historical curriculum through digital visualisation and medialisation of history to make it relatable to the learning experiences in students' daily lives. Also treated in this chapter is the discourse on how to appropriate the concept in history teaching and a comparative analysis of how the concept works in Nigeria and Ghana. The chapter closes with an evaluation of the global and contextual understanding of children's digital culture to identify the risks and opportunities significant for promoting historical knowledge.

Chapter three delves thoroughly into the geographical description of Nigeria, including location, rivers, areas, climate, and other characteristics. It analyses Nigeria's demographic profile, encompassing the total population size, ethnic nationalities, and religions. The remainder of this chapter discusses the complexities of Nigeria's national identity question since the amalgamation in 1914. It examines Nigeria's education system, the evolution of history education, and curriculum development. It ends with examining the nature of children's online experience and its implications for history education—the teaching and learning of history in junior high schools in Nigeria.

Chapter four discusses the geographical context and the methodological framework guiding this study. It justifies the use of a research design that draws inspiration from the Global Kids Online Research Toolkits, a children-centered qualitative method of data collection and analysis. This chapter also discusses the sampling procedures of the research participants and schools, ethical considerations, and limitations of the methodological framework.

Chapter five summarises the study's key results according to the research aim, questions, and objectives. The synthesis of scholarly literature and the viewpoints of professors of historical studies on the assessment of the trajectory of history education in Nigeria are presented and analysed in the first section of this chapter. The second section provides the findings of dissertation question two (2), which evaluates children's digital culture and the educational opportunities of their preferred online engagements. Finally, the study's findings regarding the

third research objective, the pedagogical significance of children's online activities to history education or adapting history curriculum to children's engagements in the digital sphere, are presented here.

Chapter six provides a summary of the study and the key conclusions. It also discusses the discoveries made or new knowledge gained, as well as the research's contribution to scholarship. This chapter also discussed the study's limitations and the steps for future study.

Chapter 2 - Literature Review

This literature review presents two sections. Section 1 delves into the fundamental debate surrounding the concept of history. It discusses historical consciousness theory, the challenges of operationalizing it in teaching practice, its relevance in the current study, and a comparative analysis of the focus of history education in Nigeria and Ghana. Next, Section 2 starts by exploring the conceptualization of childhood, followed by a general review of children's digital experiences, risks, opportunities, and pedagogical implication for historical knowledge.

2.1 The Concept of History and the Question about the Past or Present

History is commonly defined as follows: First, it infers the entirety of the human past. Secondly, history can be described as an attempt to examine and interpret the past. Barraclough (1955), as cited in Mazabow (2003), defines *history* as an endeavour to unearth significant historical events from the available fragmentary evidence. In this sense, history is the body of knowledge resulting from in-depth research. Lastly, Mazabow (2003), citing Marwick (1970), asserts that history is an academic field of study that methodically explores and documents the past. This definition poses many philosophical questions, including what constitutes the nature of history, its research approach, and significance as an academic discipline. Although historical didactics should ideally avoid addressing these ideological questions, they hold significant importance due to the significant impact of history as an academic discipline on the teaching and learning of history in schools (Mazabow, 2003).

The question of whether history should explore contemporary issues or solely examine the past is yet another philosophical debate. Manyane (1999), referencing Von Ranke's exposition on this question, argues that historians should have the capacity to evaluate the past from the present and project for the future. The author added that historians can use historical insight to explore contemporary issues relevant to society. Furthermore, historian Croce believes that history is a contemporary consideration of the past and must provide a scientific response to current problems. This view reinforces J. Dewey's position that the past is essentially the present because it answers present needs, aims and interests (Mazabow, 2003).

Manyane (1999) contends that these open-ended debates negatively affect historical didactics by invasively perpetuating the traditional belief that history lessons primarily involve memorizing vast information for examinations, resulting in students' disinterest in the subject.

Affirming the conventional notion that history is boring, Taylor (1993), cited in Manyane (1999), posits that the tedious procession of facts that “*masquerades*” as history in our present textbooks has reduced its significance because it has plagued, misled, and bored us for so long. The author also claimed that history's obsession with current developments distorts the past when contemporary learners attempt to make sense of past situations, thereby making it non-resonating with students' real classroom scenarios on a practical level. Consequently, history teachers are increasingly faced with the challenge of designing learning experiences that resonate with students' daily lives.

Another important argument is the subjectivity of historical interpretations. The notion that history is impartial and objective in examining the past is inherently questionable. According to Carr (1990), whom Mazabow (2003) cites, the historians' era and views of the society in which they live shape how they interpret historical events. Many contend that historical narratives inherently encapsulate subjectivity. Historical narratives are composed of historians' feelings, intentions, and perspectives. However, Tosh (1991) argues that a historian's profound feeling or connection to historical phenomena should not obstruct the objectivity of historical inquiry and interpretation.

2.1.1 - Historical Consciousness: General Conceptual Discourses

Globally, the concept of historical consciousness is abstract, broad in scope and extensively influenced by different academic disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, education, and historical thinking. It also incorporates interdisciplinary subjects such as museum studies, heritage studies, memory, and media studies (Popa, 2021). Furthermore, while the concept of historical consciousness is aptly significant to history education, translating it into curriculum, and applying it to teaching exercises remains considerably challenging (Ibid.).

Historical consciousness refers to our understanding of the past and how we gain information about the connections between the past, present, and future across different geographical contexts and periods (Rüsen, 2004; Thorp, 2014). Scholars have critically evaluated and interpreted this widely accepted definition. It also reinforces the importance of historical consciousness in history teaching and learning. As well as an important underlying pedagogical framework for history teaching and learning (Seixas, 2017).

Rüsen (2004) postulates that historical consciousness is a critical process that directs us towards historical thinking and knowledge and facilitates thoughtful understanding of historical events

and narratives. Rüsen (2004) identifies four narrative frameworks—traditional, exemplar, critical and genetic—that contribute to the development and maintenance of historical consciousness. He averred that the traditional historical consciousness facilitates an understanding of continuous and normative societal practices such as rituals, customs, and values. This type of historical knowledge connects people deeply to the fibre and grains of their past. The author added that this represents the core of human nature. He espouses that exemplary historical consciousness represents circumstances that influence our current context and the future outcome. History is generally a product of human agency that presents an ethical or normative guide for future generations. He explained that critical historical consciousness assesses historical episodes, events, and narratives according to social boundaries and ideologies. The critical historical consciousness allows consideration of alternative or counter-historical narratives. Lastly, genetic historical consciousness is the application of a critical framework to analyse and understand how historical events manifest and influence present debate (Ibid).

In essence, historical consciousness is both a collective and individual critical understanding of historical episodes, which allows us to look beyond single claims of historical truth and biased narratives and fosters intercultural awareness and openness (Rüsen, 2004). It is the deep connection between people and their past, reflected in their knowledge of traditions, rituals, and artefacts and their ability to critique the rationale for specific actions or inactions within the framework of time and the future (Ibid.). It is also the ability to identify cultural and temporal biases inherent in our historical narratives and the empowerment to accept alternative views outside of our own prejudices. It is the ability to admit the subjective nature of historical events, avoid bias towards the present, and critically analyse historical actions, objects, and influences in relation to their historical context (Sexias, 2012, 2017).

Rüsen's (2004) provides a beneficial framework to understand how students acquire historical consciousness and explore how historical narratives influence their viewpoints on contemporary global issues. Nevertheless, Segall et al. (2018) believe that there is a significant gap in the literature about how teachers can leverage this concept in teaching and curriculum design to help students construct historical consciousness. Körber & Meyer-Hamme (2015) establish links between teaching pedagogies and frameworks utilised in history education and the cultivation of historical consciousness in students. Moreover, they contend that every aspect of Rüsen's (2004) historical consciousness framework can prove students' ability to think

critically about the past. They noted that the cultivation of competencies in curriculum design, historical inquiry, concept application, and understanding of temporal dimensions developed into forms of Rüsen's (2004) framework of historical consciousness.

Grever & Adriaansen (2019) offer another description of historical consciousness as connected to the way we consider the linearity and progressive force of history. This description acknowledges that historical events and narratives of the past are separate from current realities. For Wineburg et al. (2007), historical consciousness contests the hypothesis that historical experience, events, and occurrence intervals are homogeneous or universally applicable to all people. In other words, it implies that to be historically conscious, we must recognise how complex social structures, human ideas, and agency directly influence human actions and inactions, as well as how they are relative in context and time.

2.1.2 - Appropriating the Conceptual Framework

This research aims to help history educators create a pedagogical framework—curriculum, lesson plan, instruction, and assessment—that can adapt to students' digital experiences. As a result, this study appropriates and adapts to the conceptual elaboration of historical consciousness by Rüsen (2004). According to Rüsen (2004), historical awareness encompasses three key abilities: a) being sensitive to the past. That is the ability to have the actual *temporal experience* of the past, which can take a more elaborate form of historical sensitivity; b) comprehending the past. That is the ability to interpret and make sense of historical material or conceive a meaningful temporal whole; c) presenting oneself in connection to history, and the ability to *orientate*, that is, to use that “temporal whole” for “guiding actions. The preceding sentences explain the notion of historical temporality, interpretation, and orientation in practical life.

Following this analysis, the current study uses this theoretical foundation to investigate children's sensitivity to historical information during their online engagement and how they make sense of the past themselves. Furthermore, history educators can leverage children's sensitivity to historical materials and information online to design a pedagogical framework that will enable them to develop historical skills—document literacy skills and evaluative skills—that enable them to examine historical evidence and reconstruct the past critically. In essence, through frequent digital experiences, the study hypothesises that students can cultivate historical sensitivity, experience historical temporality, and become oriented with historical

skills that are helpful to evaluate and interpret historical content to develop their historical consciousness for national consciousness.

2.1.3 - Comparative Approach to Historical Consciousness: Nigeria and Ghana

Nigeria - The removal of history from the school system undervalues the development of historical consciousness through pedagogical processes in Nigeria. Meanwhile, in the 20th century, historical knowledge was one of the most effective anti-colonial weapons and postcolonial nation-building efforts (Ogbogbo, 2015). Nigerian academics have been focusing on criticising the absence of historical consciousness and calling for the reinstatement of the teaching and learning of history in response to these developments. The literature on historical consciousness in Nigeria strongly emphasizes the importance of history and the link between history education in schools and historical consciousness (Adesina, 2006; Ogbogbo, 2015; Odoemene, 2021).

Odoemene (2021) asserts that history is experiencing a “crisis of relevance” and links the recurrent ethno-political rivalries to insufficient knowledge of our collective history. He believes that teaching and learning history can engender historical consciousness, which is helpful in stimulating national cohesion and raising civically responsible citizens. In this sense, within the spatial-temporal context of Nigeria, historical consciousness is conceptualised within the agenda of advancing the relevance of teaching and learning history. It advocates for the necessity of enhancing the pertinence of history education to align with the evolving global landscape and the growing enthusiasm for Nigerian historical studies.

Moreover, historical consciousness literature in Nigeria is also linked to the construction of national identity and unity through the teaching and learning of history. Given the heterogeneous composition of the country and the remarkable historical amalgamation of 1914, Nigeria's national unity and identity often face contestation. Many still believe that Nigeria is an artificial creation of the British Empire (Nafziger, 2020). This widely held belief by most Nigerians frequently leads to arguments that undermine national identity and cohesion. As a result, research engagement on historical consciousness focuses on investigating how the history curriculum can be used to promote citizenship and civic values, such as tolerance and unity in diversity among students, as well as promote social unity and facilitate societal transformation. Additionally, they aim to establish a conceptual framework for comprehending historical awareness and its relevance to national cohesion.

Ghana - Ghana's school curricula highly value history despite it not being a compulsory subject, unlike Nigeria (Boadu, 2021). Adjepong & Kwarteng (2017) assert that historical consciousness plays a crucial role in Ghana's national development, with the teaching of history aimed at cultivating critical minds that will spearhead national development initiatives. History was utilised to develop Africa's consciences and personalities, which was a necessary anti-colonial tool. President Nkrumah's policy prioritised and encouraged the teaching of history at all levels of education in early postcolonial Ghana (Ibid). However, due to the 1987 educational reform, history lost its priority position in all pre-university schools. Consequently, the educational reform of 1987 merged history with social studies at the primary school level, offering it as an optional or elective subject for General Arts students (Dwarko, 2007).

Currently, teaching and learning in junior and senior high schools have regained relevance, and the curriculum is designed to develop students' sense of awareness of the significance of their collective past, encourage them to be proud of their heritage, and contribute to consolidating the achievements of their forebears (Ministry of Education, 2019).

Adjepong & Kwarteng (2017) posit that the basis for teaching history in Ghana demonstrates two underpinning rationales: pedagogical rationale and nationalistic rationale. The pedagogical rationale emphasises that history is an intellectual discipline that transcends mere rote memorization. The nationalistic rationale emphasised the cultivation of values such as national consciousness, democratic participation, and patriotism, all of which are critical national development efforts. According to Boadu (2021), we expect history pedagogy to engage students practically and intellectually through consistent constructivism to achieve these commendable goals. Consequently, teachers are anticipated to utilise a pedagogical model that leverages brainstorming activities, role-play, group and individual activities, class discussion, source analysis and excursions.

Compared to Nigeria, Ghana's historical consciousness literature review mainly focused on advancing and entrenching the equipping of students with historical skills to examine, analyse, critique, and objectively interpret historical materials for an informed conclusion. The literature places emphasis on the appropriate pedagogical framework that is efficient for equipping students with historical skills. These skills and historical awareness capacitate students to offer insider and informed viewpoints on African and Ghanaian histories, Ghana's historical and contemporary interaction with the wider world, and Ghana's contribution to global civilization.

This represents a distinct deviation from Nigeria's concerns about the crisis of relevance that history education is experiencing.

2.2 - Conceptualising children and childhood

A variety of perspectives on childhood have emerged in the 21st century. Childhood classification is a frontline academic and international development debate, especially when considered within the context of children's rights and development.

Many people conceptualize childhood as a social construct because there are numerous possible answers to the question: Who is a child? Or what is childhood? The answers are relative and predicated on culture and traditions, temporality and space, political and economic settings, and technological development (Bisht, 2008). The social construction process has also influenced the popular classification of childhood as the years between infancy and adolescence (Ibid.).

The UNCRC (1989) established a definition of childhood that is internationally renowned and adopted by many international development organisations, national governments, and regional and sub-regional agencies in their attempt to guarantee and protect the rights of children – the most vulnerable members of society. Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) defines a child as an individual under the age of 18 years, except national legal instruments, which refer to a majority attained at an earlier age (UNCRC, 1989). Article 2 of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1999) also defines a child as an individual below the age of 18 years. Similarly, the Child Policy of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Nigerian Child Rights Act (CRA, 2003), respectively, identify children as people under 18 years old, dependent, and mostly vulnerable.

This study uses 18 years as a benchmark to classify children. Hence, the research participants comprise children between the ages of 12 and 18.

2.2.1 - General Review of Children's Digital Media Engagement Vis-à-vis Child Rights

The advent of new technology has enhanced modes of communication in a way that was previously impossible, broadening the scope of interaction and learning, particularly for children, adolescents, and young people, in an unprecedented manner (Internet Society, 2021). The new technology that powers the digital landscape has become an integral component of most children's socialisation processes. It has calibrated their lives differently, leading to new opportunities for promotion of their rights and well-being as well as posing a risk to their rights and well-being as contained in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989).

The fulcrum of children's digital media engagements presents three paradigms: the prospects, dangers, and risks of children's interaction in the digital sphere. These paradigms manifest comparatively to each other in both the Global North and the Global South. According to General Comment No. 25 (2021), the digital landscape presents several prospects for child development, dangers, and challenges to child wellbeing in the digital age. The report highlights the potential dangers and risks associated with the digital space, which could expose children to new forms of violent abuse or influence them to self-harm or harm others. The self-harm behaviours that children are potentially exposed to online are self-cutting, suicide and eating disorders. It further indicates that sexual offenders may use digital media to pressurise children into sexual indulgence and to engage in cyber-child sexual abuse. This danger can manifest through sexual extortion, live video streaming, and the creation and dissemination of child sexual abuse resources. Children have become endangered by the possibility of being recruited into violence by non-state actors, such as terrorists, armed robbery gangs, and violent extremist groups, through digital environments.

However, the General Comment acknowledges the enormous prospect for holistic child development when children can safely or securely exercise their rights to access information online and engage and express themselves in the digital environment. Overall, General Comments No. 25 provides a detailed framework for comprehending these risks, dangers, and opportunities and an actionable approach that guarantees children's safe and inclusive participation in the digital space.

In High-Income Countries (HICs) of the Global North, Lupton (2021) and Borzekowski (2022) assert that children are constantly exposed to risks and dangers when navigating the vast amount of information in the digital environment. Their obsession with graphic video games and their excessive use of social media networks such as WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook, among others, expose children to risks and dangers. The risks and dangers experienced by children negate their right to protection. As provided in the Convention, children have the right to protection from all forms of injury, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse. Children are entitled to protection against unjust or illegal intrusion upon their privacy, family, or communication, as well as unwarranted assaults on their integrity and reputation (UNCRC, 1989).

Similarly, in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs), Lupton (2021) and Borzekowski (2022) describe the prospects of children's use of digital environments and assess how their digital engagements significantly impact their educational outcomes and are contingent on their socio-economic status. Educational and socioeconomic conditions influence children's online participation or non-participation. In LMICs, children's rights to participation in the digital space, as enshrined in UNCRC, are challenged by the difficulties they experience with the availability of internet coverage, access devices and other associated costs. The Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) (2020) reports that interventions around access are profound and are decreasing both the coverage and usage gaps that hitherto existed. Accordingly, about 82 to 90 percent of people in LMICs could access 4G and 3G networks (Ibid.).

Globally, approximately 3.4 billion people, or about 7 percent of the population, lack mobile broadband network coverage due to predictable unequal variables such as geography (urban/rural), income (low/high), age (young/old), and gender (male/female). According to GSMA (2020), media technology is becoming more affordable in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, and many households are willing to purchase devices and data. In contrast, the poorest income quintile needs help to overcome this challenge.

Early adopters of digital media technology, primarily adolescents of school age, often face financial constraints due to the high cost of devices, airtime, and internet data. They ingeniously navigate through their constraints by adopting “sip and dip” and “flash and beep.” The former means they constantly activate airplane mode to reduce data charges, while the latter is an inventive way of communicating without using airtime (ITU/UNESCO, 2019).

Article 31 of the UNCRC guarantees children the right to education, aiming to unlock their full prospect and equip them with the relevant skills to lead responsible lives in society. In light of this, and in response to financial incapacities that schoolchildren encounter, major telecom operators mostly offer free and reduced data plans to schoolchildren in countries such as Nigeria, Indonesia, Bhutan, and Zimbabwe to facilitate their access to educational materials online (World Bank, 2021). It makes creating, distributing, and using formal and informal learning resources and curricula easier for children.

The Global Kids Online project provides significant insights concerning the prospects of children's online experiences, which span education, health, sociality, civic life, and recreation domains (Swist et al., 2015; Livingstone and Stoilova, 2019). For instance, Global Kids Online's empirical study of children's online experiences in Ghana revealed the staggering risks and inherent pedagogical opportunities in the digital landscape. Children in Ghana believe that the internet has offered them great opportunities to build social relationships, enjoy entertainment, and, most importantly, learn. They consider the internet a centre for learning and communication. Conversely, the inherent risk is their exposure to deviant lifestyles, such as violence and sexual perversion, among others, through risky online practices, including cyberstalking and interactions with strangers (Global Kids Online: Country Report, 2017).

Ghana's findings are similar to those of South Africa and Zambia. Livingstone & Bulger (2013) strengthen the argument by averring that the benefits of children's online experiences are positive and quantifiable. In contrast, the opportunities are the capabilities of children to imagine and mobilise digital media to drive their daily lives, depending on the socio-cultural, political, and economic structures that may either enable or prevent their right to provision, protection, and participation.

2.2.2 - Making Sense of Children's Digital Experience within Learning Framework

According to Jarvis (2018), learning is essentially a transformative process that allows a learner to construct and negotiate meaning from a particular experience in relation to their social surroundings. Learning has experiential and existential dimensions. This is because learning is a crucial component of the conscious daily experiences we create through our interactions with objects in the social landscape, as well as how we interpret these experiences and utilise them to enhance our social and personal lives.

The author further elucidates that educational experience starts with bodily sensations—seeing, tasting, smelling, hearing, and feeling—of the physical world. The body receives stimuli from our senses and translates them to our mind and brain, which processes them into concepts—language, signs, and symbols; pragmatic—sociocultural practices and identity formation; and existential—our experiences and perspectives.

The social context of the learner affects this transformative process, which involves cognitively making sense of our experience. Furthermore, social conceptions heavily influence the interpretation a learner forms from their experiences to the extent that all the meanings they derive mirror the society in which they were born.

According to the preceding analysis, digital media and technologies are fundamental components of a child's social environment. Children react to the stimuli of digital media and technologies, generating daily experiences with cognitive significance that can transform into a historical educational framework. When we interpret and give meaning to the children's online experiences, we can integrate them into what they learn about their history. They will critically assess the information, whether they agree or disagree, thereby impacting their feelings, value system, and actions, among other things.

Chapter 3 - Research Context: Nigeria

3.1 - An Introduction to Nigeria

The description of modern Nigeria began in 1914 when the British Protectorates of Southern and Northern Nigeria were amalgamated under the governorship of Sir Frederick Lugard. Nigeria became independent in 1960. Several facets of Nigerian society, particularly the education sector, still bear the vestiges of British colonialism, structured according to the British model.

Section one of this chapter examines Nigeria's geographical features, including location, rivers, areas, climate, and other characteristics. The second section presents a demographic profile, including the total population size, ethnic nationalities, and religions. Section three provides a concise overview of Nigeria's national identity question since the amalgamation of 1914 and the complexities that fraught the quest for national identity and cohesion. The final section discusses Nigeria's education system, the evolution of history education, educational opportunities, and the importance of children's online experiences for history education—the teaching and learning of history in the lower tiers of education.

3.1.1 - Geographical Description of Nigeria

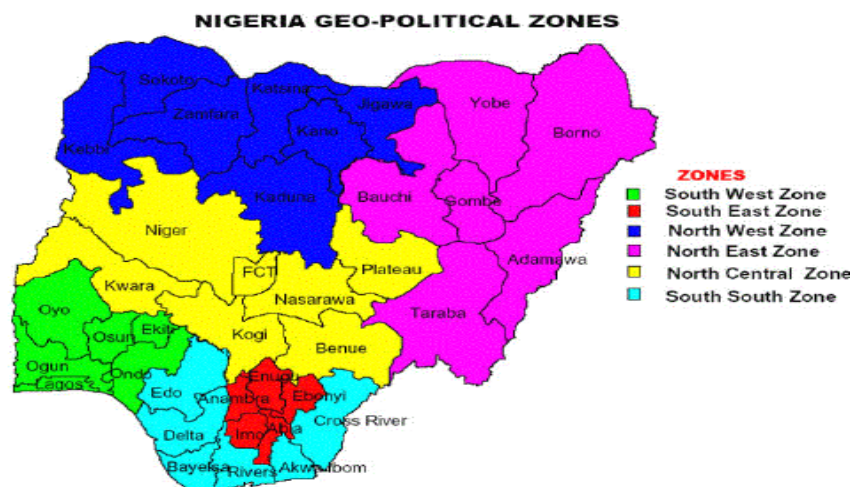
Nigeria is located around the Tropic Cancer and Equator with latitude 9° 04' 39.90" N and longitude 8° 40' 38.84" E. Geographically, Nigeria is located on the western fringe of Africa, bounded to the south by the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean, to the east by Chad and Cameroon, to the west by Benin, and the north by Niger. The River Niger, from which the country derives its name, and the River Benue are the primary rivers that demarcate the country into two unequal sections: the North and the South. The River Niger originates from Guinea, while the River Benue originates from northern Cameroon. Both rivers meet at Lokoja, the confluence town. From Lokoja, the rivers drain downward to the Gulf of Guinea through an extensive network of tributaries and creeks that constitute the Niger Delta (Udo et al., 2022; Udo, 2023).

Nigeria has a landmass area of 923,768 square kilometres, considered to be four times the size of the United Kingdom (Udo, 2023). Nigeria comprises 36 states and a Federal Capital Territory, considered the largest democracy and economy in Africa. The six distinct

geopolitical zones that make up Nigeria are Northeast, Northwest, North-central, South-west, Southeast and South-south. Nigeria possesses several natural resources, particularly abundant petroleum and natural gas deposits, which are the foundation of its economy (Udo et al., 2022).

The climatic conditions vary between the north and south. The north is dry, while the equatorial climate predominates in the south. Nigeria's climate is shaped by two wind systems: the harmattan (dry, dusty north-east wind), which originates from the Saharan Desert and the rain-bearing south-west wind, which blows from the ocean. The rainy and dry seasons are the two significant climatic variations in Nigeria. The rainy and dry seasons are the two major climatic variations in Nigeria. The rainy season commences in March and ends in November, and the dry season lasts from November to February. Climate change has significantly impacted and altered these seasons. The Southern Nigerian region experiences higher annual precipitation than the Northern Nigerian region. Northern Nigeria experiences high humidity from June to September, while South Nigeria experiences a similar trend from February to November (Udo et al., 2022; Udo, 2023).

Figure 1: Map showing the 36 states and FCT and the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria



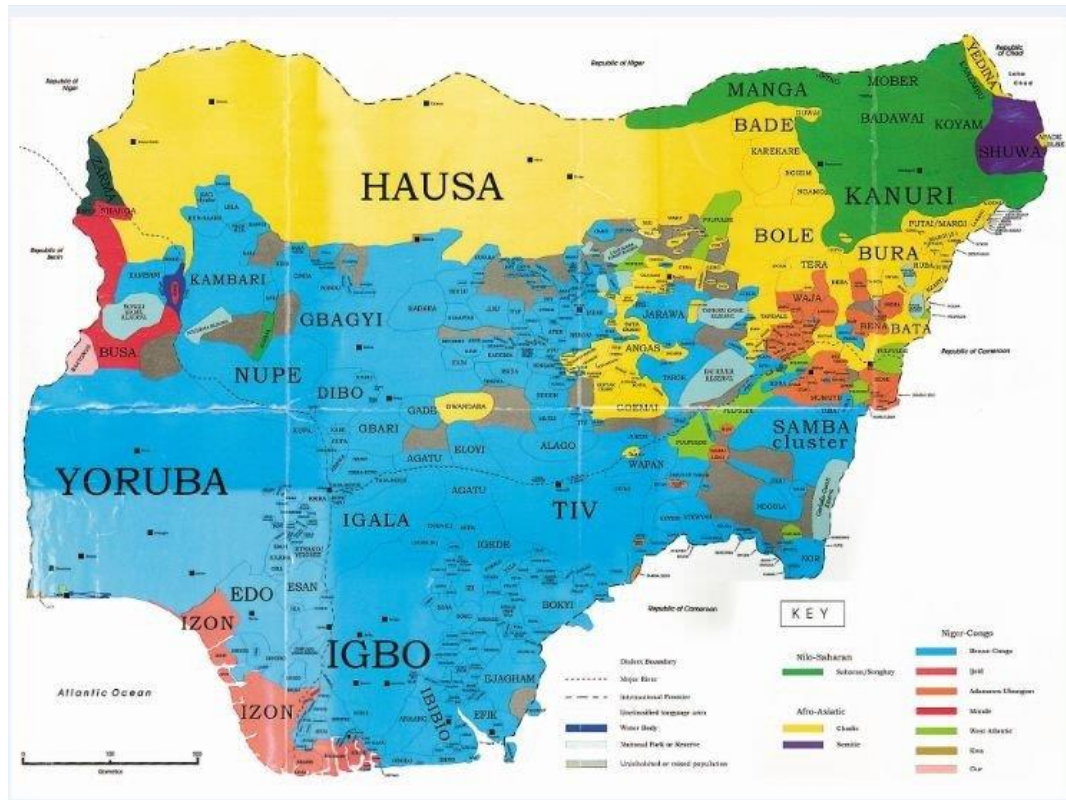
Source: Bakare (2015)

3.1.2 Nigeria's Demographic Profile and Ethnic Composition

Nigeria is one of the most densely populated countries in the African continent and ranks seventh globally because of its estimated 222 million people (Nwachukwu, 2024). As shown in *Figure 2* below, Nigeria is a heterogeneous nation-state with more than 250 ethnic nationalities and linguistic groups, including the three major ethnic nationalities: Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo. The Hausa-Fulani are in the north, the Yorubas are in the west, and the Igbos are in the east (Ibid.). Regardless of the linguistic variations, English serves as a unifying language that facilitates communication among Nigeria's various ethnic groups, and it is the language of instruction and assessment in schools.

Nigeria has different religious beliefs; however, Christianity and Islam are the most popular, followed by the traditional religion. Christianity is predominant in the southern region, while the Hausa-Fulani northerners are predominantly adherents of Islam. Nevertheless, there are minority Christian adherents in the north and minority Muslims in the south. Religious affiliations and beliefs have profoundly shaped Nigeria's historical trajectories, education, and political and social-cultural dynamics (Udo et al., 2022).

Figure 2: Map-of-Nigeria-showing-various-ethnic-groups



Source: Olagunju & Alaverdyan (2016).

3.1.3 The Complexities of the National Identity Question in Nigeria

National identity is a fluid phenomenon. However, Sokoh (2019) asserts that national identity in the Nigerian context refers to the collective consciousness of a nation as a cohesive whole, reflected through shared goals, interests, life, culture, purpose, and unity among multi-ethnic groups. It is the unifying force that connects values, aspirations, and objectives through which a people or nation can collectively define itself, identify its problems and support each other in their struggle for progress. Shared worldviews and a resilient way of life in the face of general threats, conflict, and struggle are examples of national identity (Odoemene, 2009).

Nigeria is a heterogeneous, multi-religious, culturally diverse, and multi-lingual country grappling with the issue of national identity. Nigeria has about 250 ethnic nationalities (Odoemene, 2009; National Conference Final Report, 2014). The multi-cultural and ethnic composition of Nigeria makes the quest for a cohesive national identity quite a myth and elusive. Strong cultural and religious divides, which the political class frequently takes

advantage of for its political gain, make it even worse. Hence, a lack of national identity often manifests itself through ethnic, religious, social, and political conflicts in Nigeria.

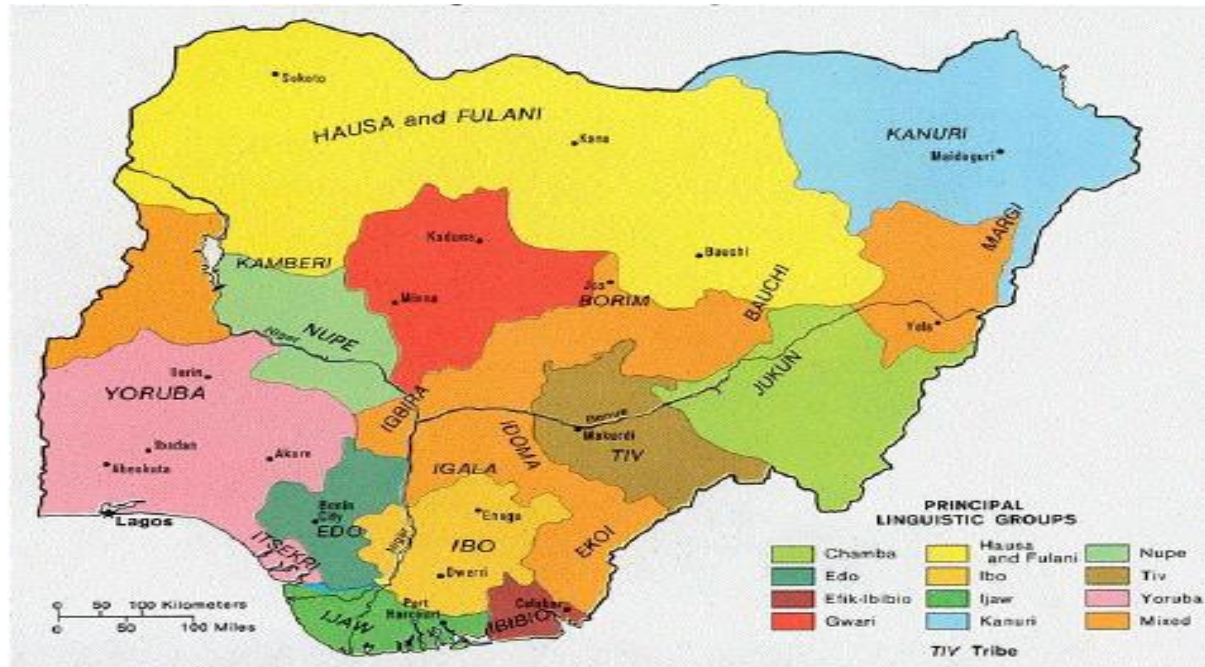
Nigeria's national identity complexities are historically rooted in the colonial amalgamation of distinct ethnic nationalities in a marriage of convenience in 1914 (Olu, 2017). Eze (2022) posits that a nation, according to the traditional view, is a group of people of the same historical heritage. In contrast, modernist theorists believe that a nation is either contrived or invented. From the modernist view, Eze (2022) remarks that Nigeria is an invention of British colonialism, which artificially created boundaries and forcefully imposed administrative systems to the degree that it led to ethnic polarisation and intergroup rivalry. Regrettably, this continually impinges on how the different ethnic groups contest for recognition, space, and political representation within Nigeria (Titus & Ogundiya, 2023).

Colonialism also failed to create a unified pattern of education to achieve holistic national cohesion in colonial and postcolonial Nigeria. In the southern part of Nigeria, Western education thrived. In contrast, in the northern part of Nigeria, Islamic education flourished. Hence, education becomes a divisive tool that propels distinctive orientations, values, and outlooks and spotlights the differences between the North and South.

Furthermore, post-colonial political dynamics such as corruption, nepotism, power struggles, military coups, and the unfortunate civil war widened religious, regional, and ethnic divides. These causes have resulted in a fragmented national identity, characterised by devotions and loyalties to ethnic or religious groups rather than the entire nation (Ibid.). Ethnic diversity and religious pluralism also constitute problems for building a cohesive national identity, as competing ethnic aspirations and the politicisation of religion and religious discrimination and extremism frequently undermine the wider nation-building objectives (Salami, 2004). These have an impact on national integration and pose a threat to Nigeria's corporate existence.

Lastly, the absence of a unifying culture exacerbates Nigeria's national identity crisis. Aside from the shared colonial experiences of amalgamation, cultural, political, and social oppression and exploitation, Nigeria lacks a unifying culture that can promote unity. However, many scholars argue that we can view collective colonial experiences as an identity and shared culture. The shared colonial experiences should motivate all ethnic groups to work towards achieving a definite goal and unity. However, this is mostly not the case, as ethnic commonality is what provides a rallying point for identity (Ibid.).

Figure 3: Map of major ethnic and linguistic groups in Nigeria



Source: Bakare (2015).

3.2 Implications of the National Identity Crisis on Pedagogy and Curriculum Design

In a heterogenous state such as Nigeria, giving children formal access to information about the past holds immeasurable potential to foster unity in diversity. However, striking a balance in the history curriculum between the distressing or traumatic memory of the Nigerian Civil War of 1967–1970 and unity in diversity is problematic.

According to Adesugba & Temitope's (2019) analysis, the absence of a cohesive national identity shapes children's educational needs in several ways. They argue that the curriculum's selective representation of the histories of dominant ethnic, regional, or religious groups, at the expense of neglecting and marginalising other groups, may unintentionally perpetuate inequalities and a distorted understanding of a country's diversity. Akanbi and Jekayinfa (2021) supported this fact by asserting that the need to represent various ethnic and religious voices, as well as minority groups, has always posed a challenge to curriculum design and development in Nigeria. Especially since the end of the Nigerian Civil War, most people believe that the Hausa-Fulani have a more powerful voice and influential representation in the curriculum than

other minority groups, such as the Igbos, who feel excluded at different points. This, according to Adesugba and Temitope (2019), potentially negates the possibility of developing an all-inclusive educational module that integrates varied perspectives and histories.

The overall consequence of having a disproportionate curriculum is that it deepens collective identity crises and weakens efforts to promote a sense of belonging, national consciousness, and civic education among pupils. This may make it impossible for them to align with broader social and national aspirations and goals.

Likewise, Igbokwe (2015) posits that the lack of a cohesive national identity also affects the teaching methods used in Nigerian classrooms. Without a shared reference point, it might be impossible to develop and effectively apply all-embracing teaching strategies that resonate with students from different ethnic settings and foster a sense of belonging in classrooms. The author further argues that the absence of a strong national identity can hinder efforts to foster critical thinking and intercultural understanding among students in Nigeria through effective pedagogy. When there is no solid basis for national identity, children are essentially unable to develop skills to navigate and appreciate different perspectives.

3.3 The Evolution of the History Curriculum, its Expulsion, and Restoration

3.3.1 Precolonial and Colonial History Curricula

Undoubtedly, the history education curriculum has evolved since Nigeria's precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial epochs. Omolewa (2016) argued that Christian missionaries introduced the teaching and learning of history as the core of Western education prior to the formalisation of colonial rule. However, the Bible and missionary resources primarily shaped the contents of the history curriculum.

Following that, the Education Ordinances of 1887, implemented by the colonial government, significantly elevated the significance of teaching and learning British and European history (Ibid.). During this period, the colonial government prioritised Biblical, British, and European histories over indigenous precolonial histories.

By the 1920s, the early educated Nigerian elite began to question the relegation or absence of the study of African history in the school curriculum. Ajayi (1984) asserts that the questioning

of the primacy of Eurocentric and Anglocentric histories over indigenous histories by educated elites such as Herbert Macaulay led to the gradual integration of African and Nigerian histories into the history curriculum. As a result, students had formal access to historical knowledge of the most influential African empires, such as the Songhai, Mali, Ghana, Benin, Oyo, and Bornu Empires, as well as their legacies. History textbooks, including *History of West Africa* and *Topics in West African History*, were launched to support the gradual embedding of indigenous histories in the Anglocentric history curriculum.

Although the history curriculum was Eurocentric and Anglocentric, it helped the educated elites develop a historical consciousness of Nigeria's and Africa's contribution to global civilization. Therefore, nationalists used history as a powerful intellectual weapon during their decolonization struggle in the 1950s (Omolewa, 2016).

3.3.2 Postcolonial History Curriculum

Following Nigeria's independence in 1960, it was imperative to decolonize and overhaul subsisting colonial educational principles, curriculum, and systems to firmly consolidate Nigeria's independence. As a result, the Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) held a curriculum conference in 1969. In 1972, Nigeria published the conference proceedings as its first indigenous education policy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2011). They launched the policy, christened it the National Policy on Education (NPE), and adopted it in 1977. Political developments, such as coups and countercoups that occurred in the years preceding 1977, delayed the adoption and operation of the NPE.

The NPE provided for a 6-3-3-4 education system, which entails six years of primary schooling, three years of junior high school, three years of senior high school, and four years of university or higher education. In 1982, the 6-3-3-4 education system became operational, and this impacted the status of history education in the lower tiers of schooling. The implementation of NPE in 1977 marked the beginning of a devaluation of the importance of teaching and learning history in Nigeria.

The Federal Ministry of Education (2017) report shows that history in the lower-tier schools was replaced with social studies, and senior high schools offered it as an elective. Likewise, the review of NPE and academic curricula from 1977 to 1981 reveals that history was classified under social norms and values, civic and social studies and was merged with geography in

secondary education (FRN, 1977; FRN, 1981). From 1982 on, history was completely delisted in primary and junior secondary curricula. It was replaced with social studies and retained as an elective in the senior secondary curriculum (FRN, 1998, 2004). Eventually, history became very unpopular at the senior secondary level following its removal from the primary and junior school curricula. Students at the senior secondary level who chose history as an optional subject lacked the necessary background knowledge to build on or motivate them to offer history (Akanbi & Jekayinfa, 2021).

According to the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) (2017), students passed through schools without sufficient insight into how Nigeria evolved through time and space, as well as the dynamics, character, and nature of intergroup relations among the multiple ethnic groups. As a result, young people do not understand Nigeria's socio-political experiences within the context of historical evolution.

Several studies have attempted to imagine the reason for the delisting of history in the National Policy on Education. First, it may not be unconnected with the fact that the then-ruling military junta initially loathed historians' critical views on national issues. Secondly, historical facts constantly contradicted their urge or intention to revise historical narratives for political ends. Thirdly, the perception that the subject is boring and uninteresting because of the conventional methods of reading long texts and memorising dates served as one of the justifications for delisting history as a subject (Ogbogbo, CBN, 2015; Odoemene, 2021). Nevertheless, when contrasted with other subjects that use similar conventional methods of teaching and evaluation as history, it is important to question why students have an enthusiastic interest in studying these subjects, and the reverse is the case for history. The Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) has been lobbying and advocating for the restoration of history as a distinct school subject since 1983, leading to its restoration in 2018.

3.4 - Restoration of History Education and Children's Digital Culture in Nigeria

In 2018, history education was restored to the school's curriculum through the efforts and advocacy of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN). HSN used its "Bring Back History" movement to vigorously interface with successive governments to return history education to schools and restore its significance. Despite the celebrated feat of restoring history to the school's curriculum, it still faces a challenge known as the "crisis of relevance" as students'

interest in the subject continues to decline (Odoemene, 2021). The scholar argues that the apathy *may not be* unconnected to the long deletion of history education from school curricula and the inadequacy of the current traditional pedagogical methods and history curricula in junior high schools to innovate, engage and immerse students in the exploration and understanding of Nigeria's history. In terms of integrating digital media components into its pedagogical model and classroom materials, the existing history education curriculum falls short, failing to sustain the interest of digital-native pupils accustomed to dynamic multimedia experiences.

Olutayo Adesina (2006) argued that the revolution in information technology has not only democratised historical scholarship but has also brought new possibilities to redefine students' perception and interest in history education, as well as a paradigm shift in delivery methods. In essence, the traditional approach to teaching history, which primarily relies on reading written historical sources, may need to integrate students' digital culture into an enhanced historical pedagogy in the digital age. Otherwise, students may again find this traditional method boring and uninspiring. Therefore, it is critical to develop innovative, fascinating, and engaging methods of teaching history, especially by leveraging opportunities provided by children's experiences in the digital environment.

3.4.1 Nigerian Children's Online Engagement and Educational Implications

There has been a noticeable increase in internet accessibility in developing economies compared to industrialized nations (Livingstone, 2014). Nigeria is among the African nations that exhibit notable and continuous growth in terms of internet usage, as about 55 percent of its population has access to digital gadgets and the internet. According to the 2024 report of Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), cited by Sahara Reporters (2024), Nigeria had over 163 million active internet users in the first quarter of 2023. In Nigeria, children make up an increasing proportion of people with access to digital technology, mobile phones, and internet access (Uzuegbunam, 2019). One in four households in Nigeria and one in three individuals have access to internet connectivity. This suggests that a significant proportion of children primarily access the internet through their personal smartphones, shared smartphones, or adult-purchased phones. However, the availability and usage of alternative digital gadgets, such as computers, laptops, and tablets, are not entirely non-existent but mostly irregular. Furthermore, the frequency of children's engagement with digital phones and internet

penetration is significantly notable. When possible, an average of 66 percent of children surf the internet using cell phones between 1 and 5 hours (Ibid.).

This rise in connectivity has led to significant transformations in various domains, including education, household activities, and research (Livingstone, 2014). However, the significant questions about children's access to the internet and digital media in Nigeria centre largely on the opportunities and risks and the extent to which their rights to provision, participation and protection are either promoted or undermined.

- **Provision**

Article 31 of the UNCRC guarantees children's access to education, aiming to unlock their full potential and equip them with the essential skills to lead responsible lives in society. The advent of digital technologies has enhanced the ability of children to access education by facilitating the ease of the creation, distribution, and use of formal and informal educational materials and syllabi for children to access in the digital sphere.

As a result, children have gainfully maximised digital technologies to execute academic tasks such as assignments and access both general and specific information, enhancing their educational pursuits. Access to digital space provides Nigerian children with the means to engage in self-directed formal and informal learning (Uzuegbunam, 2019). However, appropriating digital space for personal growth and self-education exhibits gender and socioeconomic disparities. According to Uzuegbunam (2019), privileged male adolescents residing in metropolitan areas are more likely to adopt digital technologies for these purposes than their female counterparts and individuals residing in rural or peri-urban regions.

However, according to children's right of provision, Uzuegbunam (2019) contends that social inequality and socio-economic conditions in Nigeria inhibit children's right to access digital gadgets and internet penetration for educational purposes. The gap between urban and rural residents, digital infrastructure, poverty, and social inequality all contribute to these inequalities (Uzuegbunam, 2019). Strict parental or guardian mediation, location, and poverty further restrict children's right to access smartphones, internet connections, digital skills, and literacy (Ibid.).

- **Protection**

Regarding children's right to protection from all forms of injury, abuse, neglect, sexual exploitation, and sexual abuse, Uzuegbunam (2019) notes that Nigerian children are often exposed to the profound risk of sexual grooming, sexual exploitation and abuse through the creation and distribution of sexually arousing and abusive videos; kidnapping and trafficking; and hostility through hate, harassing and bullying content on account of their footprint in the digital landscape.

- **Participation**

The UNCRC guarantees children's right to participation, especially in matters affecting them. Nigerian children use digital smartphones and internet access to interact, maintain connections, share information, and foster a sense of belonging and participation within social groups. This primarily fosters their social interaction and participation in the digital space (Uzuegbunam, 2019). Social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, and Facebook, among others, further enhance children's participation in the digital world. These networks reliably facilitate children's mutual, continuous interaction in their social setting, emotional stability, and dealing with boredom and mental health.

Nonetheless, research has shown that in Nigeria, it is common for gatekeepers—parents, guardians, teachers, and other adults—to discourage or restrict children from accessing the internet, thereby denying them participation. This is mostly due to concerns that internet usage may undermine the values of decency and morality instilled in them by adults within their socio-cultural frameworks (Uzuegbunam, 2019).

- **Educational Implication**

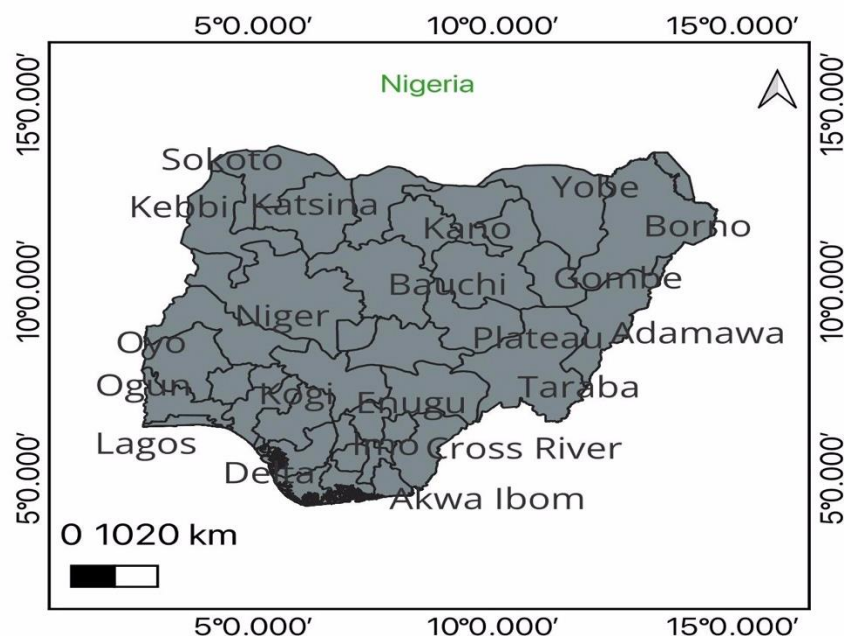
Livingstone and Bulger (2013) argue that the widespread use of digital technologies and internet connectivity presents immense new opportunities and benefits for children. This is factual in developing countries such as Nigeria, where the digital landscape presents an amazing prospect for promoting children's rights and educational development. Hence, adapting history content to the digital culture of children in Nigeria is imperative for the design

of child-centred pedagogy and curriculum. Therefore, this study aims to understand students' interests and activities in the digital realm and explore effective ways to leverage these for promoting historical awareness and transforming students' unfavorable attitudes towards the subject.

Chapter 4: Research Methodological Approach

This chapter discusses the methodological framework guiding this study. It begins by elucidating the geographical context within which this research occurred. Next, it scrutinizes and validates the study's methodological approach or research design, which employs a qualitative data analysis strategy that draws inspiration from the Global Kids Online Research Toolkits. Following this, the chapter discusses the data collection approach, the data sampling procedure, the selection criteria and sampled schools and the ethical considerations and limitations of the methodological framework.

Figure 4: Map Showing the States in Nigeria: Rivers State is in the middle between Delta and Akwa Ibom States, South-south.



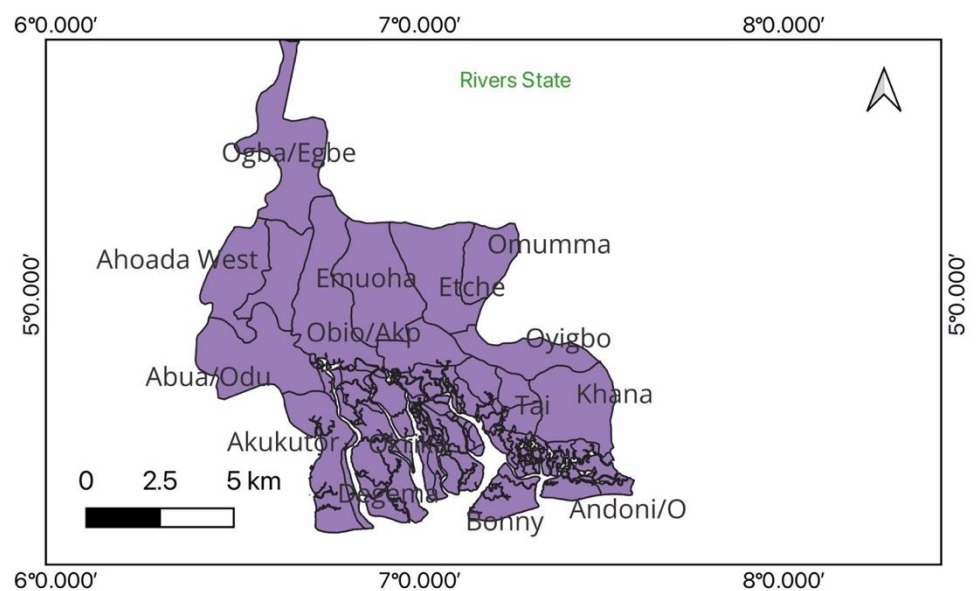
Source: Design by the Author

4.1 Study Area Description

The study was conducted in Obio Akpo. Obio Akpo is one of the twenty-three (23) local government areas of Rivers State. The Obio Akpo local government area is in the metropolis of Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Obio Akpo, located in Nigeria's south-south geopolitical zone within the oil-endowed Niger Delta area, has a blend of rural and urban areas with varying degrees of public, social and physical infrastructures, and access to public services (Dawaye & Dornubari, 2023).

According to Falilat (2022), the area is between longitudes $6^{\circ}50'E$ and $8^{\circ}00'E$ and latitudes $4^{\circ}45'N$ and $4^{\circ}60'N$, with a total land mass area of approximately 90 sq mi. Obio-Akpor is bordered to the south by Port Harcourt, where the local government headquarter is located, Oyibo and Eleme to the east, Emohua to the west, and Ikwerre and Etche to the north. Furthermore, according to the National Population Commission (2023), Obio Akpor has approximately 665,000 people, and it is a lowland area with an average elevation below 30 metres above sea level.

Figure 5: Map of Rivers State, Nigeria



Source: Design by the Author

4.2 Research Design

This research aims to investigate the pedagogical significance of children's digital cultural experiences or engagements, as well as the possible adaptation of Nigeria's junior high history education curricula to these digital-sphere engagements. As a result, the study's first objective is to explore the historical, socio-political, and economic dynamics that led to the exclusion and inclusion of history from the curriculum and explore the strengths and pitfalls of the existing junior schools' history curriculum. The second objective is to examine children's digital culture vis-à-vis historical consciousness. These two objectives are critical to this study. The third research objective is to analyse the findings of the former objectives.

The study utilised historical research tools to realise the first objective, including a review of secondary literature, oral interviews, and archival research. Following this, the research design to achieve the second research objective is inspired by the Global Kids Online Research Toolkit¹ (GKL), a framework developed by UNICEF and the London School of Economics (LSE) to examine children's digital cultural experiences.

The Global Kids Online framework or approach offers an extensive qualitative analytical framework for studying children's online experiences and fits perfectly into this study's interdisciplinary nature. Overall, this research design employs an interdisciplinary framework based on qualitative analysis, utilising primary and secondary data to gain insight into the junior high students' digital culture vis-à-vis to historical knowledge.

4.2.1 Data Collection

The primary data was collected through Zoom in-person interviews with pupils. This provides insight into the children's digital culture, their lived online experiences and how these impact their educational development (Table 1). The Zoom interviews with pupils and history subject instructors focused on gathering first-hand information about children's digital culture, including their online access, digital gadgets and social media use, and engagement with historical information online for learning and entertainment.

¹ Global Kids Online toolkit is a collection of research instruments designed to help governments, civil society groups, academics, and other relevant stakeholders conduct trusted and standardized national research on the children's digital culture, risks, and opportunities. The Global Kids Online project (www.globalkidsonline.net) was designed as a collaborative initiative between the UNICEF and the London School of Economics and Political Science, and the EU Kids Online network.

Furthermore, an appointed research assistant conducted face-to-face oral interviews with renowned professors of historical studies. The oral interview aimed to gather reliable data on the dynamic evolution of history education in Nigeria. The essence is also to explore the rationale behind removing history education from schools' syllabuses and the factors that resulted in its reinstatement. Ultimately, this provides credible insights for the analysis of research question 1.

The secondary data from research articles and official publications provides a comprehensive insight into children's digital culture, risks in the digital sphere, and the corresponding educational benefits. The secondary data from research articles also provides a foundation to evaluate the dynamic evolution of history education and how its traditional pedagogical approach impacts students' perceptions of history.

Table 1: Description of the Research Methodology

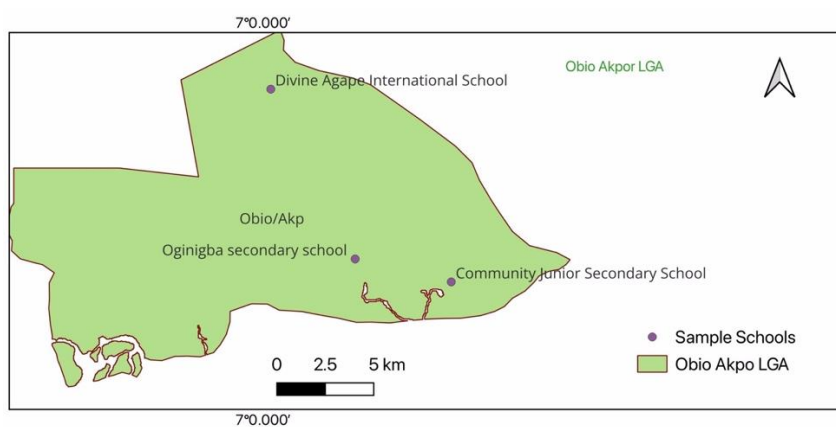
Methods	Data Sources	Classifications of Data
Secondary data collection	Academic journals Official publications	Qualitative data
Primary data collection	Zoom (virtual) in-person interviews and face-to-face interviews were conducted via a research assistant.	Qualitative data

Source: Author

4.2.2 - Sampling Methods

Purposive convenience sampling was used to choose two (2) junior secondary schools, comprising one private school with internet facilities and one public school without internet facilities, in Obio Akpo Local Government Area, Port Harcourt. This was premised on the need for easy access to the specified category of research participants, given the limited time frame of this research and the researcher's inability to travel to the study's area to conduct face-to-face interviews.

Figure 6: Map of Obio/Akpo Showing the Location of the Sampled Schools



Source: Designed by the Author

Photo 1: The Public Secondary School



Source: Ms. Ogechi

Photo 2: The Private Secondary School



Source: Mr. Amos

A total of ten (10) respondents, including eight (8) students—five boys and three girls—and two (2) teachers—were sampled and interviewed to collect data on children’s digital culture and its pedagogical significance for history education. Similarly, three professors of historical studies were interviewed by an appointed research assistant (Mr. Clinton) to collect data on the trajectory of history education in Nigeria. In all, the research respondents included school-aged children between the ages of 12 and 18, history teachers with sufficient knowledge of the phenomenon, and professors of historical studies.

4.2.3 Questionnaire Development

The interview questions were framed to examine the respondent's insights about (i) how children's activities and experiences in the digital sphere may impact history education and historical consciousness; (ii) the weaknesses and gaps in the current junior secondary school history curriculum; and (iii) how we can leverage the educational opportunities embedded in children's digital footprint to fill the gaps in the current history education curriculum (Table 2). The questions were designed in a clear and relatable manner, eliminating any ambiguity.

Table 2: Research Problems, Questions and Respondents

Research Problems	Key Questions
1. Assessing the history education evolution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the nature of history education and what factors that shaped its removal and restoration in schools' curricula? • What are the strength and weaknesses of the existing history curriculum? • Does it resonate with the digital reality of contemporary learners?
2. The nature of children's digital culture in Nigeria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do children access the internet? • How do children feel when they learn about the past and their perception of history? • What is the connection between children's online engagement and historical consciousness?
3. The pedagogical significance of children's digital culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the possible ways of adapting history curriculum to children's digital culture and engagement?

Source: Author

4.2.4 Rationale for the Sampling Method and its Limitations

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools and research participants to reflect the differences in the extent of children's digital culture in the study area. This method enables a more detailed investigation of the disparities between schools with internet facilities and those without. Similarly, pupils were selected from diverse socio-economic backgrounds to capture unique viewpoints related to their online presence. This ensures a thorough grasp of how various factors influence children's digital culture and interest in learning history or historical consciousness. In sum, the rationale and criteria for the purposeful selection of schools and respondents were based on the need to have broad insight and varied experiential accounts of the phenomenon and to understand how children's rights enshrined in UNCRC are promoted or undermined in the digital sphere.

The purposive sampling method has its drawbacks. However, it is critical to highlight or acknowledge these limitations for transparency and to ensure a thorough understanding of the study's discussions and findings within the context of these constraints. One of the limitations of purposive sampling, according to Sharma (2017), is its susceptibility to selection bias. Considering the limited scope and time of this study, the researcher chose the study area, schools, and respondents' sampling methods at his discretion, following the advice of the research project lead supervisor. Due to time constraints and the researcher's inability to travel

to Nigeria to conduct an elaborate study with a wider range of research participants, purposive sampling was a convenient approach. Thus, the sampling method is limited in its geographical scope, populations, and children's perspectives. As a result, the pupils' and teachers' insights into the subject matter in this geographical context may not accurately represent the entirety of the opinions of Nigeria's schoolchildren and history teachers about children's digital culture and the corresponding adaptation of history curriculum to their engagements in the digital sphere.

The study conducted virtual interviews via Zoom, limiting the ability to observe schoolchildren and teachers' lively and dynamic enthusiasm in discussing the subject matter. Additionally, the research aims and objectives may influence or predispose respondents' perspectives on the subject matter. Significant challenges also included the inability to travel to Nigeria for the research and limited data on children's digital culture in Nigeria generally. Thus, the research analysis will depend mainly on respondents' viewpoints collected via a Zoom virtual video chat and other secondary literature. Finally, the recurring themes concerning the adaptation of history curriculum to children's online engagements will be evaluated by using thematic analysis of interview transcripts.

4.3 Ethical Considerations

This research prioritised ethical considerations, mainly because it focused on children aged 12–18. Informed consent was secured from sampled schools', research participants—pupils and teachers—and parental or guardian consent was secured likewise. The study's aim, benefits, and risks were explained to the teacher and child participants in age-appropriate language, providing explicit guarantees of voluntary participation and withdrawal from the research should it become necessary. The history teachers transparently selected the participants. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. In the private school, the interviews were conducted in the school's computer lab, which also doubles as a history lab. In contrast, the history teacher in the public school used her smartphone to conduct the interviews in one of the classrooms. The interviews were conducted in the presence of the respective subject teachers without their interference.

Participants' psychological well-being was prioritised, confidentiality and privacy were preserved, and a debriefing was conducted at the end of the interview exercise. Data handling was done according to the security and anonymity code of conduct. The sensitivity of

protecting participants' identities was demonstrated during the reporting, discussing, and evaluating the study's findings. Continuous monitoring and responsiveness to feedback ensured ethical conduct, with a commitment to safeguarding the well-being and rights of children throughout the research process.

Chapter 5 - Research Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses the study's results. It is divided into thematic sections according to the research aim, questions, and objectives.

Section 5.1 presents a synthesis of secondary literature and the research participants' viewpoints on the first research problem: the assessment of Nigeria's history education trajectory.

Section 5.2 presents the findings for the second research concern: evaluating children's digital culture vis-à-vis their historical consciousness.

Section 5.3 presents the study's findings regarding the third research objective: the significance of children's online activities to history pedagogy or adapting history curriculum to children's engagements in the digital sphere.

5.1 History Education Trajectory and the Existing Junior Schools' Curriculum

The discourse here draws on the viewpoints of three academics: Emeritus Professor Ebiegberi Joe Alagoa, an oral historian, archivist, and scholar, renowned for his contribution to the development of Nigerian history. He has held several academic positions, including Vice Chancellor of the University of Port Harcourt (1982–1983) and President of the Historical Society of Nigeria²; The retired Professor Abi Derefaka, a historian, archaeologist and founding Director of the Institute of Niger Delta Studies, University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria³; and Professor Akachi Odoemene, an African historian, and Dean of the Faculty of Humanities Federal University Otuoke, Nigeria. He is the immediate past National Secretary of the Historical Society of Nigeria.⁴

The discourse also draws on archival documents and secondary literature to address the first research problem, which is focused on unravelling the underlying factors that probably triggered the erasure of history from schools' curricula and how existing history curricula are oriented to shape or reshape pupils' perceptions.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/E._J._Alagoa interviewed on 12 March 2024.

³ <https://www.uniport.edu.ng/news/featured/1869-history-dept-fetes-derefaka.html> interviewed 5 March 2024.

⁴ <https://fuotuoike.edu.ng/academics/academic-departments-programmes/social-sciences/faculty/akachi-odoemene-phd/> interviewed 9 March 2024

To explore this question, the interview questions for the Professors, archival research and secondary literature search centered on three primary objectives:

- a) To understand evolutionary epochs of historical education and consciousness in Nigeria.
- b) To examine postcolonial dynamics that culminated in the erasure of history from lower school syllabus.
- c) To describe the path to the reintroduction of history education.

5.1.1 Evolutional Epochs of Historical Education and Consciousness in Nigeria

The study's findings on this question indicate that history education in Nigeria has a trajectory that spans from 1884 to 2018. According to the respondents and literature, the 1884 Berlin Conference laid the foundation for formal history education due to the formalisation of British colonialism at the Conference. Thenceforth, intervening events in between culminated in the reintroduction of history education into lower-level school curricula in 2018 after decades of expulsion. As a result, the proceeding sub-sections discuss the research findings, which include the superimposition of an Anglo-Eurocentric history curriculum over African history and how the effort to Nigerianize history education between 1914 and 1960 shaped history education and historical consciousness in Nigeria. In this research report, African history will be used interchangeably and deliberately to represent Nigerian history within the context of the colonial and decolonization debates.

- **The Berlin Conference of 1884: A Precursor of Anglo-Eurocentric Historical Syllabi and Erasure of Nigerian History**

The Berlin West African Conference of 1884, convoked to regulate European imperialist exploitation in Africa, was the precursor to the superimposition of Anglo-Eurocentric history education in Nigeria. This event has had an enduring effect on the direction of historical consciousness in postcolonial Nigeria, especially in primary and junior high schools. The study found that the Berlin Conference heralded British colonialism, engendered colonial biases that marginalized indigenous perspectives, and contributed to the cancellation of Nigerian history education beginning from the late 19th century up to the half of the 20th century (Ajayi, 1984; Omolewa, 2016; Nafziger, 2020; Akanbi & Jekayinfa, 2021).

When reflecting on the evolution of Nigeria's history education, Professor EJ Alagoa and Abi Derefaka's responses indicate that even though the British colonial incursion in the Nigerian areas had begun long before 1884, the Berlin Conference was critical to its formalisation. The formalisation reinforced the widespread establishment of primary schools by missionaries to promote formal education. By 1914, when Nigeria was officially created through the amalgamation of the Southern and Northern British Protectorates, primary education had become interwoven with missionaries' proselytization.

History education was one of the core subjects of British formal education, in addition to mathematics and the English language, which equipped pupils with the reading, writing, and arithmetic skills necessary to participate in colonial expropriation and exploitation as clerical officers (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Professor Alagoa affirmed that formal education propagated Anglo-Eurocentric structured history curricula, which had an underlying and overt motive to promote European cultures, value systems, languages, and histories. Conversely, the inherent purpose of the Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum was to deny Africans their history, undermine African values, erase indigenous cultures and traditions, and westernize young minds towards the actualization of British imperialism in Nigeria (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024).

The Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum was structured to glorify British and European historical exploits or activities in Africa. The British imagined Africa as a dark, uncivilised, and culturally backward continent of no historical significance because it lacked written culture. Simply put, Africa had no history apart from the history of European activities in Africa (Falola & Heaton, 2008). Invalidating this notion, Derefaka asserts: *"Colonialists gave the impression that African history was the story of the Europeans in Africa... and that is not true... The history of Nigerian or African societies was rooted and preserved in oral traditions and cultural practices. History education did not start with the coming of the white man; we historically educated our children informally in the house"* (Professor Derefaka, Personal Interview, March 5, 2024)."

Reinforcing Derefaka's position, Alagoa posits that the Anglo-Eurocentric history syllabus deemphasized oral tradition as an important source of African history. It degraded African societies' precolonial cultural achievement and civilisations and extolled the civilising missions, missionary activities, and European conquests of Africa (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024). The British colonial government promulgated the Education

Ordinances in 1887, which, among other things, promoted and buttressed the significance of the history of the British Empire as a mandatory subject to further consolidate colonial hierarchies to the degree that it advanced the imperial project's idea of the racial, cultural, and historical supremacy of the British Empire over colonised societies (Omolewa, 2016; Akanbi & Jekayinfa, 2021).

The Berlin Conference laid the groundwork for the imposition of Anglo-Eurocentric historical education, which viciously marginalised African historical perspectives and had significant implications for the trajectory of history education and Nigeria's indigenous knowledge system. It provided the premise for the socio-political dynamics that strengthened the resoluteness of Nigeria's postcolonial nationalists to create collective amnesia by removing history from the education curriculum. The superimposition of Anglo-Eurocentric histories in basic schools' curricula over African history signified the earliest erasure and undermining of Nigerian history by colonial authority. After independence, political leaders only inherited, upheld and consolidated this legacy.

• Period Between 1914 to 1960: Nigerianizing History Education Syllabus and Decolonization Process

This study's findings revealed that the timeline from 1914 to 1960 was characterized by a significant upset against the exclusion of African or Nigerian perspectives in the history curriculum and how that not only influenced the decolonization process—the nationalist movement—but equally shaped historical education and consciousness in Nigeria.

Although the Anglo-Eurocentric history syllabus served as a colonial instrument of control, marginalization, and suppression, it developed critical historical minds who began questioning the status quo and challenging the deliberate exclusion of African (Nigerian) historical narratives and perspectives from the curriculum (Woolman, 2001). Between the 1920s and mid-1950s, Africanist historians and intellectual nationalists emerged. The scholarship of Africanist historians such as Professors Kenneth Dike (founding president of the Historical Society of Nigeria), EJ Alagoa, Ade Ajayi, and Abdullahi Smith, among others, gave impetus to the call for the Nigerianization of the history curriculum. Their insistence on indigenizing history syllabus content to reflect Nigerian cultural heritage, historical experiences, narratives, and perspectives profoundly influenced nationalist movements and their desire for self-determination.

According to Professor Derefaka, these Africanist historians, mainly from the reputable Ibadan School of History at the University of Ibadan, began to intellectually repudiate the skewed Eurocentric historical narrative of Africa by reconstructing Africa's history using oral sources and methodologies. He said: "...there were some historians fought against the notion that Africa had no history, and they documented Nigerian history from oral tradition and other unwritten sources. Foremost among them were Professors Vashina, EJ Alagoa, etc." (Professor Derefaka, Personal Interview, March 5, 2024)

Professor Alagoa revealed that the Ibadan School of History established a historiographic tradition that emphatically integrated indigenous African sources, giving specific significance to oral methodology and unwritten facts as invaluable and appropriate sources of African historiography (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024, p.1). The Africanist historians argued that for people without a writing culture in African societies, history can be archived in oral tradition, including the most notable of them all—music. It could be documented in dance or memory and systematically retrieved whenever needed. Despite its inherent challenges, this underlines the beauty of African history (Odoemene, 2023).

Consequently, Kenneth Dike's-led Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN) vigorously engaged in research projects, seminars, conferences, trainings, and publications that promoted Nigerian and African histories relying on oral methodology. In 1956, HSN held a conference to discuss the pedagogy of African histories in primary and secondary schools and universities. By the conclusion of that year, histories of prominent African empires, including Songhai, Mali, Ghana, Benin, Oyo, and Bornu Empires, along with their legacies, were gradually incorporated into primary and secondary curricula across the country. Between 1956 and the early 1960s, the history education curriculum consisted of a blend of Afrocentric and Eurocentric histories (Ajayi, 1975).

This revolutionary quest to Nigerianize the history curriculum fitted into the broader decolonization agenda or process. The aim was to use history education not only for historical consciousness but also for political canvassing, nationalist consciousness and fostering solidarity and national identity among Nigerians. This was a genuine and unique decolonization movement that leveraged historical intellectualism.

Nevertheless, the research findings indicate that the significant strides undertaken to Nigerianize the history education curriculum by the Ibadan School of History amounted to

three things. First, there was an urgent need to correct the misrepresentation of the Nigerian historical past by valorizing its precolonial history. It provided intellectual resistance to colonialism that influenced the emergence of a sovereign state—Nigeria. The Nigerianization advocacy led to a firm grounding of historical scholarship in Nigeria. It continued to shape the trajectory of history education during and after the ‘dark days’ of its removal from the school curriculum.

5.1.2 Postcolonial Dynamics Leading to the Erasure of History Education

The research outcome establishes that history was a core subject in the colonial basic education syllabus, although it had an Anglo-Eurocentric framework. However, Africanist historians wrest for the inclusion of indigenous perspectives in the existing Anglo-Eurocentric framework. Whereas, in the postcolonial period, history education was completely removed from the basic-level school syllabus. The spirited energy of HSN ensured its reintroduction after decades of erasure. The research findings show that several intermingling factors, particularly colonial legacy, socio-political development, and education policy reforms, culminated in replacing history education with social studies.

- **Socio-Political Development: The Impact of the ‘Ethnic-Oriented’ Civil War**

The Nigerian civil war or the Nigerian-Biafran war, was a socio-political development that influenced Nigeria's history education trajectory. The wave of violent military takeovers that engulfed the newly independent African countries in the 1960s did not spare Nigeria, which experienced a bloody military coup six years after independence (Odoemene, 2023). The 1966 coup d’etat not only ended the first republic, but it also set in motion chains of critical events, including religious and ethnic rivalry, which exploded in the gory Nigerian-Biafran civil conflagration between 1967 and 1970.

Following the carnage and the intense ethnic division that resulted from the civil war, the political class considered it expedient to foster collective amnesia of the war by removing history from the syllabus. Alagoa asserts that the military coup of 1966 and the disastrous civil war, which claimed the lives of an estimated three (3) million people, mainly from the country's south-eastern region, laid the groundwork for the erasure of history in junior high school curriculum (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024). The pronounced division of the country along ethnic and religious boundaries significantly jeopardized the fundamental

principles of national cohesion upon which Nigeria is based. Therefore, it was imperative to institute education reforms that will decolonise Nigeria's education sector as well as achieve a transition from historical consciousness to national consciousness through replacing history education with social studies.

- Transition from Historical Studies to Social Studies

As a build-up to the dethronement of history, the United States Education Development Centre (EDC) and the English Centre for Curriculum Renewal and Education Development Overseas (CREDO) held a conference in 1967 at Queen's College, University of Oxford, for education policy makers in Africa to discuss how African countries can chart a course of national consciousness, stability, and development through social studies education (Merryfield, 1988). In attendance at the conference were international development organisations, including UNESCO, USAID, the British Council, etc., and Nigerian education policymakers and bureaucrats (CREDO, 1968).

EDC and CREDO promoted social studies as a fresh educational route and response to the nation-building crisis that African countries, including Nigeria, were experiencing. This means merging civic education, history, sociology, anthropology, geography, and economics into social studies. According to Alagoa, the concept of social studies education for national consciousness coincided with the period when the civil war exposed the fragility of the country's ethnic relations and threatened the notion that Nigeria is indivisible (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024, p.4). Political elites and bureaucrats, in search of national healing and cohesion, envisaged that, unlike history, social studies would stimulate national integration and consolidate nation-building. Furthermore, they imagined that social studies would foster the school's corporate social responsibility in society, economic development, critical thinking, and self-confidence, as well as prepare school leavers for the labour market (CREDO, 1968).

On the contrary, political elites and bureaucrats argued that continued inclusion of history education in the curriculum would achieve disruptive effects and remind the younger generation of Nigerians of the cause, course, and consequences of the civil war. For them, that kind of engagement would deter nation-building and exacerbate ethnic rifts in Nigeria. In sum, while the social studies syllabus would focus on teaching national consciousness (issues

contemporaneous with the time) and unity, history education will achieve the opposite result. Professor Deferaka described this as follows:

The switch from historical studies to social studies occurred swiftly after the Nigerian-Biafran war. The then Education Minister openly denounced history and affirmed social studies as a curriculum subject that would help achieve post-war reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation policies. The aim was to weld an ethnically divided country rather than further divide it with history instruction. You know it was unavoidable to discuss Nigeria's history at the time without discussing the remote and immediate causes of the civil war and all its manifest deleterious impacts. This sort of historical reflection from the viewpoint of the Minister will inevitably create resentment among children from different ethnic groups and reopen old scars. (Professor Derefaka, Personal Interview, March 5, 2024).

Bureaucrats advanced another prominent argument that the capitalist-driven economy considered history insignificant, as it reinforced pupils' disconnection from their immediate environment and had no relevance to Nigeria's social, economic, and political prospects. Instead, they promoted social studies as a more functional and significant subject to uphold the Western model of development in Nigeria.

5.1.3 - Education Policies and Western Complicity

Following this, the Nigerian government kicked off the process of drafting a National Policy on Education to overhaul or purge the existing education syllabus from colonial vestiges and accommodate social studies—the new national needs, aspirations, and goals. Consequently, the first indigenous national curriculum conference took place in 1969. Various stakeholders participated in the Joint Consultative Council on Education (JCCE) conference, which had funding from the Ford Foundation and UNESCO (FMOE, 2004).

As a follow-up to the 1969 conference, Nigeria organized another conference of specialists and technocrats from various educational sectors in 1973 to draft the country's education policy. In 1977, the first National Policy on Education (NPE), which replaced historical consciousness with national consciousness and was designed to impart values and develop critical minds for economic growth, was finally published. The dynamic nature of education and social changes led to the launch of several other editions of the National Policy on Education in 1977, 1981, 1988, and many more (FMOE, 2004). The first social studies textbooks published by the

National Education Research Council in 1979 followed. Professor Alagoa notes that the social studies textbooks for primary and junior secondary schools had little or no historical content (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024).

- Western Complicity – Influence from without

In Nigeria, there was apparent Western complicity in the erasure of historical studies. The involvement of EDC and the Ford Foundation demonstrates this complicity and the visible influence the United States has had on the Nigerian education sector. Alagoa asserts that *“social studies was a novel subject that had just been introduced in the US education syllabus at the time. Yet, in the US, social studies did not displace or replace history. History was retained as a mandatory subject in the United States curriculum. Meanwhile, the case was different in Nigeria. Hence, in my opinion, beyond the intentional design to obliterate history education, the National Policy on Education, facilitated mostly by US technocrats, reflected ignorance and misplaced priority.”* (Professor Alagoa, Personal Interview, March 12, 2024).

Similarly, Professor Derefaka alludes to the fact that the drift from history to social studies was inspired by the US. *“The idea of social studies was a copy-and-paste syllabus from the US. Nigeria was at a critical intersection of finding a balance between building trust among ethnic groups and decolonizing the education curriculum when the idea of social studies emerged. It appealed to the logic and sentiment of political elites and bureaucrats. As laudable as the idea of social studies was, it ought to have been taught separately and concurrently with history. I think the political leaders were afraid of their shadows—that is what history is. That is why they did not hesitate to expunge it. The social studies curriculum, as copied from America, was very inadequate in many ways. Its uncritical approach to African culture, value and tradition and normative view about the role of men and women and code of conduct were, in my opinion, condescending.”* (Professor Derefaka, Personal Interview, March 5, 2024).

5.1.4 The Reintroduction of History – The Role of HSN

The reintroduction of history education into lower schools follows a path akin to the "long walk to freedom." Nigeria's eventual transition from military rule to democracy in 1999, after a long period, marked a turning point in the Historical Society of Nigeria's advocacy for the restoration of history education. The HSN launched the “Bring Back History” movement to relentlessly

agitate for the reintroduction of history education and historical consciousness at all educational levels in Nigeria.

Professor Akachi Odoemene, the immediate past HSN National Secretary, recalls that the 50th anniversary of HSN in 2005 marked the beginning of the revived pursuit of the reintroduction of history education. This event was also significant in the restructuring of Society. As he said in the interview: *the leadership of the Society visited the then President Obasanjo with a request to restore historical studies. Obasanjo acceded the request and instructed the Education Minister to restore the subject to the curriculum. Unfortunately, that order was never implemented, and the excitement was short-lived.*⁵ (Professor Akachi, Personal Interview, March 9, 2024, p.3).

Nine years later, another contingent of HSN leaders visited President Goodluck Jonathan in 2014 with a similar request. Odoemene reflects: *“yet again another verbalised approval and order that were never executed was given by President Jonathan. President Jonathan lost the general election to Mohammed Buhari.”* (Professor Akachi, Personal Interview, March 9, 2024, p.4).

A new leadership of HSN, led by Professor Ogbogbo, jettisoned the culture of unproductive visits to Nigerian Presidents by his predecessors. He re-strategized by building effective collaboration with first-class traditional rulers, National Assembly members, state governors, government agencies, and other opinion leaders to amplify criticisms, advocacy, and public sensitization about the dire consequences of the erasure of history education. This idea of collective duty for advocacy and criticism yielded the required result. While the listed stakeholders were exerting pressure on the government to reintroduce history, HSN members maintained the momentum through intellectual contributions, including massive sensitization and scholarly publications on the relevance of history education to national development (Odoemene, 2023).

The issue became a prime topic of debate on television and in newspapers. Through this massive sensitisation, many prominent Nigerians, including Nobel Laureate Professor Wole

⁵ Interview with former National Secretary of the Historical Society of Nigeria, Professor of African History, Federal University Otuoke, March 13th, 2024.

Soyinka, who had learned history in their primary and junior schools, became aware of the removal of history from the syllabus. In 2016, he expressed shock and displeasure about it in an interview he gave to a national newspaper. "I learned not so long ago that this country [Nigeria] has taken history off the curriculum," he noted. Can you imagine that? History? What is wrong with history? Or maybe I should ask, what is wrong with some people's heads?"⁶

Finally, in 2018, President Buhari approved the request and directed the Minister of Education, Professor Adamu Adamu, to implement it. The Minister summoned a meeting with HSN and the National Education and Research Development Commission (NERDC) to work out modalities for the detachment of history from the social studies curriculum. Finally, the National Council on Education approved the detachment of history from social studies and recognized it as a stand-alone and mandatory subject for primary and junior secondary schools.

This was exciting news that received extensive coverage in the news media. The Guardian newspaper summarised the excitement that greeted the return of history education as follows: *Finally, the future of Nigeria looks a little brighter because the nation has decided to begin to look, again, into its own past. The erstwhile removal of history from the school curriculum, or its so-called integration into that of social studies, was a mindless and uncharitable act of disservice to the generation of Nigerian pupils/students to which it was denied, a deprivation of the human need to understand its origin and trajectory in order to chart a worthy and viable course for its continuity. Thankfully, however, history has been restored, and Nigeria is no longer doomed, like the proverbial river that forgets its origin, to dry up and crack in its bed (The Guardian, 2018).*⁷

HSN's intellectual contribution to addressing nation-building and national development questions is evident in the actualization of its advocacy for the reintroduction of history education. The restoration of history education in schools represents an expression of optimism for Nigerians to appreciate their cultural achievements and gain insights from past mistakes.

⁶ Ben Ezeamalu. (26 August, 2016). "Soyinka wants History Restored in Nigerian Schools' Curriculum" (26 August); <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/more-news/209358-soyinka-wants-history-restored-nigerian-schools-curriculum.html> (Accessed: 15 March 2024).

⁷ The Guardian (2018). Editorial: As History returns to the curriculum. *The Guardian* newspaper. <https://guardian.ng/opinion/as-history-returns-to-the-curriculum/>

5.1.5 Analysis of the Trajectory of History Education in Nigeria

The study's findings demonstrate that the earliest course of formal history education in Nigeria began in 1884 with the introduction of the Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum by the colonialists. This formative phase laid the foundation for the evolutionary processes that would characterise historical scholarship in Nigeria.

Odoemene (2023) presents the SUR thesis, an acronym for “settled, unsettled and resettled,” to evaluate the trajectory of Nigeria’s history education. Odoemene argues that SUR represents the three dynamic phases of historical education. Odoemene describes the period between the 1950s and late 1970s as the “settled or golden phase” of historical scholarship in Nigeria. During this phase, Nigerian society and nationalist movements benefited from the intellectual contributions of faculty members of the Ibadan School of History, which challenged dominant colonial narratives. Their contribution promoted a nuanced insight into Nigerian history and shaped historical scholarship at all levels of education. Nationalists and the Nigerian populace held historical discipline in high regard and cherished it, especially in the context of anti-colonial struggle and advancing self-determination.

Furthermore, Odoemene describes the period between the early 1980s and 2016 as the “unsettling period.” He argues that the consequences of the ethnic-oriented civil war imposed a heavy question on the relevance of history education and the implication of its continued existence in the syllabus, particularly for the political elites who wish to obliterate the war memories. The continued questioning of the relevance of history and contempt for it culminated in its removal from the curriculum in 1983 and its replacement with social studies by government-sponsored technocrats. Following this, the Odoemene describes the time since 2016 as the “resettled phase” of historical studies. During this time, the Historical Society of Nigeria's persistent and aggressive agitations resulted in the reintroduction of history education into the lower school curriculum.

While Odoemene’s analysis shed light on the periods from the 1950s onwards, this study offers significant insight by providing extensive information about the evolution of history education in Nigeria, beginning from its inception in 1884 with the Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum to Odoemene’s “resettled phase” in 2016. The establishment of the Anglo-Eurocentric curriculum during this formative epoch crucially laid the groundwork for the subsequent “settled, unsettled, and resettled” epochs. Moreover, providing this earliest historical context underlines

the transformative journey of history education and emphasizes the essential role of persistent advocacy and adaptation in sustaining its significance and relevance among junior high school pupils in Nigeria.

5.2 The Nature of Children's Digital Culture Vis-à-vis Historical Consciousness

This section addresses research question two, drawing on data from eight (8) pupils, consisting of five (5) boys and three (3) girls, as well as two (2) history instructors collected via Zoom interview. A public and a private school were sampled and four pupils in each of the schools participated in the research. Global Kid Online provides a framework for analysing the research findings. The children-oriented interview questions, as well as those of their instructors adapted to the Global Kid Online framework, explored the following objectives:

- To understand how children get online, access internet and the span of time they spend online.
- To ascertain how children feel when they learn about the past and their perception of history.
- To establish the connection between children's online engagement and historical consciousness.

The children's and the teachers' responses, however, in resonance with the objectives above and the UNCR principles, most specifically provided information about the following questions: pupils' historical knowledge or consciousness; pupils' digital culture, including how they access the internet; information about their activities and experiences online; how they engage or interact with historical information, content or resources online; what skills they acquire; the risks and opportunities they encounter in the digital sphere. The information provided by these research respondents, although limited, was relevant in the analysis of the pedagogical implications of children's digital experiences to history education, which constitute the core of research question three.

5.2.1 Analysis of Children's Knowledge and Perception of Historical Education

The research findings contradict the general common perception that history is boring, vast, deep, less engaging, and a difficult-to-understand subject. The common notion that history is in-depth and covers more topics than social studies largely stimulate this perception of history as difficult (Nafziger, 2020). Pupils prefer subjects that are easy to learn and understand,

leading them to gravitate towards social studies, which they perceive as less burdensome (Ibid.).

However, the children's responses demonstrate that there is a gradual mental shift from this negative perception. In both schools sampled, the children revealed that they study history and perceive it to be an intriguing and exciting subject. Children stated that they always feel intrigued, curiously excited and enjoy learning about the past. One of the pupils disclosed that he was intrigued to learn how the Scottish Presbyterian missionaries stopped the traditional practice of killing twins. He said, *"I learned in our history class that Marry Slessor from Scotland stopped the killing of twins in Calabar. I was surprised. I am a twin. It means I and my sibling would have been killed if she did not stop it."*

The response from the teachers supplied insight into why history lessons might be exciting and intriguing to the pupils. Mr. Amos (pseudo name), who holds a bachelor's degree in history and diplomacy and teaches in the private school sampled, revealed that his pupils are always keen and excited to have history lessons. Similarly, Ms. Ogechi (pseudo name), who has a first degree in history education and teaches in the public school sampled, gave disclosure about children's keen interest and curiosity to learn history. The teachers' teaching method seems to have contributed to students' appetite for history lessons.

Responding to the connection between pedagogy and pupils' absorbing interest in history lessons, Mr. Amos disclosed that history education is now a mandatory subject at the junior secondary level. Moreover, the incorporation of visual aids and the use digital media as part of teaching methods not only facilitate pupils' ability to be intrigued by, engage with, and visually relate or process the historical events; but these tools also effectively help to sustain their appetite or interest in the subject. He said, *"My pupils' are always looking forward to history classes... I teach every historical topic with picture aids, and I mostly take them to the computer lab, where I have the chance to google for them to see some of the historical places. I think the visuals of the historical places intrigue them and help them to believe that the said event occurred."*

Unlike the private school, the public school lacks digital infrastructure. Ms. Ogechi acknowledged that, in most cases, she uses her phone to show the student a visual illustration or pictorial depiction of historical narrative to enable them to relate the past event to the present.

“I think showing my students historical pictures on my phone makes history fascinating to them and easy to understand. They are always happy to learn, and they ask curious questions too...”

To conclude this part, the responses of these pupils' and teachers demonstrate two overarching points. Enforcing history as a mandatory subject inevitably introduces children to the historical understanding of their society's evolution and its impact on them. For instance, one of the eight students eloquently depicted the impact of colonial intervention or interference that prevented the cultural practices of killing twins on his life, including his sibling. But they are fascinated by engaging with the reality of the past and its significance and implications in the present. Secondly, the instructors' chosen pedagogical tool significantly influences the students' perception of history. They now find history captivating and motivating. Mr. Amos and Ms. Ogechi's pedagogical approach: visualization of historical events can be considered viable and mostly contribute to pupils' ability to make meaning of history.

5.2.2 How Children Access the Internet

The research findings indicate that the sampled children generally have structures, including mobile phones and internet services, that ideally inspire their digital access and culture. The children and teachers live in an urban area where internet connectivity is not a problem, and they all frequently use the internet for a variety of purposes, including completing academic tasks or educational engagements. Nonetheless, the digital divide between haves and have-nots, unequal socio-economic conditions and parental restrictions occasionally limit or bar their ability to leverage these infrastructures to access the digital space. The study shows that the private school sampled have more digital infrastructures that make online participation possible compared to the sampled public school. This finding can be leveraged to draw plausible conclusion and inference that children's online participation or engagements is mostly robust in private schools with internet facilities compared with public schools without similar infrastructures.

• Pupils' Mode of Access to the Internet in the Private School

The literature demonstrates that devices such as smartphones and desktop computers, along with the availability of internet service, are increasingly facilitating internet access (Livingstone & Bulger, 2013; Livingstone, 2014, Uzuegbunam, 2019). These affect children's

and young people's access to and experience with the internet, which further present immense new opportunities and benefits for children. The four respondents from the sampled private school revealed that they primarily use internet-enabled smartphones at home to access the internet, while their parents or guardians provide internet access, and they use desktop computers in school during history lessons and for other subjects too. They typically spend about four (4) hours or more engaging online, both at home and in school. Similarly, Mr. Amos confirmed the school has internet and desktop computers, which enable the children to have online access and exclusive interaction with educational resources while in school. This reveals that there is a robust children's digital culture and online participation among the pupils at this private school. The most used devices to access the internet are smartphones, while desktop computers are the second most used devices to access the internet in school. Children seem to prefer smartphones over desktops due to their portability and ease of use.

• Pupils' Mode of Access to the Internet in the Public School

In the public school, pupils' responses show that they only access the internet through their parents' mobile smartphones at home. They rarely access the internet in the school because their school does not have digital infrastructure such as a computer lab and internet services. When they are in school, they can only access the internet through the teacher's smartphone. They spend an average of four hours or more online. Their teacher, Ms. Ogechi, corroborates the children's claim by stating that there are no desktop computers available for them to use as a gateway into the online space. This demonstrates that in this public school, pupils' online participation is less robust due to lack of digital infrastructures.

5.2.3 Examining Children Online Engagements with Historical Resources

Research reveals that children participate in a variety of activities in the digital space (Global Kids Online Report on Ghana, 2017; Livingstone and Stoilova, 2019; Internet Society, 2021). It is within the right and entitlement of children to gainfully participate online and leverage opportunities inherent for development without threat, harassment, or violation of rights (UNCRC, 1989; UN General Comment No. 25, 2021). In this respect, the relevance of smartphones, social media platforms, and the content that children engage with online determine the nature of their online activities.

• The Role of Internet-Enabled Smartphones

In furtherance of this participation right, the respondents alluded to the fact that internet-enabled smartphones greatly facilitate their online access and engagements. The engagements straddle several social media and historical content platforms. The respondents indicated that they have utilised smartphones to accomplish the following within a varied range of regularity: they reported that *a few times* internet-enabled smartphones have helped them to connect and network with new and mutual friends across social media networks; participate in virtual lessons; execute homework across all subjects; play online games; and create and share content, including memes, videos, and music, among others, online.

They also stated that *several times* and almost all the time they have leveraged internet-enabled smartphones to explore historical resources online, complete homework, assignments, or tasks in other subjects, including mathematics, music, and choreographic dance. The history teachers believe that the children have internet-supported smartphones in their homes for online access, and they probably spend a maximum of four (4) hours and more online.

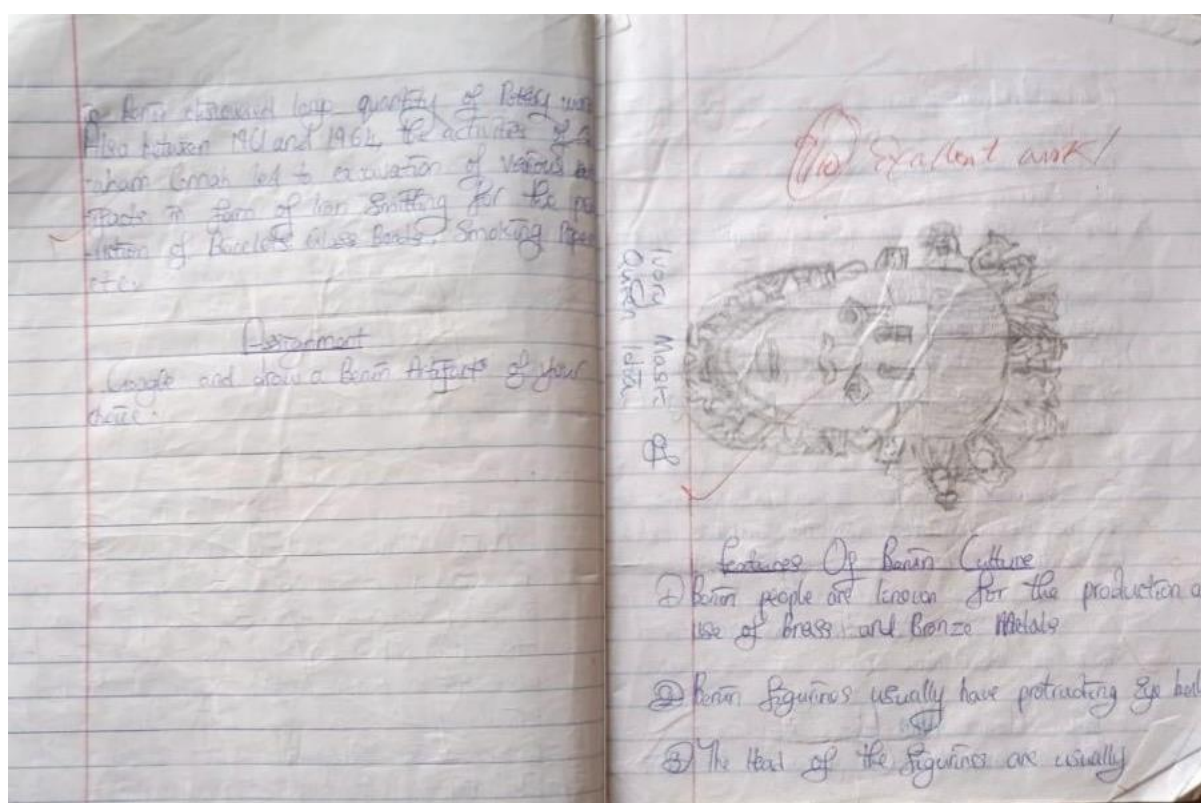
This broad range of children's online engagements that straddle across education, entertainment, communication, recreation, social connection, content creation and dissemination are not exclusive to this sampled population. For instance, Global Kids Online research reports in Ghana and South Africa demonstrate that children's online engagements mostly revolve around the above-mentioned activities.

• Children's Leverage of Social Media Platforms for Historical Knowledge

Children's access to and exploration of the digital space ensures their participation and opportunity to interact and communicate ideas, appropriate them for educational purposes, and create and share real-time content virtually with others through many social media platforms. In this context, the children revealed through a survey the social media platform they use to interact with historical resources and enhance their learning experience. These platforms comprise Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Tik Tok, and WhatsApp.

They alluded to the fact that they *always* engage with historical content on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok when required, particularly when given homework or an academic assignment. They also noted that several times they have liked and shared historical content, such as pictures, information, and videos they found online and the ones they recreated or recreated by others with their friends, on social media platforms. They stated that *almost all the time* they browse through the internet and social media platforms and engage with historical content to complete their history homework or assignment. These platforms provide useful resources for doing assignments. One of the students noted, “*I always look for materials online to do my homework and assignments.*”

Figure 7: Image showing history education assignment completed with online materials.



Source: Mr Amos

A few of the pupils stated that *several times*, they have shared significant historical information, including pictures, videos, and music about their locality, perhaps in a WhatsApp group or status accessed by people known and unknown to them without seeking consent. On the other hand, results show they *never* participate in internet-based protests, boycotts, political campaign or sign online petitions.

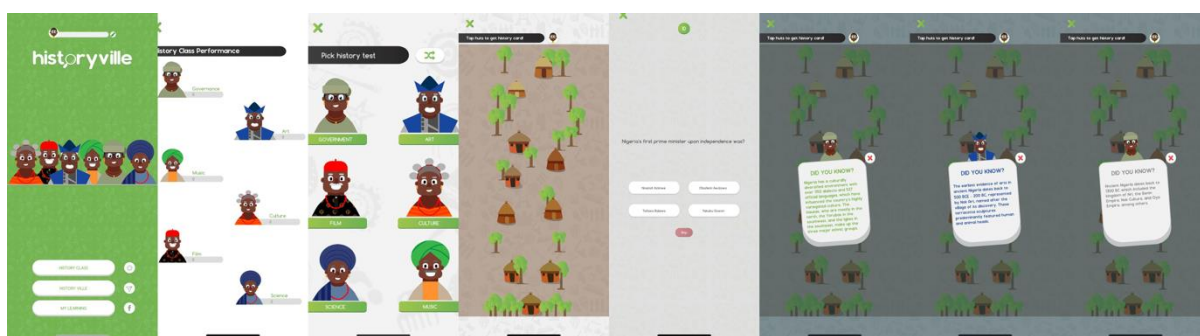
The history instructors buttressed the point that while in school, *almost all the time* the pupils explore the online landscape for learning purposes, especially for completing their history assignments and academic tasks in other subjects both in school and at home. According to the teachers, the pupils have possibly engaged with content—that is, liked and shared pictures, videos, music, and some history-related content found online or recreated by them or that of other people *frequently* on social media platforms. In the same vein, the teachers believe that *several time* pupils’ online activities are predicated on learning and the completion of homework. *A few times*, they believe that their online activities might not be related to learning but to interaction with their peers and making new friends. Finally, the teachers believe that perhaps the pupils have *never* signed an online petition or participated in an internet-based protest because they are not very inclined towards such engagement.

• Digital Platforms and Software Application that Shares Historical Content

This research findings indicate that children leverage historical content platforms to achieve historical consciousness. The teachers shed light on specific platforms hosted on several social media sites that promote history education and learning. According to Mr. Amos, “*apart from the general Google search for specific historical information, I can attest to **Historyville** as one of Nigeria’s renowned history platforms that I recommended to my pupils. Historyville has a learning software application and Historyville is hosted on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram, which are accessible to children.*” Mr. Amos explained that the Historyville learning software consists of three components: The history class; Historyville; and My learning. Each components contains history lessons designed for primary and junior secondary school students. Ms. Ogechi affirmed that in addition to Historyville, she also leveraged the Nigerian Nostalgia 1960–1980 project on Facebook to facilitate her delivery of historical instruction.

Correspondingly, the teachers firmly believe that the pupils *constantly* explore, when required, these history resources, software application and platforms on social media to execute their homework and academic assignments. Furthermore, the teachers believe that children use the resources in Historyville, which is hosted on social networking platforms, to learn and share historical information with their parents, friends, and people in their space.

Figure 8: Images from Historyville App.



Source: Author

• Parental and Guardian’s Mediation: Restriction or Guidance

On the question of parental mediation, restriction or guidance, the pupils strongly agree that their parents often regulate when they can access the internet and how much time they can spend online. One of the public-school pupils said, *“My mother only allows me to access the internet, mostly in the evenings when I need to do my homework.”* They also concur that their parents prohibit them from visiting certain websites that are considered unsafe.

The children acknowledged that *very often* their parents check and inquire about their online activities, suggest ways to navigate the internet safely, encourage them to leverage the internet for learning purposes and assist when it becomes necessary. The teachers similarly *strongly agree* that it is useful to set rules about the totality of pupils’ usage of the internet. While doing that, they ensure that the rules do not infringe on the pupils’ right of participation. They alluded to the fact that they *very often* have an informal general discussion with the students about their safety in the digital sphere, their nature of interaction in the space, the need to leverage educational opportunities, control what pupils do on the internet while in school and help them where they have difficulty.

• Harmful and Risky Online Engagements

In their responses, the students hinted that while interacting with historical information online, some of them had engaged in risky activities multiple times. This includes interacting with strangers, seeking to be friends with strangers, following unknown social media pages, and sharing information with people they do not know personally, as well as in WhatsApp groups that consist of known or unknown people without their consent. The risky practices are common among the male respondents. The research finding shows that five (5) boys out of the

eight (8) pupils are culpable for engaging in risky behaviour despite parental mediation. On the other hand, the female respondents revealed that they only share information they deem relevant with friends and do not necessarily engage in risky practices consequent upon parental mediation. Additionally, the research findings reveal that children frequently encounter harmful digital content, such as upsetting unsolicited ads or website cookies that promote football betting, gambling, money scams, and violent and adult content, while navigating or sourcing historical resources in online social networks.

These contents are socially and morally considered inappropriate by parents and guardians for children to view. However, due to the lack of regulation in the digital space, unsolicited ads and cookies expose children to non-educational videos and images. Also, children did not report any direct cyberstalking, bullying, or violent abuse. Regrettably, the research did not seek insight or probe into how children feel when they encounter inappropriate content, their reactive response, or their coping mechanisms.

• Digital Skills Acquired in the Digital Sphere

Navigating the internet for any purpose unintendedly equips users with certain digital skills. On the other hand, surfing the internet requires users to possess operational, social, and mobile skills, which are basic skills. Individuals primarily acquire and hone these skills through regular participation in online activities. About this, the pupils reported that they acquired and honed social skills during their online activities, which enhanced their ability to like, recreate, edit, and share history-related information with other online users. Additionally, they also developed operational skills that allow them to bookmark or save important information—images, videos, or files—to their devices for later use. The children reported having the ability to install games, software, social network and learning applications such as Historyville.

A private school student said they easily use these skills to operate desktop computers in their computer lab, with significant help from Mr. Amos. However, all the children noted that while using smartphones at home, they sometimes seek assistance from older or more knowledgeable individuals in cases where they cannot effectively deploy any of the skills. Based on this finding, it is plausible to assert that designing history syllabi that aligns with children's digital cultural experiences can equip pupils with competencies necessary for daily interaction in the digital age while simultaneously sustaining their interest for the subject.

5.2.4 Contextual Evaluation of Opportunities for Pupils Online Access and Engagements

The result of this study demonstrates and validates the exposition that opportunities inherent in children's access to the digital landscape can be grouped into four broad divisions: education, learning and digital literacy; participation and civic engagement; creativity and self-expression; and identity and social connection (Livingstone and Haddon, 2009). Similarly, the authors argues that the approach by which to leverage these wider spectra of opportunities intrinsic in children's online experiences to enhance Nigeria's history education syllabus can be adequately understood through the concept of structure and agency.

Put differently, within the limited scope of this study, the concepts of structure and agency offer sufficient contextual insights that can be leveraged to evaluate children's opportunities within Nigeria's digital landscape. According to Giddens (1984) cited in Livingstone and Haddon (2009), structure is both the enabling and constraining factors (such as resources and rules) that can either enable or constrain children's online access. The enabling factors are resources such as the availability of internet connections, smartphones, computers, and time that interconnectedly open children up to online opportunities. Whereas the factors that constrain pupils' online access include rules and regulations such as parental guidance and mediation. On the other hand, the concept of agency as adapted in this context refers to children's freedom and capability to do what they do online (participate). It is also the choices—motivation, creativity, will, liberty, self-expression, etc.—that define and characterise children's online engagements (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998).

From the preceding analysis, the research found that enabling structures, including access to internet connections, access to devices such as smartphones and desktop computers, the availability of 'positive' parental mediation and structured time governance, enhanced children's agency and capability to develop a digital cultural engagement and leverage opportunities therein in the following four cardinal areas:

- **Education, Learning and Digital Literacy**

According to the research results, education, learning, and digital literacy are both great composite motivations for children's online access and benefits from online engagements. Teachers and pupils who participated in the research stated that children's access to online

information provides them with a wealth of historical learning resources, allowing them to engage visually and medially with Nigerian historical themes and gain deeper insights beyond what the conventional educational syllabus offers. For example, Historyville has on its YouTube page a comprehensive visual and media version of Nigerian history across historical epochs (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O5JvMjSUM30&t=83s>), which children and teachers often access.

By appropriating online learning and educational opportunities, children can complete their academic tasks. Beyond this, they alluded to being intrigued by the fact that historical education resonates with their daily realities. This is partly due to children's visual engagement with historical narratives according to one of the teachers (Mr. Amos). As a result, there is a leading shift from children's hitherto negative perception of history to that of the curious excitement of learning about the past. Engaging with historical materials online for academic assignments challenges the sampled children to imagine historical accounts critically, obtain more insight and make informed decisions.

The study found that history learning platforms such as Historyville, hosted on different social networking platforms, offer pupils customised learning adapted to their interests, strength and learning styles. This adaptive and flexible learning approach inspires children's interest in history education. Furthermore, the study established that online engagement could enable the sampled children to develop digital literacy and hone their diverse digital skills, including operating smartphones and computer interfaces, downloading, and using educational software, apps, and games, and gaining insight into safety and privacy skills.

• **Participation and Civic Engagement**

The research found that access to internet learning platforms and social networks allows the sampled children to actively participate in the space as education content creators, creatively express their agency and creativity, and civically engage in their society. Their recreating, editing, and sharing of relevant historical information with others online have helped promote history education among their peers and learning experiences. Even though children's responses show that they have not participated in an online protest, a few have liked posts on social networking platforms that raised awareness of historical-related themes, social issues, and community development.

• Social Connection and Collaboration

This study found that online engagements have given children the opportunity to build social connections and collaboration with their peers, teachers, and experts virtually outside their location through online platforms. This collaboration can improve and promote continued and lifelong learning, the concept of global citizenship, cultural exchange, communication skills, teamwork, and cross-cultural perspectives.

Although there are enormous intrinsic opportunities for history education in children's online activities, the maximum leveraging of these benefits is contingent on the safety and security of the digital space and the extent to which children can give expression to their agency and leverage the inherent benefits. Parents, guardians, and educators have the critical responsibility of providing positive supervision of children's online activities for them to maximise their educational potential.

Conclusively, this study found that children's access to and engagement in the digital environment have primarily given them unmatched opportunities to access information, learn, acquire digital skills, communicate, connect, share, and express themselves. Although these opportunities fall under the education, learning, and digital literacy that motivate children's online access, they are not exclusive to children in the geographical context of this research, as shown by the results of Global Kids Online research in Ghana and South Africa. In other words, the motivation to access the internet, the digital culture, engagements, risks, and educational opportunities are universally applicable. However, the difference in this research context is the children's capability to engage with historical resources and the benefit of historical awareness they have through online engagements.

5.3 Adapting the History Syllabus to the Educational Opportunities of Children's Digital Experience

Answering the *third research question*, this study focused on adapting the history education curriculum to children's online experiences and agency, considering the profound structure that enhances children's digital culture, the intrinsic learning and educational opportunities in their online engagements even as historical content creators and communicators. The research evidence suggests that in addition to social networking, collaboration and other worthy online

engagements, children also use the internet to achieve educational ends, such as searching for historical information.

The study's findings suggest that adapting Nigeria's junior high school history education syllabus to children's digital agency and online engagement on platforms like YouTube, Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, WhatsApp, and others has immense potential for promoting children's historical consciousness. Consequently, the research suggests that the underlisted strategies have the potential to significantly inspire and enhance children's historical teaching and learning.

- First and foremost, initiatives aimed at increasing internet coverage at all public primary, junior and senior schools should be implemented to address the constraining barriers to online accessibility at this level. This intervention will be a focal point for optimising the history syllabus and guaranteeing children's inclusive and equitable access to online historical learning resources.
- There should be a prioritised and focused intervention or advocacy for the design of a hybrid history syllabus by the Historical Society of Nigeria that is adaptable to digital and conventional curriculum frameworks. That is a curriculum that incorporates or blend visual and digital media components with textual materials. This has the prospect of addressing the problem of negative perceptions of history education and optimising the delivery and comprehension of the subject.
- Schools' can own dedicated social networking pages on Facebook, Instagram, etc., or channels on YouTube and TikTok for posting short, informative, and engaging videos and images of Nigeria's historical themes, thereby making historical lessons more accessible, interactive, and engaging for students. However, this might be challenging for children in public schools without an enabling structure for internet access.
- A historical syllabus should practically leverage children's agency as historical content creators and communicators to encourage them to create videos or images about historical topics. Incorporating children's agency into the curriculum can foster active participation and student creativity. Similarly, the syllabus should provide exercises and homework that encourage students to produce digital stories of critical historical epochs in Nigeria and share them virtually with peers and teachers.
- Based on the research evidence, children resonate visually and medially with historical narratives; hence, a curriculum that incorporates virtual tours of historical sites will provide them with a glimpse of Nigeria's historical landmarks and artefacts.

- Educational games and simulations of historical narratives, epochs and figures should be included in the curriculum to make history learning more enjoyable and enhance students' retention of historical knowledge.

The above propositions have the profound potential to enrich history education, making its teaching and learning more inclusive, engaging, and interactive, as well as fostering historical consciousness of Nigeria's rich historical heritage.

Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This chapter discusses the study's key conclusions in relation to the dissertation, aim, questions, and objectives.

This dissertation assessed the pedagogical significance of children's digital culture and engagements to history education and historical consciousness in Nigeria. It scrutinised children's access to the digital space, their online activities, the content they explore, the risks they face, and the potential opportunities for history education curriculum design. It explored the prospects of visualising and medializing the junior high school history education curriculum in alignment with children's online engagements to optimise the existing history syllabus, inspire pupils' interest in history education by making the teaching and learning experience more dynamic, interactive, engaging, relevant, and relatable, as well as promote historical consciousness in Nigeria.

This research aimed to address children's increasing apathy towards history education in Nigeria by exploring ways of aligning the history curriculum with their exciting online engagements. Based on the perception that the subject is boring, uninspiring, and does not resonate with children's digital age reality. Furthermore, it aimed to identify how digital media and technological innovation positively shape pupils' perceptions of the relevance of history education, which they often question because it seems history is far removed from their reality.

Three overarching objectives guided the dissertation:

1. Examining the evolution of history education in Nigeria to identify factors that influenced its removal and reinstatement in schools' curricula.
2. Investigating children's digital culture and engagements.
3. Evaluating how to adapt children's agency in the digital space to history education curricula.

The study adopted the Global Kids Online toolkit, a children-centred qualitative research design for data collection and analysis. It leveraged a data collection approach comprising surveys, virtual Zoom interviews, oral interviews, and archival research to examine the dissertation questions and objectives.

The study's findings provide insights into various critical aspects of the research questions and objectives.

Regarding the **first research question**, which assessed the evolution of Nigeria's history education and the factors that influenced its removal and reinstatement in schools' curricula, the study's findings provide the following insights:

- *The 1884 Berlin Conference* ratified British colonialism in Nigeria. This laid the groundwork for the formal imposition of Anglo-Eurocentric history education and curriculum, which denied the reality of African historical perspectives.
- *Removal of History from Schools' Syllabus*: This earliest erasure of African history by colonialists strengthened the resolve of Nigeria's postcolonial military leaders and technocrats to create collective amnesia or erase Civil War memories by removing history from the education curriculum.
- *Western Complicity*: According to this research, the United States was complicit in replacing historical studies with social studies. They overtly supported the merging of history education with social studies in Nigeria and Ghana, as well as across African countries, simultaneously.
- *Reinstatement of History Education*: The Historical Society of Nigeria's determined and uncompromising advocacy resulted in the reinstatement of history education into the lower school curriculum.

The study's key findings on the **second research question**, which investigated children's digital culture and engagement, are as follows:

- *Digital Culture*: The research found that the children who participated in the study generally have enabling factors such as the availability of internet connections, computers, smartphones, and time that support their digital culture—the ability to access the internet. They often enjoy positive mediation from their parents and guardians. Likewise, they have agency—the capability to safely participate fully online without threat—and choice—the ability to express themselves and leverage online opportunities freely.
- *Technological gaps*: However, the study shows that the sampled private school has desktop computers and an internet connection, which make children's online participation possible compared to the sampled public school that does not.

- *Online Engagements:* The study's findings show that children's online engagements involve various activities, such as connecting and networking with new and mutual friends across social media networks, participating in virtual lessons, learning, playing online games, and creating and sharing content. That is, their activities straddle education, entertainment, communication, recreation, social connection, content creation and dissemination of information. These activities are not exclusive to this specific geographical context but are universally applicable to children's online footprints. The study found that while the internet fosters children's educational development, they are also exposed to risks and threats that undermine their wellbeing.
- *Interacting with Online Historical Learning Resources:* The study found that history online learning platforms such as Historyville, hosted on different social networking platforms, offer pupils customised learning adapted to their interests, strengths and learning styles. The Historyville platform encourages children to complete their history homework and assignments. The historical learning resources in Historyville enhance their learning experiences and enable them to engage visually and medially with Nigerian historical themes and gain deeper insights beyond what the conventional educational syllabus offers. This adaptive and flexible learning approach inspires children's interest in history education.
- *Online engagement and digital literacy:* Furthermore, the study established that online engagement has enabled children to develop digital literacy and hone their diverse digital skills, including operating smartphones and computer interfaces, downloading, and using educational software, apps, and games, and gaining insight into safety and privacy skills.

Regarding **research question #3**, The findings significantly demonstrate that adapting Nigeria's junior high school history education syllabus to children's digital agency and online footprints on history learning platforms in the digital environment holds a remarkable implication for promoting children's historical consciousness. The study further outlines several valuable approaches that can significantly enhance children's historical teaching and learning. These approaches encompass, but do not restrict to, the following:

- First, the history education syllabus should be hybridised—adaptable to the digital and traditional curriculum frameworks—to make it interactive and engaging.

- Second, virtual and medialised historical narratives should be integrated into the curriculum to make history resonate with pupils through visual engagement with Nigeria's historical landmarks and artefacts.
- Thirdly, schools can have dedicated history learning pages in the digital space to make historical lessons more accessible, interactive, and engaging for students.

Despite the remarkable findings of this study, it also had some **limitations**. One of the critical limitations of the study's scope is that it sampled only eight (8) junior high school pupils and two (2) history teachers of a private and a public school situated in Obio Akpo LGA, Port Harcourt, Rivers State as well as three (3) professors of historical studies. A more significant regional, countrywide, and/or comparative empirical study with a broad range of research respondents would have provided detailed insights into children's digital culture and the benefits of adapting the history education syllabus to children's online engagements across various contexts.

Furthermore, the study was conducted in an urban centre that rarely has internet connectivity challenges and did not sample parents and guardians to understand their role in promoting children's digital culture and historical consciousness. A broader research project that explores children's experiences in rural areas could have provided a better understanding of how socio-economic conditions and geographical contexts affect children's digital culture, online activities, and historical consciousness.

Finally, the study did not examine in depth the nature and forms of online violence experienced by children, how they respond to it, and how such threats impact historical consciousness. This would have added more nuance to the study.

Further Research: A broader region-wide or country-wide, all-inclusive mixed-approach study is required to fully understand how to adapt the history education curriculum across primary and secondary schools to children's online practices to promote historical consciousness. An assessment of how socio-economic conditions and other constraining structures in rural areas impact children's agency and choice to leverage online education opportunities for historical awareness might be required.

Finally, it will be expedient to study broadly the impact of parental mediation on historical consciousness and how children respond to forms of online violence that beset them and impact their capacity to engage with historical learning resources online.

The Nexus Between the Research Findings and the Public Sphere: Habermas framework of the public sphere can be expanded to include the digital landscape, which provides children with modern arenas of engagement with historical resources across online platforms and communication of historical information. The study found that children actively engage in the digital sphere and media platforms such as YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and others. By adapting the junior high school history education curriculum to contemporary students' digital engagements and habits, history educators can democratise access to historical knowledge and make the subject more interactive, engaging, and relatable to the pupils. Furthermore, this hybridised curriculum and teaching approach can encourage students to create content related to historical themes and transmit it in the digital sphere. This approach could inspire children's interest in historical knowledge and consciousness.

In conclusion, the most remarkable contribution of this research is its novel and empirical assessment of the relationship between children's digital cultural practices and historical consciousness, recommending concrete approaches to aligning the junior high school history education syllabus to children's digital experiences. This contribution not only has the possibility of deepening historical scholarship but also has substantial implications for optimizing the existing history education curriculum of Nigeria's junior high schools', making history teaching, and learning an engaging, interactive, inclusive, and relatable experience.

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3. Emeritus Professor E.J Alagoa – interviewed on 12 March 2024

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APPENDIX A

Transcripts of Interviews Conducted with Professors of Historical Studies

The Transcript of the Interview with Emeritus Professor E.J Alagoa Conducted on 13 March 2024 to Explore the Trajectory of History Education in Nigeria.

Introduction

My name is Mr. Areprekumor Clinton. I am an Assistant lecturer at the Niger Delta University. And I am carrying out this fieldwork on behalf of a friend and colleague who is doing Master's in History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) at FSCH Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal.

Clinton

We will go straight to the questions. Can you briefly tell us about your academic career and research interests?

Professor Alagoa

Oh yes, I studied history at the famous Ibadan School of History, University of Ibadan under Professor Kenneth Dike, a great historian, and Vice Chancellor of the University of Ibadan. Dike was one the first Nigerian Historians to use indigenous and oral tradition sources. Dike's PhD Thesis, "Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta" put Nigeria and Niger Delta history on the world map. Ibadan School of History had historiographic tradition that elevated oral methodology and unwritten sources. This was at the time when British colonialists wrongly claim that Africans had no history. I think the urge to refute this stereotype led to Professor Dike's pioneering work and his use of oral sources. This was a novel approach to African historiography, and it served as inspiration to my work: "A History of the Niger Delta".

And then when I graduated from the University of Ibadan I worked with Dike as archivist. We set up the National Archives at Ibadan, Enugu, and Kaduna. From there, through Dike's influence, I was given a fellowship at the University of Wisconsin where I was supervised by the top historian, Professor Jan Vashina. Have you heard of him? Yes, yes, he was the pioneer of oral tradition. Yeah.

Then I came back to Nigeria, I taught at the University of Lagos. Afterwards, I became the first Vice Chancellor at the University of Port Harcourt. That now gave me the opportunity to mentor a lot of

students and scholars, do my own original works, which are out there, so I don't have to tell you about them, you just have to find more about me yourself.

Clinton

As professor of history, can you share with us your understanding of the evolution of history education in Nigeria?

Professor Alagoa

I would like to start by reminding you that Nigeria's historical periods are sub-divided into precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial. The Niger Delta histories just like all other ethnic groups during the precolonial era were derivable on oral traditions. The oral tradition is a veritable source of African history. But when the British arrived and found that we had no writing culture, they dictated the historical narratives. They silenced African perspectives with the narrative that we have no history. Do you remember Trevor Roper? The British historian who in the 1960s claimed that Africa is a dark continent without history and that the history of Africa is the history of Europeans in Africa. This was a dominant and racial supremacist thinking. The colonial European trade and politics in the Niger Delta and elsewhere were considered as the only footprint of histories in Africa. Colonialism thrived on this demeaning and derogatory narratives.

When we debate colonialism in Africa, you have to consider the crucial role of the Partition of Africa in the Berlin West African Conference in 1884/1885. This was formal legitimisation of European colonial adventure in Africa. At the Conference, the British was given the Nigerian territories. Although the British had indelible footprints in Nigeria before 1884, but the Berlin event signalled the official and firm establishment of British colonialism. The British started consolidating its imperialism through conquest of indigenous institutions and societies on one hand. And on the other hand, more missionary schools were established. In the schools' children were Christianised, indoctrinated, and taught British history, mathematics and English language and they were given post as clerical officer upon completion of basic education.

All these were to sustain imperialism by devaluing and erasing our historical identity, civilisations and achievements preserved in our oral tradition. History education at the time only propagated British and Eurocentric views and denigrated our indigenous knowledge systems and values.

After I finished by PhD, I came back and found out that there was need to change this denigrating Eurocentric views about African History. Historical research then largely depended on European sources. So, I and the host of other academic historian of the time started changing historical research methodology by relying completely on oral or indigenous sources. They also tried to, as it were, write

and study the history of the Nigerian territories using their oral traditional sources. And of course, they did it through asking the elders or rulers of the Nigerian communities over which they ruled to tell their histories informally.

Dike's Trade and politics is regarded as the first historical work that penetrated to make statements and study histories of communities under British rule. So, he was the first Nigerian historian to do a history that goes beyond his or her own community. Other historian such as Biobaku, used oral sources to write history of local communities, he moved a bit further into relying oral tradition than the Dike.

The impact of our research cut across all levels of history education because we began to publish textbooks about indigenous Nigerian and African empires. These textbooks were used and read in primary and secondary schools together with the British curriculum. This was our intellectual contribution to the decolonisation struggle. By 1960, when Nigeria gained independence, Nigerian history was taught in several schools across Nigeria.

Clinton

To be clear, in your works, you know you really amplify the works of Biobaku and then Dike. Why?

Prof. Alagoa

They were my teachers, so I had to be respectful and to really think with respect yeah yeah and they were really very intelligent scholars. They used every available unwritten source that they could to reconstruct the histories of Nigerian communities. Looking at Dike's trade and politics from the British point of view, focused on an international trade or imperialist part of the activities of the British. So, it was quite a complex job whereby the internal local communities were woven into international history of colonialism and international trade. Looking at that aspect, I think it was a bit hard, using those sources for the history of the communities. So, from there we understood how the house systems were dismantled, then the beginning of British colonial rule, starting from trade. Yes, and Dike was a real master historian who wanted to build a Nigerian Nationalist history. Dike was somebody who created a lot of institutions to promote historical scholarship. He founded the Historical Society of Nigeria with the aim of promoting historiography. He established the National Archives of Nigeria. So, he could set up institutions that will collect whatever sources, the materials that were used for the writing of the several Nigerian histories. So, the institution he created carried on the propagation of historical scholarship in Nigeria and improved upon the use oral methodology as a credible source of African historiography.

Clinton

Thank you very much. Quickly, what were the factors that led to the removal of history from secondary school curriculum in Nigeria? Anyone else you can remember? The political factors? Economic, social?

Prof Alagoa

A couple of interwoven factors led to the removal of history from the primary and secondary school system. There was an effort to decolonize the British curriculum and Nigerianise to our educational system. But the prominent among the reasons was the disastrous Civil War. There was also pressure from the United States to introduce social studies to promote national integration after the civil war and replace history. A combination of factors resulted in the removal of historical education in Nigeria.

In the aftermath of the Nigerian Civil War, General Gowon and his bureaucrats had this policy of reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation. Then, the I recall the official report suggest that almost three million people died in that war, and they were mainly the Igbo group. You know, there is no way to avoid teaching the civil war with children in their history classes. You as well know that the Nigerian Civil War is a very emotive topic. When you are taught about the nature of the war, there is probability that you might have a bad impression about the other group. So, the military leaders considered history as a threat to the policy of reconciliation and national consciousness. This was the beginning of the removal of history from the syllabus. However, this was not a good reason because it was an attempt to make people forget that the war ever happened.

The United States government latched on the fact that Nigeria was from recovering from a divisive civil war, charting a path of national reconciliation to keep the fragile country united and in the process of decolonisation of its educational structure to introduce social studies as a replacement of history in Nigeria. The US sponsored several conferences in support of this course. Social studies was a novel subject that had just been introduced in the US education syllabus at the time. Yet, in the US, social studies did not displace or replace history. History was retained as a mandatory subject in the United States curriculum. Meanwhile, the case was different in Nigeria. Hence, in my opinion, beyond the intentional design to obliterate history education, the National Policy on Education, facilitated mostly by US technocrats, reflected ignorance and misplaced priority.

So, in the new National Policy on Education which came into effect in 1977, history education was merged with social studies. From that time, history lost its sole status as a subject. Unfortunately, the social studies materials had little or no historical topics in them.

Social studies curriculum covered very general social and national topics without providing historical context. The curriculum broadly treated current affairs. Due to this, overtime, history began to lose relevance among students because they were not expose to it from primary and secondary schools. So,

what happened, in the universities students did not want to study history. We had to attach international relations and diplomacy to history to attract students.

Clinton

They needed to have national cohesion and they thought they were doing the country the best by removing history subject from school? But in the end, it was more harm.

Professor Alagoa

Exactly!

Clinton

Thank you, Prof., for that insight. Again, as an archivist, you have experience in archive. Do you think the digitalization of history materials and the medium of instruction might have some form of relevance again?

Prof. Alagoa:

History is relevant for the survival of communities and their identity. So, the need is there, but how do you think that they will get there? How do they think they are able to define new ways of reaching that type of knowledge that will keep changing? People must keep thinking in that direction because technology keep changing too.

These are very critical concerns I have about digitisation. But I know if know that it has great promise for young people of this century. But I cannot correctly comment about the extent it will change the face of history. But I will always support efforts that will sustain the relevance of history. If digitisation is an approach to achieve it, then I will encourage institutions to make use of it.

Clinton

You advanced the multidisciplinary approach to historiography, the works you did with K. Williams and bringing a linguistic perspective. On the archaeological side, Derefaka was there with you also, you know.

Prof. Alagoa

It is because I understood that history is bigger than just the story. That project, my work has been an effort to define a daily story of our people. Yeah, yeah. That is, it. So, I did not think that I have an idea of one discipline that can do it, so, from the beginning, I knew that I must have an archaeologist and linguist in my team and work in concert with them.

The Transcript of the Oral Interview with Professor Abi Derefaka Conducted on 7 March 2024 to Explore the Trajectory of History Education in Nigeria.

Introduction

My name is Mr. Areprekumor Clinton. I am an Assistant lecturer at the Niger Delta University. And I am carrying out this fieldwork on behalf of a friend and colleague who is doing his postgraduate master's in history in the Public Sphere (HIPS) at FSCH Nova University, Lisbon, Portugal.

Question: Professor Derefaka, please can you briefly introduce yourself and tell us about your academic career?

Prof. Derefaka

My name is Abi Derefaka, a retired professor of history and archaeology from the University of Port Harcourt, Nigeria. I have held several academic positions before my retirement including the founding Director of the Institute of Niger Delta Studies, University of Port Harcourt.

Question: As Professor of History and archaeology, can you share with him your understanding of the evolution of history education in Nigeria?

Prof. Derefaka's Response

History education did not start with the coming of the Europeans; we historically educated our children informally. Children received historical knowledge and awareness from the elderly people such as our grandparents who recounts how a given society evolved through commerce, wars, intermarriages, and socio-cultural practices and norms. These categories of people in precolonial African societies were custodians and purveyors of historical narratives.

The colonialists gave the impression that Africans had no history other than the history of the Europeans in Africa. That is to say our experiences as a people were of no historical value. That is untrue and deriding. On a contrary, Nigerian societies had histories before the arrival of the Europeans. Our histories were embedded in our oral traditions and cultural practices as nonliterate societies. However, within the framework of formal education, history education

which adapted to literal culture started with British colonialism in Nigeria. But the curriculum used is what I would like to describe as Anglo-Eurocentric histories. This is because the curriculum focused on British and European histories without recognising African perspective. The teaching of European history was very critical to the colonial adventure in many regards. So, British and European history alongside mathematics and English language were the main subject taught in the missionaries' schools established around Nigerian territories before colonialism was officially accepted in 1884/1885 at the Berlin West African Conference. But it became more structured after 1884/1885 and the amalgamation of Nigeria.

The teaching of history in schools was encouraged by colonial administration, even though what they taught was exclusive and unbalance. The colonialists were not really interested in you knowing our history. Yet, they exploited our existing socio-cultural structures to sustain the indirect rule policy which was the infrastructure established locally to aid the exploitation of society. Of course, without the knowledge of local history, there would not have been indirect rule. The indirect rule system presumed that there was already a structure in place, all you need is to make sure it works well to fulfil the imperial interest. So those colonialists were not really doing history for the sake of it. That is why during the colonial period the dominant idea was that we (Africans) had no history until the white man came.

But then, during the period between late 1940s to postcolonial Nigeria, there were some historians who fought against the notion that Africa had no history. They documented and reconstructed African history drawing from oral tradition as a source of history and historical methodology. Foremost among them were Professor Vasina and Professor EJ Alagoa, Professor Biobaku among many others. I joined clique of scholars beginning from mid 1970s, providing archaeological insights to reconstruct Nigerian histories and to promote historical scholarship. These scholars were mainly from the Ibadan School of History that was at the forefront of promoting the study of African and Nigerian history in schools. From there, they diverged to other institutions such as the University of Lagos.

Question: Prof. can you shed more light on the role of oral tradition in shaping historical reconstruction and scholarship?

Prof. Derefaka's Response:

Yeah, the early Africanist historians, linguists, and archaeologists propagated the Idea that African history predates the coming of the Europeans and if you want to understand African history, we must hear it from our own people. The historians looked at oral traditions as the source of history. Historian like Prof. Alagoa argued that there are societies in which their complete history is captured by their own oral tradition. So, the development of the area of study now elicited the need for supporting evidence because oral tradition is transcript orally. But then there are rules within the oral tradition that serve as tools that will enable you to ensure that you have objectivity. For example, you can collect oral tradition from one person, collect from another person in the same society. And they will be saying different things. But on the aggregate, the majority of accounts you will get will tend towards something. The tendencies to take that majority position.

The other way of checking oral traditions, whether they are okay or not is to do individual interview as well as group interviews. Now you are talking to me, I can tell you things about my stay in Maryland. But you can crosscheck with Alagoa, he may tell you more things he knows about me. But then if you bring two of us together, and we sat down with you, and you confronted me with something I said. Before Prof Alagoa, I may not be able to repeat it because I probably know that what I said is not completely true. That's the role of the group interview as a check on individual interview. In summary, what the point I am making is that the respective and collaborative studies carried out by the historians, linguists and archaeologists all pointed towards disabusing the erroneous notion about African history.

Decolonisation and Nationalist Movement

So, during the colonial period, there was this awakening by historians, to the fact that we must stress and own our own history, and then there were also nexus between that approach to history and the nationalist movement. But when we look at history education, we should go back and look at the views of some of the nationalists like Azikiwe and Awolowo. If you go outside Nigeria, we consider the like of Nyerere and Nkrumah who sponsored the whole idea of pan - Africanism. So that was the main thrust of historical studies during the colonial period.

Clinton

Thank you very much for this great insight. Quickly, what were the factors that shaped the removal of history from the lower school system?

Prof. Derefaka's Response:

I think to understand the reasons why history was removed; we need to understand the Nigerian factors. There is always this tendency to throw away things of significance because we don't place value of what is importance.

In the postcolonial era historical education, which ought to be very important waned. History was deleted from schools' curricula under the guise of merging it with social studies so as to cover up the events of the civil war. The switch from historical studies to social studies happened after the Nigerian-Biafran war. The then Education Minister (I think his name was Yesufu Eke) openly denounced history and affirmed social studies as a curriculum subject that would help achieve post-war reconciliation, reconstruction, and rehabilitation policies. The aim was to weld an ethnically divided country rather than further divide it with history instruction. You know it was unavoidable even as it is right now to discuss Nigeria's history without discussing the remote and immediate causes of the civil war and all its manifest deleterious impacts. This sort of historical reflection from the viewpoint of the Minister and those in government at the time will inevitably create resentment among children from different ethnic groups and reopen old scars.

I must add that the idea of social studies was a copy-and-paste syllabus from the US. The US knew that Nigeria was at a critical intersection of finding a balance between building trust among ethnic groups and decolonizing the education curriculum when they sold the idea of social studies us. It appealed to the logic and sentiment of political elites and bureaucrats. As laudable as the idea of social studies was, it ought to have been taught separately and concurrently with history. I think the political leaders were afraid of their shadows—that is what history is. That is why they did not hesitate to expunge it. The social studies curriculum, as copied from America, was very inadequate in many ways. Its uncritical approach to African culture, value and tradition and normative view about the role of men and women and code of conduct were, in my opinion, condescending. When you merge two significant subjects, one is

bound to lose its identity and relevance. Unfortunately, in this case, history lost its relevance to social studies.

Basically, the reason for the decline of history education in the post-colonial period was because of our politicians. They did not want us to remember. They wanted collective amnesia. They wanted us to forget some of the things that they done. Then you cannot sweep history under the carpet. Somehow, instead of helping them, it has made things worse. Our children do not know their history. Because they do not know their history, they do not have confidence in themselves. They are open to all influences that come. There are no value systems to help cushion them from this bombardment from outside.

Question: Prof. in your opinion, what are the challenges of the existing history curriculum?

Prof. Derefaka's Response

One problem that the history syllabus had was that its content was higher than what other subjects had at the lower school level. The requirements in the colonial and postcolonial curriculum were too high for that level. If you are teaching Nigerian history to the secondary school students, it should not be the same way you teach Nigerian history to undergraduate. That was one mistake committed by the designers of the curriculum. Because of this, instead of doing history, students diverted to government because the syllabus for government was manageable and easier for them. In other words, because the history syllabus was over bloated in terms of manageability by students. So, there was a perception that history was a difficult subject.

The Historical Society of Nigeria should be commended for resolute advocacy that has resulted in the reintroduction of history education. I recall that Professor Abasiattai Committee was set up by the Historical Society of Nigeria to address the issue of over bloated syllabus that has affected the relevance of history. Perhaps, they came up with a report and the recommendation therein has been implemented, I am not aware. Now that history has been reinstated in the curricula, it behoves on the HSN to ensure that history should be fun to learners because a people without knowledge of their history is prone to repeat the mistake of the past and they cannot plan well for the future.

The Transcript of the Oral Interview with Professor Akachi Odoemene Conducted on 7 March 2024 to Explore the Trajectory of History Education in Nigeria.

Clinton

My name is Areprekumo Clinton, I am an assistant lecturer at the Niger Delta University, Bayelsa State. I am conducting this fieldwork on behalf of one of your former students Unyime-Young Mfon who is studying postgraduate master's in history in the Public Sphere (HIPS) at FSCH NOVA University, Lisbon, Portugal.

Professor Akachi

Oh, Young Mfon, right? I am proud of him.

Clinton

Please sir can you briefly tell us about yourself.

Professor Akachi

My name is Akachi Odoemene. I am a professor of African History at the Federal University Otuoke (FUO), Nigeria. I am the immediate past National Secretary of the Historical Society of Nigeria. I have served the Society in different capacities before my immediate past role. I am currently the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, FUO.

Clinton:

Can you tell me about the evolution of historical education and consciousness in Nigeria.

Professor Akachi

The trajectory of historical education in Nigeria is an interesting development that span across Nigeria's historical epochs and characterised by significant developments. Let me start with the precolonial epoch. In this period, history education was transmitted informally and orally

through our oral tradition which consist of epic stories, folklore, songs, proverbs, and cultural display. The older members of communities were custodian historical information. They relay this information to younger generations in homes, village squares or under trees in form of tales at moonlight. History was used to inculcate moral lessons, wisdom and transmit indigenous knowledge across generations. The oral tradition played a crucial role in preserving historical narratives, cultural values and heritage and preserving the collective memory of a people.

During the colonial time, history education was now transmitted in a formal setting influenced by colonial educational policies and systems. The Western-style education introduced by missionaries and colonialists which formalised the teaching of history in schools, doubled as an attempt to marginalise and erase African history. The colonial administrators claimed that African societies had no historical antecedents because of lack of writing culture. This is why history education syllabus at this time largely reflected Eurocentric perspectives, elevating British historical narratives at the detriment of indigenous history and culture. Beginning from 1950 there was intellectual resistance against the Eurocentric curriculum from academic historians mostly from the Department of History of the premier University of Ibadan. The academic historians' intellectual resistance was a contribution to the decolonisation struggle that resulted in inclusion of African or Nigerian historical perspectives in the history education syllabus. The postcolonial era was characterised determined efforts to Nigerianise history education syllabus and incorporate African perspectives and histories. The indigenisation or decolonisation or even Nigerianisation process, however you want to term it also contributed to the removal of history from the curriculum.

Clinton (interjected)

Prof, I was going to ask about that. It seems there is a nexus between the decolonisation effort and the removal of history.

Professor Akachi

Yea, there is.

Clinton

Can you share these postcolonial dynamics that culminated in the erasure of history from lower school syllabus in Nigeria?

As I was saying, the removal of history from school curricula can be explained within the scope of educational reforms which sort to decolonise the Eurocentric curriculum and political dynamics of the civil war after in postcolonial Nigeria. I think the coincidence of these two factors led to the deleting of history education.

The Nigerian civil war had caused deep seated ethnic division and disunity. So, the teaching and learning of history in primary and secondary schools was considered inconsistent with the government's attempt to achieve national reconciliation unity. Given the very disastrous impacts of the civil war, it was not difficult to replace history with social studies. Do not forget that the government had initiated the educational reforms to get rid of European narratives and give more priority to our indigenous perspectives. Unfortunately, one of the contemporary themes of Nigerian history is the civil war. The government felt that teaching children this kind of history will divide the country more than unite it. The government rather opted for social studies which emphasize on shared commonalities than history. Eventually, when the first indigenous national education policy was launched in 1977, history was expunged from school curricula.

Clinton:

There is a dominant narrative that history education was removed from curriculum because of pedagogical challenges arising from complaints that the subject was boring and less engaging. What do you have to say about that?

And **briefly describe the path to the reintroduction of history education.**

Professor Akachi:

That is what I termed “crisis of relevance.” Students’ interest in learning history continuous to decline owing to the excuse that it is boring and uninspiring. However, what I can say is that that was not the initial core reason for its removal. Because of its removal, history was only taught as an elective subject at the senior secondary level. Students who choose history as elective subject at senior secondary class without prior knowledge of the subject at the primary and middle schools, found it difficult to relate with it. In comparison with social studies, history is more detail and cover wide range of themes. Whereas social studies only gives cosmetic attention to topics. I think this where the notion of history as a boring subject stemmed from.

And it further consolidated government negative position about history education. So, this very excuse only came about as a result of removing the subject from schools' curriculum.

The reintroduction of history was a fight and advocacy sustained by successive presidents of the Historical Society of Nigeria (HSN). It was characterised by several challenges and shortcomings. But what I will describe as the golden era of the struggle for the return of history started in 2005. The year marked the 50th anniversary of HSN and the revived pursuit of the reintroduction of history education at this time was very symbolic to us. HSN had become more more dogged, organise and had a well defined agenda which was to advocate for the return of history. The Society had young and vibrant academics in its ranks. Some of them had just finished their doctoral studies within and outside Nigeria. I was in that category. We churned out brilliant ideas and worked collaboratively towards achieving this ultimate goal. We deployed everything in our arsenal, including facilitating engagement in the public sphere, social capital, our contacts in government, intellectual contributions such as peer review research publications on significance of history.

First, HSN inaugurated several working Committees for this purpose. One of which was the Professor Abasiattai Committee set up to draft a new history education curriculum for primary and junior schools in the country. The Committee's report was very instrumental HSN's objective. Instrumental in the sense that, they gave HSN something (a draft syllabus) to work with. Following that the leadership of the Society visited the then President Obasanjo with a request to restore historical studies. Obasanjo acceded the request and instructed the Minister of Education to restore the subject to the curriculum. Unfortunately, that order was never implemented, and the excitement was short-lived. HSN remained undaunted regardless of the disappointing outcome. In 2014, the HSN paid a courtesy visit to President Goodluck Jonathan. He appeared to have been impressed with our course. Yet again another verbalised approval, an order that were never executed was given by President Jonathan. President Jonathan lost the general election to Mohammed Buhari.

Between 2014 to 2018, we expanded the scope of our consultation to include first class traditional rulers across the country, political bigwigs, and important stakeholders in educational development. In 2018, a memo was sent to President Buhari. Upon receipt, he acted on it and approved the reintroduction of history into school curriculum. The Minister of Education and NERC executed President's approval.

APPENDIX B – Informed Consent Forms



CONSENT FORM FOR STUDY ON CHILDREN'S DIGITAL CULTURE

Researchers' Names: UNYIME-YOUNG MFON
Research Institution: Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, New University of Lisbon, Portugal
The Aim of the Study: The research is to collect information about children's activities and experiences online for the purpose of adapting history subject curriculum for junior high school students; as a compulsory requirement for the award of Master's degree in History in the Public Sphere (HIPS MA) to the aforementioned researcher.
To be completed by the: HEAD TEACHER
<p>I am willing to support the research on children's digital culture in our school and have no objections to children from _____ School participating in this study about children's use of the internet. Children from this school can take part in either a focus group or individual interview to be conducted virtually.</p> <p>The research will be used to ascertain the pedagogical importance of children's online engagements. I understand that the children's responses will be kept totally confidential. The research is anonymous and neither the school nor the children will be identified in the findings or reports of this research.</p>
Signed by Headteacher OR Principal: _____ Date: _____
Name in block letters: _____
Headteacher's OR Principal's phone number: _____
Email: _____
For any questions about the study, please contact UNYIME-YOUNG MFON at 351933507941

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Researchers' names: Unyime-Young Mfon
Research institution: Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, New University of Lisbon, Portugal
The Aim of the Study: The research is to collect information about children's activities and experiences online for the purpose of adapting history subject curriculum for junior high school students; as a compulsory requirement for the award of Master's degree in History in the Public Sphere (HIPS MA) to the aforementioned researcher.
To be completed by the PARENT/GUARDIAN
<p>Please circle the relevant answer</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you clearly understand the research? YES/ NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you know that your child can withdraw from this study at any time, with no need to give a reason and without any negative consequences? YES/ NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you know that your child's answers are confidential?</p> <p>[If your country has mandatory reporting of child abuse, add] If during the research it becomes clear that a child is being abused or neglected and it hasn't been reported, we will have to report this to [the nearest Nigerian Police Station]. YES/ NO</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Do you agree that your child can take part in this study, whose results could be published (e.g., in a report or book)? Neither you nor your child will be identified in any way in these publications. YES/ NO</p> <p>If YES to all, please fill in the details below.</p> <p>Child's name: _____</p> <p>Child's date of birth: _____</p> <p>School: _____</p> <p>Class: _____</p> <p>Signed by parent/guardian: _____</p> <p>Date: _____</p> <p>Name in block letters: _____</p> <p>Address: _____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Email: _____</p> <p>Phone number: _____</p>
For any questions about the study, please contact UNYIME-YOUNG MFON at [351933507941]

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR CHILDREN

About me and the research.

- ✓ I am enrolled in History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) Master's programme at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences, New University of Lisbon, Portugal.
- ✓ I am studying how children are using the internet in Port Harcourt, Nigeria.
- ✓ I want to find out how children get online, what kinds of things they do when they are online, what they like and don't like about internet.
- ✓ I want to use this information to design children centered curriculum for history subject for junior secondary schools.

My name and contact information.

Name: **UNYIME-YOUNG MFON**
Phone number: **351933507941**
Email address: **a2023114359@campus.fcsh.unl.pt**

How will you collect the information?

By interviewing children in groups or individually through Zoom.

Expected questions.

I will ask you questions about the internet and how you use it. The interview duration will be approximately between 3 and 4 hours, and a short break will be observed in-between. I will ask your permission to record the discussion.

What will the interview be like?

I will ask you questions about the internet and how you use it. You can respond in a group discussion. But if you are not comfortable disclosing in the midst of people, you can request to have a private session with me. I can assure you that your identity will be protected and kept confidential in the final report. I will also request to record the interview.

Can I change my mind about taking part or answering?

Yes, of course. You can change your mind or leave the room anytime you want to. You can also skip any questions you don't want to answer.

Will my name be used?

No. I will give you a pseudo name and I will change the name of your school, so that no one reading about the project knows who you really are.

Is it confidential?

- ✓ Yes. I will not tell anybody what you said.
- ✓ [If there is mandatory reporting of child abuse, add] However, if you tell me something about someone who is hurting you or putting you in danger, I will have to report this to **the nearest Nigerian Police Station.**

What will happen afterwards?

- ✓ I will listen to the recording from your discussions and those from other schools, and then I will write about the children's digital culture in my dissertation.
- ✓ The dissertation will be ready latest June 2024 for defense and approval. Once my school publish it you can find it here: <https://hipsma.com>.
- ✓ The results of this project will be used to design interactive history education curriculum for junior high school. Your opinion will help them to do that.

Can I get more information?

Yes, of course. You can use my contact information to reach me.

Yes, I want to take part.

Remember: There are no right or wrong answers. I am simply interested in hearing about your experiences.

Please fill out this form, sign it and give to it me.

I agree to take part in an interview for the research project on Children's Digital Culture in Nigeria.

My name: _____

Today's date: _____

Please sign here: _____

APPENDIX C – Research Questionnaire

Interview Questions for Professors of Historical Studies



Semi-Structured Interview Protocol for Professors of Historical Studies

Introduction

My name is **Unyime-Young Mfon**. I am a postgraduate student studying History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) program at the FCSH (UNL) NOVA University, Lisbon, Portugal.

Purpose of the Research and Interview

This thesis is titled: *Historical Consciousness and Pedagogy: Adapting Junior Schools History Curriculum to Children's Digital Culture in Nigeria*. The purpose of this thesis is to find out information about the pedagogical significance of children's digital cultural experiences or engagements and the possible adaptation of Nigeria's junior high history education curricula to these digital sphere engagements. So, in this interview, I would like to holistically ask you to share your knowledge of the historical, socio-political, and economic dynamics that led to the exclusion and inclusion of history from curriculum as well as your viewpoint about the strength and weaknesses of the existing junior schools' history curriculum and the possibility of adapting the existing curriculum to pupils' online experience.

What to Expect During the Interview Session

This interview will be conducted in lieu of me by Mr. Areprekumor Clinton whom I have appointed my Research Assistant. Mr. Clinton holds an MA degree in History and International Studies, and he is an Assistant Lecturer, Department of History and Diplomacy, Niger Delta University, Nigeria. He is highly capable and dedicated individual with a strong academic background and research experience. He has previously conducted semi-structured interview in fields relevant to this study. Mr. Clinton will ask you questions about the trajectory of history education and historical consciousness in Nigeria, and he will ask your permission to record the discussion.

No Confidentiality

Given your status as an authority in historical studies, your answers to the questions on these topics are highly valuable and will not be reported with confidentiality. The responses which will constitute the research outcome will be documented and reported with your name stated.

The Main Questions

1. Professor can you tell him about yourself, your academic, career and research background?
2. As Professor of History, can you share with him your understanding of the evolution of history education in Nigeria?
3. Can you briefly share your thoughts on the factors (including historical factor, socio-economic and political factors, personalities, policy framework, nature of historical consciousness and general perception about the subject) that resulted in the removal of history from primary and junior high schools' curricula in Nigeria? In short why was history removed from schools' curricula?
4. Can you describe the processes (including the personalities and/or organisation) that led to the reintroduction of history education in the curriculum?
5. What are the strength and weakness of the existing history education curriculum?
6. Since restoration, how is the existing junior schools' history curriculum oriented to shape or reshape pupils' and general perception about the subject?
7. The Nigeria's National Bureau of Statistics reports that about 163 million Nigerians have access to internet and digital devices in 2023 and schoolchildren between 10 to 18 years constitute a great proportion of internet users. Given this report, how do you think that history curriculum can be adapted to resonate with pupils' engagements or footprints in the digital landscape?
8. Is there anything else you would like to add that I left out of the conversation?

Children's Research Questionnaire



INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON CHILDREN'S DIGITAL CULTURE IN NIGERIA

A. General Introduction

A1. Name and Institutional Affiliation of the Researcher

My name is **Unyime-Young Mfon**. I am a postgraduate student studying History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) program at the FCSH, NOVA, Lisbon.

A1.1 Purpose of the Research and Interview

The purpose of this research is to find out information about children's activities and experiences online and how their online experiences can be used to improve the teaching and learning of history. So, in this interview, I would like to know more about your understanding of history, how you get online, what you do when you are online, why you do what you do online, what skills you may acquire online, what you like and what you do not like when online.

- **Confidentiality**

Your answers to the questions on these topics are highly valuable and confidential. The responses which will constitute the research outcome will be documented and reported using pseudo names to protect your identity.

A1.2 Icebreaker

Please, tell me your name or nickname, age, favourite food, interests, and hobbies.

The Main Questions

To explore the question of children's understanding of history, their learning experience and digital culture: access and practices.

Questions about children knowledge of History and their learning experience

Q1. Have you heard of the term "History" before?

- ☐ No
- ☐ Yes

Q2. If yes, where did you hear of it?

- ☐ School
- ☐ Home

Q3. Do you learn History subject in your school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q4. Do you like the History class?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Q5. If yes, what do you like about the History class?

Q6. How do you feel when you learn about the past?

Q7. If boring and uninteresting, can you say why?

Now I will ask you how you access the internet and the History related activities you do online.

Q1. How do you get online? What devices do you use?

a) A mobile phone/smartphone ☐

b) A desktop computer or laptop ☐

c) A tablet ☐

d) Other

e) I have never gone to the internet ☐

Q2. About how long do you spend on the internet during a regular weekday (i.e., school day)?

- ☐ little or no time
☐ about half an hour
☐ about 1 hour
☐ about 2 hours
☐ about 3 hours
☐ about 4 hours or more

Q3. Are you able to access the INTERNET at home?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q4. Are you able to access the INTERNET at school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q5. Are you able to access the INTERNET in other places like Church?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q6. How often have you done these things on the internet or on a mobile phone in the past three months?

	Never	A few times	Several times	Almost all the time
a) I participated in an online course or lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) I did group schoolwork with other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I practised something I was learning (e.g., maths, a language, or music)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) I looked for news online and historical information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) I used internet to learn something new (e.g., by watching tutorials)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) I looked for new friends or contacts on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) I watched videos or music clips online	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) I played online games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) I created and edited some digital content (e.g., music, videos, gifs, memes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

j) I searched for information about history, physical health, injury, or physical treatment ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

k) I searched for information about mental health, mental difficulties, or well-being ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Online Activities/Engagement

Q7. Have you done any of the following in the past on the internet (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, other websites...)

	Never	Once	Twice	More than twice
a) Signed an online petition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Shared news or music or videos with historical, social or political content with people in your social networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Discussed or commented on historical, social or political issues on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Participated in an internet-based protest, campaign, or boycott	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Joined or followed a historical or political group on social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q8. Do you use digital devices in learning history? (they may use at school or in other contexts,

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Q9. If yes, what kind of digital devices?

- ☐ Desktop computers.
☐ Smartphones.
☐ Tablets.
☐ Others.

Explore connections to Historical knowledge.

Q1. Now I will ask you some questions about how you learn and communicated Historical information or shared history related information online with others during the past years.

	Never	A few times	Several times each day	Almost all the time
a) How often do you use a social network where you had your own profile (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) How often do you share historical information on a social network, either content that you created yourself (e.g., photos, status, comments) or that someone else created (e.g., YouTube videos, or articles)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) How often do you only browse through social networks and look at historical piece posted by others, like their story, profiles, photos, stories, or statuses without commenting on them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

→ If you answered NEVER to question Q1a in this category) ... use a social network where you had your own profile (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok). By this I don't mean applications that are only used for sending messages, like WhatsApp or Messenger, SKIP to question Q3.

→ If you answered A FEW TIMES or MORE OFTEN, answer the NEXT QUESTION K2.

Q2. On your social network profile that you use the most, do you share and click historical information or only general information?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q3. In the past year, how often did you use the INTERNET to communicate history related information like sharing school assignment, finding more question with the people listed below? By internet, we mean any application, including Messenger, email, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.

	Never	A few times	Several times
a) Friends or teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) parents or caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. There are some specific internet platforms that share historical information, some others don't share such information. How often do visit these historical platforms or share information share from it in the PAST YEAR?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EVERY LINE

	Never	A few times	Several times
a) I learn and publicly shared information, photo or a video from historical platforms on my social networks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) I have shared some historical information about my locality that I consider significant with people I'd never met before.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) I have shared historical information or content (e.g., photos, videos) about my locality with someone who I know without asking for his/her permission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) I have shared historical information or content that someone else had shared with me with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5. Does your parent or carer do the following things?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>
a) Sets rules about when you can use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Forbids you from doing certain things online (e.g., play certain online games, use some websites)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Sets rules about the total time you can spend online in a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. How often does your parent or carer do any of these things?

	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very often	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>
a) Suggests ways to use the internet safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Talks to you about what you do on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Encourages you to explore and learn things on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Helps you when something bothers you on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Checks/controls what you do on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

History Education Teacher's Research Questionnaire



TEACHERS' INTERVIEW QUESTIONS ON CHILDREN'S DIGITAL CULTURE IN NIGERIA

B. General Introduction

A1. Name and Institutional Affiliation of the Researcher

My name is **Unyime-Young Mfon**. I am a postgraduate student studying History in the Public Sphere (HIPS) program at the FCSH, NOVA, Lisbon.

A1.1 Purpose of the Research and Interview

The purpose of this research is to find out information about pupils' activities and experiences online and how these can be adapted to design history curricula for junior secondary schools. So, in this interview, I would like to know more about how you impart historical knowledge or consciousness, your knowledge of pupils' digital culture, including how they access the internet, how they engage or interact with historical information, content or resources in the digital sphere, the skills they acquire, the risks and opportunities they encounter while online, and the pedagogical significance of these experiences.

- **Confidentiality**

Your answers to the questions on these topics are highly valuable and confidential. The responses which will constitute the research outcome will be documented and reported using pseudo names to protect your identity.

A1.2 Icebreaker

Please, tell me your name or nickname, age, favourite food, interests, and hobbies.

The Main Questions

To explore the question of the delivery of history instruction to pupils', your understanding of their learning experience and digital culture: access and practices.

Questions about how History is taught and children's learning experience.

Q1. Are you a professional history teacher (that is do you have a degree in History Education or History and International Studies)?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q2. If yes, what is your highest degree?

- ☐ BA
☐ MA
☐ PhD

Q3. Is History a mandatory subject studied across all classes?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q4. If yes, what is the perception of the pupils about the subject?

Q5. If no (that is if the subject is offered as elective), are pupils keen about offering it?

Q6. How do they feel when they learn about the past?

Q7. If boring and uninteresting, can you say why?

Q8. How can you describe the history curriculum and the pedagogical framework used?

Now I will ask you of your knowledge of how pupils' access the internet and engage with History related content online.

Q1. How do pupils get online and what devices do they frequently use?

f) A mobile phone/smartphone	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) A desktop computer or laptop	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) A tablet	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Other	
j) I have no idea	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2. Are pupils permitted to own, bring, and use any of these devices able to access at school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q3. Is INTERNET at school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q4. If no, what other option is available at school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q5. If yes, are pupils able to access the INTERNET at school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Q2. About how long do they spend on the internet during a regular weekday (i.e., school day)?

- ☐ little or no time
☐ about half an hour
☐ about 1 hour
☐ about 2 hours
☐ about 3 hours
☐ about 4 hours or more
☐ I have no idea.

Q4. Do they have to access the INTERNET in other places outside school?

- ☐ No
☐ Yes

Your Knowledge of Pupils' Online Activities and Engagement

Q1. Do you know how often pupils have done these things on the internet or on a mobile phone in the past three months?

	Never	A few times	Several times	Almost all the time
l) Participation in an online course or lesson	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
m) Engagement with group schoolwork with other students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
n) Used internet to execute history assignment and homework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
o) Looked for news online and historical information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

p) Used internet to learn something new (e.g., by watching history related tutorials)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
q) Looked for new friends or contacts on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
r) Watched online music clips or historical videos	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
s) Played online games with historical themes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
t) Created and edited some digital content (e.g., music, videos, gifs, memes)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
u) Searched for information about history, physical health, injury, or physical treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
v) Searched for information about mental health, mental difficulties, or well-being	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q2. Do you know if pupils have engaged in the following activities on digital media platforms in the past (e.g., YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, other websites...)

	Never	Once	Twice	More than twice
f) Signed an online petition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Shared news or music or videos with historical, social, or political content with people in your social networks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Discussed or commented on historical, social, or political issues on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Participated in an internet-based protest, campaign, or boycott	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

j) Joined or followed a historical or political group on social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Q8. Do you use digital media and devices in teaching history?

Q9. If yes, what kind of digital devices?

- ☐ Desktop computers.
- ☐ Smartphones.
- ☐ Tablets.
- ☐ Others.

Q10. How is historical topics and themes adapted in the digital media?

Explore connections to Historical knowledge.

Q1. Now I will ask you some questions about your knowledge of how pupils learn and communicated Historical information or shared history related information online with others during the past years.

	Never	A few times	Several times each day	Almost all the time
d) How often do they use a social network where they had their own profile (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) How often do they share historical information on a social network, either content that they created themselves (e.g., photos, status, comments) or that someone else created (e.g., YouTube videos, or articles)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

f) How often do they browse through social networks and look at historical piece posted by others, like their story, profiles, photos, stories, or statuses without commenting on them?

☐☐☐☐

→ If you answered NEVER to question Q1a in this category) ... use a social network where they had their own profile (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, TikTok). By this I don't mean applications that are only used for sending messages, like WhatsApp or Messenger, SKIP to question Q3.

→ If you answered A FEW TIMES or MORE OFTEN, answer the NEXT QUESTION K2.

Q2. On their social network profile that they use the most, do they share and click historical information or only general information?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Q3. In the past year, how often did they use the INTERNET to communicate history related information like sharing school assignment, finding more question with the people listed below? By internet, I mean any application, including Messenger, email, WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.

	Never	A few times	Several times
c) Friends or teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) parents or caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q4. There are some specific internet platforms that share historical information, some others don't share such information. How often do they visit these historical platforms or share information share from it in the PAST YEAR?

PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ON EVERY LINE

	Never	A few times	Several times
e) They learn and publicly shared information, photo, or a video from historical platforms on their social networks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) They have shared some historical information about their locality that they consider significant with people they never met before.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) They have shared historical information or content (e.g., photos, videos) about their locality with people who they know without asking for their permission	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) They have shared historical information or content that someone else had shared with them with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q5. Do teachers do the following things?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>
d) Sets rules about when pupils can use the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

e) Forbids pupils from doing certain things online (e.g., play certain online games, use some websites)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Sets rules about the total time they can spend online in a day	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q6. How often do teachers do any of these things?

	Never	Hardly ever	Sometimes	Often	Very often	<i>I don't know</i>	<i>Prefer not to say</i>
f) Suggests ways pupils can use the internet safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Talks to pupils about what they do on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Encourages pupils to explore and learn from historical resources on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Helps pupils when something bothers them on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Checks/controls what pupils do on the internet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q7. What are the possible ways to adapt history curriculum for junior secondary schools to pupils' online engagement?