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Beyond Borders: Leveraging Technology to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals in Education

[1]Semiu Olawale Makinde, [1]Bola Mariam Sulyman, [1]Abdulmuhsin Ibrahim

[1]Department of Science Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria

Research Article

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ABSTRACT
This study examines the transformative role of technology in education system and its potential to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through a systematic review of 51 scholarly sources, the research analyzes how technological innovations are addressing critical challenges such as accessibility, quality, and educational inequality in respect to Nigerian education system. The findings reveal that digital tools and online platforms significantly expand educational access, reduce disparities between well-resourced and under-resourced schools, and support lifelong learning through flexible, on-demand resources. Personalized learning technologies, which adapt content to individual student needs, are shown to enhance student engagement and improve learning outcomes. Additionally, interactive tools like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are recognized for their effectiveness in simplifying complex concepts. Advances in data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) have also improved educational management by optimizing decision-making and resource distribution. The study emphasizes the persistent challenge of the digital divide, where unequal access to technology and the internet exacerbates educational inequities. The research calls for targeted policies to ensure equitable access to digital tools and connectivity for all students. Furthermore, the study highlights how technology contributes to environmental education and sustainability by promoting sustainable practices and providing essential learning resources. As technological advancements continue, their role in overcoming educational barriers and driving sustainable global development is expected to grow.

Keywords: Technology in Education, Educational Equity, Personalized Learning, Digital Divide, Sustainable Development Goals

Corresponding Author:
Bola Mariam Sulyman,
Department of Science Education,
Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria
Email: bolasulyman01@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the international community united to adopt the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a universal standard for guiding and evaluating development efforts. These comprehensive goals encompass a wide range of aspects, from poverty eradication to global partnerships. Among the 17 SDGs, Goal 4 stands out as a transformative objective: "Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all." This goal prioritizes equitable, inclusive, and quality education not only as an end in itself but also as a driving force and catalyst for global development, enabling the achievement of the other SDGs. Education has been an integral part of human existence, playing a vital role in the development of individuals and societies. As the most important factor in personal growth, education serves as a foundation for fostering equitable and sustainable development worldwide (Lawrence et al., 2020; Makinde et al., 2024).

Education and continuous innovation have made it possible for humanity to advance from the stone-age to the industrial age and subsequently to the computer/internet age by providing the knowledge, competencies and skills that have led to the emergence of our digital world and the leap frogging of technological innovations and transformations. Our current global economy is a knowledge economy, driven and sustained by education and lifelong learning. Education and research largely allow subsequent endeavors to concentrate on how to improve on current standards in knowledge and technological advancement. Education provides everyone the knowledge to be a better person, to become a global citizen, to express oneself freely without

psychological complexes, and to take informed risks (Spero, 2022). Education describes the process of receiving or giving organized instruction, especially in a formal institution of learning; usually, the school (Opoku et al., 2024).

Education can also take place outside of school settings and this type of education is described as informal and non-formal education (Lawrence et al., 2020). Whether it is formal, informal or non-formal, education as a form of socialization is now recognized as the instrument par excellence to drive national development and growth (Sun & Xu, 2024). This is because education arms the recipient with skills, competencies and enables individuals to have the abilities to contribute to the socio-economic transformation of his/her society. Beyond such skills and competencies, education also confers positive transfer effects, known as externalities on societies. Such externalities include a drop in fertility rates, a better capacity to manage the environment in sustainable manners and the emergence of improved civic capacities. It is in recognition of these many benefits of education that development practitioners now see education as central to the attainment of the other SDGs (Opoku et al., 2024).

There is now growing consensus that progress in the attainment of SDG, in meeting its seven targets and its three enablers plays critical roles in the sustainable development of any nation (Nwosu, 2024). Such emerging global consensus also underscores the importance of conducting critical analyses of factors in any nation that inhibit the pursuit and attainment of this goal and its target in their totality, as emerging evidence shows that most developing countries, especially in Sub Saharan Africa are falling behind in their pursuit of SDG. Understanding the factors that inhibit the attainment of SDG as well as the interaction of these factors could yield useful insights into the general problems of the implementation of the SDGs in general and more importantly could also provide the basis for informed corrective actions that could propel a defaulting country to higher levels in sustainable development. Nigeria was selected as the focus of this study due to its status as Africa's most populous nation, representing a substantial portion of the continent's population. In fact, Nigeria contributes significantly not only to Africa's demographic landscape but also to that of all developing nations combined. With 2.64% of the global population (Lawrence et al., 2020), Nigeria serves as a pivotal case for examining broader trends in education and development. Hence, this study structured around four specific objectives:

1. To evaluate the challenges hindering SDG achievement in Nigerian education;
2. To investigate the technology's role in addressing educational disparities and fostering equity in Nigeria;
3. To identify technological innovations driving sustainable development in education
4. To assess the impact of digital technologies on education access and outcomes in Nigeria for sustainable development

Clarification of Variables

The following variables are clarified: Technology in Education, Educational Equity, Personalized Learning, Digital Divide, SDGs, and Sustainability.

Technology in Education: Technology in education refers to the use of digital tools and platforms to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative processes in educational institutions. This includes learning management systems (LMS), educational software, and virtual classrooms, which can improve student engagement and facilitate access to diverse learning resources. Research shows that integrating technology into education enhances the learning experience by providing flexible, interactive, and personalized educational opportunities (Voogt et al., 2018). Moreover, technology supports innovative pedagogies such as blended learning and flipped classrooms, further enriching the educational landscape (Bates, 2022).

Educational Equity: Educational equity involves ensuring that all students, regardless of socioeconomic status, gender, ethnicity, or geographic location, have access to quality education. It focuses on providing equal opportunities and resources to learners, particularly those in underprivileged or marginalized communities. The use of technology in education has the potential to reduce inequality by offering remote access to learning resources and reducing barriers to information (Di Pietro et al., 2020). However, achieving true equity also requires addressing infrastructural and systemic challenges, such as disparities in internet connectivity and digital literacy (UNESCO, 2021).

Personalized Learning: Personalized learning is an instructional approach that tailors educational experiences to individual students' strengths, needs, and learning preferences. Technology plays a crucial role in enabling personalized learning through adaptive learning systems and data-driven insights that help educators adjust content and pacing for students (Pane et al., 2017). These systems often utilize artificial intelligence (AI) to customize lessons, assessments, and feedback, thus fostering a more learner-centered environment (King & South, 2017).

Digital Divide: The digital divide refers to the gap between individuals and communities that have access to modern information and communication technologies (ICTs) and those that do not. In education, this divide manifests in unequal access to digital tools, internet connectivity, and technical skills. It disproportionately affects students from low-income households and rural areas, exacerbating educational inequality (Van Dijk, 2020). Bridging the digital divide requires investments in infrastructure, affordable internet services, and digital literacy programs (World Bank, 2019).

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The SDGs are a set of 17 global goals adopted by the United Nations to address critical challenges such as poverty, inequality, climate change, and education by 2030. SDG 4 specifically aims to ensure inclusive

and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2015). Technology in education is recognized as a key enabler for achieving this goal by facilitating access to education, promoting equity, and enhancing educational outcomes, especially in developing countries (UNESCO, 2020).

Sustainability: Sustainability in education refers to promoting practices and knowledge that support environmental stewardship and sustainable development. Educational technologies contribute to sustainability by reducing the need for physical resources (e.g., paper), supporting remote learning, and fostering awareness about sustainable practices (Sterling, 2016). Moreover, digital platforms enable the dissemination of educational content focused on sustainability, equipping students with the knowledge and skills necessary to address environmental challenges (Leal Filho et al., 2021).

Harnessing Technology for Inclusive and Equitable Education: Nigeria's Journey toward Achieving SDG 4

In 2015, the United Nations member states adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which serve as a global plan to foster peace, prosperity, and sustainability. Among these goals, SDG 4 stands out as a priority, aiming to ensure that everyone has access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities (Olubiyi, 2024). Nigeria, as Africa's most populous country, holds a key position in driving the continent's progress toward these goals. However, the country's education system faces numerous obstacles that complicate its ability to achieve SDG 4 (Olubiyi, 2024). Alongside these challenges, however, are opportunities that, if effectively utilized, could lead to significant improvements in the education system and contribute to global efforts. One of the primary issues hindering Nigeria's progress in education is limited access, heavily influenced by widespread poverty (Ibironke & Bunmi, 2024).

A large portion of the population struggles to make ends meet, and many families simply cannot afford the costs associated with schooling, such as fees, uniforms, and learning materials. Many children are forced to contribute to their household income, making regular school attendance difficult, thus limiting their educational opportunities (Sennuga et al., 2023). Furthermore, the lack of infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, exacerbates the problem. Numerous schools do not have basic facilities like adequate classrooms, desks, or proper sanitation. Overcrowded classrooms and dilapidated buildings create an environment that hampers both students and teachers, making it difficult for education to be delivered effectively (Ihebom & Uko, 2020). Another significant barrier is gender inequality. In certain parts of Nigeria, cultural expectations discourage girls from pursuing education.

Many young girls are expected to take on household duties or marry at an early age, which greatly limits their access to schooling. This results in a lower literacy rate among women, particularly in rural areas where such societal norms are more prevalent. In addition to these social factors, security concerns in the country, particularly in the Northeast, have caused severe disruptions to education. Groups like Boko Haram have actively targeted schools, resulting in widespread destruction and displacement. As a result, millions of children are unable to attend school, further decreasing educational attainment in regions already struggling with poverty and instability. Beyond issues of access, the quality of education in Nigeria is also a major concern. There is a shortage of qualified teachers across the country, and many educators lack the proper training to effectively teach their subjects (Oluwatosin & Bolanle, 2024).

In the absence of professional development opportunities, teaching methods remain inadequate, and students are not receiving the level of education necessary to compete in a globalized world. The curriculum currently in use is outdated and does not equip students with the critical thinking, technological skills, or vocational training that are essential for success in the modern workforce. Furthermore, the chronic underfunding of the education sector exacerbates these problems. Nigeria's budget allocation for education remains far below the UNESCO-recommended level of 15-20% of national expenditure. This underinvestment affects everything from teacher salaries to the maintenance of school infrastructure, resulting in poor learning environments and diminished educational outcomes (Govindarajoo et al., 2022). Inequality also plays a critical role in deepening the challenges facing Nigeria's education system (Edache & Gaiya, 2024).

The urban-rural divide is stark, with educational resources heavily concentrated in cities, while rural areas are left with inadequate facilities, poorly trained teachers, and limited access to technology. As a result, rural students are significantly disadvantaged compared to their urban counterparts (Karim et al., 2024). Socioeconomic disparities further compound these issues, as wealthier families can afford private education, which generally provides better resources and learning conditions. Meanwhile, children from poorer backgrounds are often stuck in underfunded and overcrowded public schools, perpetuating cycles of poverty and limited opportunity (Raj, 2021). In addition to these structural issues, governance and policy inconsistencies also impede progress. Corruption remains a pervasive problem in Nigeria, and the mismanagement of funds intended for educational development has undermined improvement efforts.

Furthermore, frequent changes in educational policies without proper implementation strategies have led to inefficiencies and confusion among teachers and administrators (Dimmock et al., 2021). Long-term planning is often sacrificed for political gains, and the lack of reliable data and research makes it difficult to effectively monitor and address the needs of the education sector.

Technology represents another significant challenge. Many schools lack the technological infrastructure necessary to incorporate digital learning into the classroom (Timotheou et al., 2023). Access to computers, the internet, and other digital tools is limited, particularly in rural areas. Furthermore, both teachers and students often lack the digital literacy needed to use these tools effectively. This gap was particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when schools had to shift to remote learning.

The lack of digital readiness in many parts of the country severely hindered these efforts, widening the educational divide even further. Despite these daunting challenges, there are opportunities for Nigeria to make meaningful progress toward achieving SDG 4. By addressing the root causes of these issues and focusing on targeted reforms, the country can significantly improve its education system. If these opportunities are harnessed effectively, Nigeria can unlock its vast potential and ensure that all its children have access to the quality education they deserve, thus contributing to broader global efforts to achieve sustainable development. Nigeria has a pivotal opportunity to utilize education as a driving force to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Obadahun et al., 2024). Recognizing the need for significant improvement, the government has taken crucial steps toward reforming the education system.

One such initiative, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, seeks to provide all children with access to free and compulsory basic education (Ojo & Salman, 2024. This initiative aims to remove financial obstacles that prevent children from attending school, thereby increasing enrollment rates, especially in areas that have historically been underserved. Moreover, ongoing reforms in the areas of curriculum development, teacher training, and inclusive education practices are geared towards achieving the broader objectives of SDG 4. These efforts reflect a clear commitment to reducing inequality in education and opening up new opportunities for all students. The growing influence of technology also offers promising possibilities for improving both access to and the quality of education (Timotheou et al., 2023). With the widespread availability of mobile devices and internet access, e-learning platforms and mobile applications have become essential tools for delivering education, particularly in regions where physical educational infrastructure is lacking (Itam et al., 2024).

The COVID-19 pandemic further highlighted the potential of digital learning, as many schools transitioned to online platforms during the lockdown period. By enhancing the country's information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, Nigeria can broaden access to high-quality education and reach even those in remote areas. This digital shift supports lifelong learning, cultivates digital literacy, and has the potential to significantly enhance educational outcomes across the nation (Adamu et al., 2024). International partnerships also present key opportunities for advancing Nigeria's educational objectives. Through collaborations with global organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank, Nigeria has gained access to valuable funding, technical expertise, and capacity-building programs. For instance, the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) has been instrumental in enhancing access to education and strengthening the national education system (Outhred & Turner, 2020).

These international collaborations enable Nigeria to draw from global best practices and receive crucial support in tackling the multifaceted challenges within its education sector. By continuing to foster these partnerships, the country can make greater strides towards achieving the SDGs. The country's youth population is another vital asset in driving educational reforms and progress toward the SDGs (Akinwale, 2023). By actively involving young people in policy development and educational planning, the government can foster a sense of ownership and accountability within this demographic. Youth-led advocacy groups and organizations have the potential to lead campaigns for education reform and innovation, ensuring that their perspectives are considered in decision-making processes (Omweri, 2024). By tapping into the energy and creativity of its youth, Nigeria can inspire new ideas and solutions that promote a more inclusive and equitable educational system (Big-Alabo & Opuowei, 2024).

The involvement of the private sector also provides a valuable opportunity to advance educational development in Nigeria. Companies, through corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives, can make meaningful contributions by funding scholarships, constructing schools, and offering resources to underserved communities. Public-private partnerships have the potential to mobilize additional resources that can complement government efforts, ensuring that a greater number of students gain access to quality education. Furthermore, the rise of educational technology (EdTech) startups in Nigeria is helping to address persistent challenges in the education sector (Udanoh & Zouria, 2023). These startups are creating digital tools that enhance teacher training, improve educational content, and make learning more accessible to students nationwide, thus contributing to a more innovative and effective education system (Jha & Jha, 2020).

Emphasizing technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is another critical strategy for addressing unemployment and underemployment among Nigerian graduates. By providing students with practical, marketable skills, TVET programs can better align education with the demands of the job market. This not only helps students' secure meaningful employment but also contributes to the nation's broader economic development and efforts to reduce poverty. As more students graduate with the necessary skills for high-demand industries, Nigeria can reduce unemployment and cultivate a stronger and more dynamic workforce, further supporting the country's alignment with multiple SDG targets (Alam et al., 2024). Community engagement and advocacy are essential for the success of educational reforms in Nigeria. Grassroots initiatives, spearheaded by local leaders and organizations, can play a significant role in promoting school attendance and challenging cultural barriers

that limit educational access, particularly for girls. By ensuring that local communities have a voice in the development and implementation of educational programs, the government can create more culturally sensitive and sustainable solutions (Wright et al., 2022). Empowering communities to take active ownership of educational progress will not only ensure that the system is more responsive to local needs but also drive meaningful progress towards achieving the SDGs.

Revolutionizing Education through Technology: Enhancing Accessibility, Personalization, and Learning Outcomes Globally

Technology has fundamentally transformed education systems across the globe, opening up new avenues for enhancing learning experiences, broadening accessibility, and improving educational outcomes. The integration of digital tools in the classroom has revolutionized traditional teaching methods, making education more engaging and interactive. With the proliferation of computers, tablets, and smartphones, students now have access to a vast array of educational resources from virtually anywhere, which extends learning beyond the confines of traditional classrooms (Haleem. et al 2023). This shift allows for a more personalized educational experience, tailored to the individual needs and pace of each learner, moving away from the conventional one-size-fits-all model. A key benefit of technology is its capacity to democratize education. Online learning platforms and open educational resources (OER) offer high-quality instructional materials irrespective of geographic location or economic conditions (Ahmad, 2024).

For areas where schools are underfunded or lacking in resources, these digital solutions provide valuable alternatives, giving students access to subjects and learning opportunities that may not be available locally. Furthermore, e-learning and distance education programs have made it possible for learners who might face financial or physical barriers to participate in educational activities. This capacity to expand educational reach is especially crucial in remote regions with limited physical infrastructure (Ahlf, et. al, 2024). Technology also enhances the role of educators by equipping them with tools to create more effective and engaging learning environments. Interactive learning technologies, such as virtual simulations and augmented reality, make complex concepts more accessible, helping to clarify abstract ideas for students. Digital assessment tools allow educators to monitor student progress in real-time, facilitating timely feedback and intervention. Moreover, technology fosters collaboration among teachers, enabling them to share best practices and resources globally (Asad, et.al. 2021)

This has led to the formation of international learning communities where educators can continuously refine their teaching methods and stay abreast of educational advancements. Beyond its impact on teaching and learning, technology has transformed the administration of educational institutions. The use of data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized decision-making processes, allowing administrators to identify trends, allocate resources more effectively, and enhance student outcomes. These technologies enable the prediction of student performance, monitoring of attendance, and creation of personalized learning pathways, thereby supporting a more data-driven approach to managing education. Despite its potential, the integration of technology into education is not without challenges (de Souza Zanirato Maia, et.al. 2023). The digital divide remains a significant barrier, with unequal access to technology and internet connectivity perpetuating disparities in educational opportunities. It is crucial to address these inequalities to ensure that the benefits of technology are available to all learners, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location (Hassan, & Naoual.2024).

Transforming Education through Technology: Advancing Learning and Sustainability

Technological innovations are dramatically transforming education, playing a crucial role in advancing sustainable development by reshaping how learning is both delivered and accessed. These advancements offer significant opportunities to tackle longstanding educational challenges and foster more inclusive and effective learning environments. Central to this transformation is the proliferation of digital tools and online platforms, which have expanded the horizons of education far beyond traditional classroom settings. Previously, educational opportunities were often restricted by physical and geographical constraints (Haleem, et, al 2022). Now, students in remote or underserved areas can access a wealth of high-quality educational content and resources through online platforms and digital libraries. This shift not only bridges the divide between well-resourced and under-resourced educational environments but also promotes lifelong learning through flexible, on-demand options that cater to diverse needs and learning styles (Haleem, et, al 2022).

One of the most impactful technological advancements is the ability to offer personalized learning experiences. Adaptive learning technologies utilize sophisticated algorithms to customize educational content according to each student's individual needs, preferences, and learning pace. This tailored approach addresses the varied learning styles and speeds of students, enabling them to advance at their own pace and focus on areas requiring additional support. By harnessing data analytics, educators can gain detailed insights into students' learning behaviors and outcomes, facilitating more targeted and effective interventions. This level of customization not only enhances student engagement but also improves educational outcomes, making learning more effective and inclusive. Moreover, technology is fostering innovative teaching methods through interactive tools such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) (Matsieli, & Mutula, 2024).

VR creates immersive learning experiences by simulating historical events or scientific phenomena, offering students hands-on experiences that are difficult to replicate in traditional classrooms. Similarly, AR overlays digital information onto the real world, enabling interactive and engaging learning experiences that blend digital and physical elements (Georgiou, et, al 2021). These tools enhance understanding and retention of complex concepts, making learning more engaging and effective. In addition to enhancing student experiences, technology is revolutionizing the management of educational institutions. Data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) are increasingly used to streamline decision-making processes, allowing administrators to identify trends, allocate resources more efficiently, and improve student outcomes. These technologies enable predictive analysis of student performance, monitoring of attendance, and the creation of personalized learning pathways, leading to a more data-driven approach to education management. Despite the considerable potential of technology to advance education, challenges persist (Georgiou, et, al 2021).

The digital divide remains a significant issue, with disparities in access to technology and internet connectivity creating inequalities in educational opportunities. Addressing these gaps is essential to ensuring that technological benefits are accessible to all learners, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location. Furthermore, technological innovations are instrumental in promoting environmental education and sustainability (Jamil, & Muschert, 2024). Digital tools and platforms facilitate sustainability education by providing valuable information on environmental issues, fostering discussions on sustainable practices, and supporting student projects focused on environmental stewardship. Technology also contributes to the efficiency of educational institutions by optimizing resource management, reducing waste, and supporting green initiatives. As technology continues to evolve, its role in advancing education and sustainable development is likely to expand, offering new opportunities to address educational challenges and promote global progress (Hajj-Hassan. et, al. 2024).

METHOD

This study conducts a systematic review of the literature to investigate how advancements in technology can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within Nigeria's education system. It focuses on addressing key challenges such as accessibility, quality, and inequality, drawing from 51 scholarly sources including articles, reports, and conference proceedings from platforms like Scopus, web of science, ProQuest, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. The research underscores the potential of smart learning as a framework for meeting SDGs, exploring how collaborative efforts and technological innovations can drive progress. It highlights the significant barriers to educational advancement in Nigeria, such as poverty, gender imbalances, and inadequate infrastructure, particularly in underserved regions. Technology is positioned as a critical tool in overcoming these hurdles, improving educational outcomes, and fostering sustainable development across the country. Key opportunities identified in the study include the expansion of e-learning platforms, the growing use of mobile technology, and international collaborations that can promote equitable and inclusive education. The research also outlines possible future pathways for pedagogical innovation and strategies for achieving long-term systemic change, emphasizing the role of technology in enhancing governance, accessibility, and personalized learning experiences. The study concludes by advocating for strong partnerships between the public and private sectors, supported by policy reforms and investments in ICT infrastructure, to ensure that Nigeria's education system aligns with global SDG objectives.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Challenges Hindering SDG Achievement in Nigerian Education

The findings from the systematic review and analysis highlight various obstacles slowing Nigeria's progress toward achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which seeks to provide inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. A major hurdle is the widespread poverty that forces many children to work to support their families, thus limiting their school attendance, particularly in rural areas where the problem is more severe (Ibironke & Bunmi, 2024; Sennuga et al., 2023). Another significant challenge is the lack of proper infrastructure, especially in rural schools, where many lack essential facilities like classrooms, sanitation, and seating. Overcrowded, poorly maintained schools create difficulties for students and teachers alike, resulting in lower learning outcomes (Ihebom & Uko, 2020). Cultural factors, particularly gender inequality, further compound this issue, with many girls prevented from attending school due to societal pressures around domestic roles or early marriage, leading to lower female literacy rates in these areas (Sennuga et al., 2023).

In Northern Nigeria, security threats from insurgent groups such as Boko Haram have further disrupted education, with targeted attacks on schools displacing communities and destabilizing educational access (Oluwatosin & Bolanle, 2024). Additionally, a shortage of qualified teachers and outdated curricula that fail to equip students with relevant skills undermine the overall quality of education (Olubiyi, 2024). The urban-rural divide exacerbates educational inequalities, with rural students lacking the resources, infrastructure, and technological access available in urban areas. This imbalance traps rural students in poorly funded schools, perpetuating cycles of poverty (Karim et al., 2024). Nevertheless, there are pathways to improvement.

Government initiatives such as the Universal Basic Education (UBE) program, which seeks to provide free compulsory education, show promise in increasing enrollment, especially in underserved areas (Ojo & Salman, 2024).
Digital tools and online platforms, particularly highlighted during the COVID-19 pandemic, offer potential to bridge resource gaps and improve learning opportunities (Timotheou et al., 2023; Adamu et al., 2024). International collaborations with organizations like UNICEF and the World Bank have contributed valuable resources and expertise to address these issues and implement best practices (Outhred & Turner, 2020). Additionally, Nigeria's large youth population offers a unique opportunity to drive educational reforms by involving young people in policymaking (Akinwale, 2023). Private sector engagement, through initiatives like corporate social responsibility programs and partnerships, can also support educational infrastructure and content, while vocational training programs can align the education system with the job market, fostering economic growth and reducing unemployment (Jha & Jha, 2020; Alam et al., 2024).
Technology's Role in Addressing Educational Disparities and Fostering Equity in Nigeria
The study underscores how technological advancements are playing a pivotal role in reducing educational disparities in Nigeria, particularly by fostering inclusive and equitable learning environments through digital tools. Technology has been instrumental in overcoming traditional educational barriers, especially in areas with limited resources. The findings reveal that the integration of digital platforms, such as online learning systems and Open Educational Resources (OER), has expanded educational access nationwide, enabling more personalized learning experiences for students. According to Ahmad (2024), OER has been vital in democratizing education by providing high-quality instructional materials to disadvantaged students who otherwise might not have access to such resources. Moreover, the research shows that technology has significantly increased access to education in remote regions with inadequate infrastructure.
Ahlf et al. (2024) highlight how e-learning and distance education programs have enabled students facing financial or physical challenges to pursue learning, even in the most isolated areas. This is particularly relevant in Nigeria, where rural communities often struggle with insufficient educational resources. In addition to improving access, technology has greatly enhanced teaching methods. Tools like virtual simulations and augmented reality have simplified complex concepts, making them more understandable and engaging for students. As Asad et al. (2021) observe, these innovations have empowered educators to improve their teaching strategies, helping students' better grasp abstract concepts. Additionally, digital assessment tools allow for real-time feedback, helping teachers track student progress and intervene promptly when necessary to enhance learning outcomes.
However, the study also highlights the persistent challenge of the digital divide. While technology offers substantial potential to reduce educational gaps, unequal access to devices and reliable internet connectivity continues to exacerbate disparities. De Souza Zanirato Maia et al. (2023) stress that unless these inequalities are addressed, many students, particularly in underserved regions, will not fully benefit from technological advancements. The findings suggest that to achieve genuine educational equity in Nigeria, targeted efforts are needed to ensure all students, regardless of socio-economic background or location, have access to the necessary digital tools and internet connectivity.
Technological Innovations Driving Sustainable Development in Education
The study examines how technological innovations are enhancing Nigeria's education system in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability, while aligning with global trends and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The results highlight that technology is playing a pivotal role in transforming education by tackling significant challenges and fostering more inclusive learning environments. A major impact of these innovations is the broadening of educational access beyond traditional classroom settings. Digital tools and online platforms are bridging the gap between well-resourced and under-resourced schools, providing students in remote or underserved regions with access to high-quality educational materials (Haleem et al., 2022). This advancement has effectively removed physical and geographical barriers and supports lifelong learning through flexible, on-demand resources that meet various learning needs.
Another significant development is the rise of personalized learning. Adaptive learning technologies utilize algorithms to tailor educational content to each student's unique needs and learning pace. This customization allows students to progress at their own speed and concentrate on areas where they require additional support. Enhanced by data analytics, educators can gain valuable insights into student learning patterns, enabling targeted interventions that boost engagement and improve educational outcomes. Interactive technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) have also transformed teaching methods. VR provides immersive experiences by recreating historical events or scientific phenomena, while AR integrates digital information with the physical world, making learning more interactive and engaging (Matsieli & Mutula, 2024; Georgiou et al., 2021). These tools are particularly effective in helping students grasp and retain complex concepts.
Additionally, technology is reshaping the management of educational institutions. Data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) streamline decision-making processes, allowing administrators to better analyze trends, allocate resources efficiently, and create personalized learning pathways. These advancements lead to more effective and data-driven educational management. Despite these advancements, challenges such as the digital divide remain. Inequities in access to technology and internet connectivity

continue to hinder educational opportunities. Addressing these disparities is crucial to ensuring that technological benefits are available to all learners (Georgiou et al., 2021). Furthermore, technology plays a role in promoting environmental education and sustainability. It offers resources on environmental issues, facilitates discussions on sustainable practices, and supports projects focused on environmental stewardship (Jamil & Muschert, 2024). Technology also aids in optimizing resource management and reducing waste in educational settings. As technology continues to advance, its role in supporting education and sustainability is expected to grow, presenting new opportunities to overcome educational challenges and contribute to global progress (Hajj-Hassan et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

This study has thoroughly examined the challenges hindering the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigerian education, the role of technology in addressing educational disparities, and the impact of digital technologies on education access and outcomes. The findings reveal significant challenges, including inadequate infrastructure, poor teacher training, and limited access to quality education. However, technology has been identified as a crucial factor in addressing these disparities and driving sustainable development in education.

SUGGESTION

1. The Nigerian government and stakeholders should invest in developing and implementing effective technology-based solutions to address educational disparities and improve access to quality education.
2. Teacher training programs should be established to enhance educators' digital literacy and capacity to effectively integrate technology into their teaching practices.
3. Increased funding and partnerships with private sector organizations should be explored to improve infrastructure and expand access to digital technologies in schools.
4. Policy reforms should be implemented to support the integration of technology in education and ensure equitable distribution of resources.
5. Further research should be conducted to continuously monitor the impact of digital technologies on education access and outcomes in Nigeria and inform data-driven decision-making.

By implementing these recommendations, Nigeria can harness the potential of technology to achieve the SDGs and create a more equitable and sustainable education system

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Information about the authors:

Semiu Olawale Makinde – Department of Science Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria; ORCID 0000-0001-5456-3464; E-mail: somakinde@alhikmah.edu.ng

Bola Mariam Sulyman – Department of Science Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria; ORCID 0009-0008-7776-5489; E-mail: bolasulyman01@gmail.com

Abdulmuhsin Ibrahim – Department of Science Education, Al-Hikmah University Ilorin, Nigeria; ORCID 0009-0002-2147-3854; E-mail: abdulmuhsinibrahim72@gmail.com