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## **INTEGRATING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY IN *EKOMBI* DANCE MUSIC EDUCATION: A PATHWAY TO ARCHIVING VISION 2030 IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

### **Abstract**

Ekombi dance music is a cultural expression in Cross River State, Nigeria. Diminishing interest among younger generations and insufficient modern educational resources are some of its challenges. This study investigated how integrating digital technologies into ekombi dance music education could contribute to achieving Vision 2030. It evaluates the effectiveness of digital tools in enhancing the teaching and appreciation of ekombi dance music, thus aiding in cultural preservation and educational advancement. Survey, analytical, archival, photographic and video tutorials, interactive apps, and virtual reality experiences were employed. The study is grounded in theories of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) by Fred Davis in 1989 and Cultural-Historical Activity (CHAT) by Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky in 1920s and Alexei Leontiev in 1930s respectively. Findings indicate that the use of digital tools was found to create a deeper connection with cultural heritage while making the dance more accessible and appealing to younger audiences. In conclusion, the integration of digital technologies in ekombi dance music education is crucial for cultural preservation and the attainment of Vision 2030. The study recommends that stakeholders should focus on developing and implementing digital resources to ensure the sustainability and growth of ekombi dance music in Cross River State and across the globe.

### **Introduction**

The *ekombi* dance music, a vibrant and integral component of the cultural heritage of the Efik people in Cross River State, Nigeria, is a traditional dance that embodies the community's history, values, and artistic expression. However, like many traditional art forms, the *ekombi* dance music faces the threat of erosion due to the increasing influence of globalization, changing societal values, and the waning interest among younger generations (Nzewi, 2013). This issue is particularly concerning as it threatens the transmission of cultural knowledge and the continuity of this unique art form.

In response to these challenges, there is a growing recognition of the potential of digital technologies to rejuvenate and sustain traditional cultural practices. Digital technologies offer innovative ways to document, teach, and engage with traditional art forms, making them more accessible and appealing to contemporary audiences (Jones, 2016). The integration of these technologies into musical arts education aligns with Nigeria's Vision 2030, which emphasizes the importance of leveraging technology to enhance education, promote cultural preservation, and drive socio-economic development (National Planning Commission, 2017).

One key advantage of digital technologies is their ability to create interactive and immersive learning experiences. For instance, Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR) can provide students with a simulated environment to practice and perform the *ekombi* dance music, enhancing their understanding and appreciation of the art form (Smith, 2020). Additionally, mobile applications and online platforms can also serve as repositories of knowledge, offering video tutorials, historical contexts, and interactive lessons that are accessible anytime and anywhere (Adedokun, Adeyemo and Ojo, 2019). These tools not only facilitate learning but also bridge the gap between generations, ensuring that the *ekombi* dance music remains a living tradition.

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), introduced by Fred Davis in 1989, provides a useful framework for understanding how digital technologies can be adopted in educational settings. According to TAM, perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness are critical factors that influence the acceptance of new technologies (Davis, 1989). This model can help educators and policymakers identify and address potential barriers to the adoption of digital tools in *ekombi* dance music education. Furthermore, the Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), developed by Lev Vygotsky and later expanded by Alexei Leontiev, offers insights into how cultural practices are mediated by tools and how these practices evolve over time (Engeström, 2018). By applying CHAT, we can explore how digital technologies can be integrated into the cultural activity of *ekombi* dance music, transforming it in ways that respect and enhance its traditional essence.

This study aims to investigate the integration of digital technologies in *ekombi* dance music education as a means to achieving Vision 2030 in Cross River State. By examining the effectiveness of digital tools in teaching and preserving this traditional art form, we can develop strategies that ensure the sustainability of the *ekombi* dance music and its transmission to future generations. This research not only contributes to the academic discourse on cultural preservation and educational innovation but also offers practical solutions to the challenges faced by traditional musical arts in the digital age.

## Integrating Digital Technologies

The integration of digital technologies in education has been widely studied, showing significant improvements in engagement and learning outcomes. Technologies such as virtual reality, mobile applications, and online platforms have revolutionized traditional teaching methods, making education more interactive and accessible (Jones, 2016).



**Figure 1: Common mobile devices**

### ***Ekombi* Dance**

*Ekombi* dance is a traditional dance of the Efik people in Cross River State, Nigeria. It is characterized by graceful movements and elaborate costumes, embodying the cultural heritage and identity of the Efik community. Despite its cultural significance, it faces the risk of decline due to modernization and reduced youth interest (Nzewi, 2013). Ekpa (2012) affirms that *ekombi* music is gracefully performed by the Efik maidens (young girls/ladies), gesticulating the beautiful signs of womanhood as well as the rich cultural heritage of the Efiks. Ezebube and Anthony (2022) further explain that the music is a display of rhythmic patterns, sonorous melodies, beautiful dance steps and the adorning apparels of womanhood. The musical performance is often demonstrated with flexible hands, swinging back and front like the water waves; supple twisting of the body from chest to the legs like that of the fish or mermaid movement. On the whole, the instrumental accompaniments and vocal text of *ekombi* music often thrill both the audience and dancers to more graceful body gesticulation at spontaneous pulses and balancing of the pulse marker, ostinato and the rhythmic extemporization of the drums. *Ekombi* dance formation sways from linear formation to triangular formation and sometimes from semi-circular formation to zigzag formation, depending on the numbers of the performers.



Figure 2 : *Ekombi* Dancers



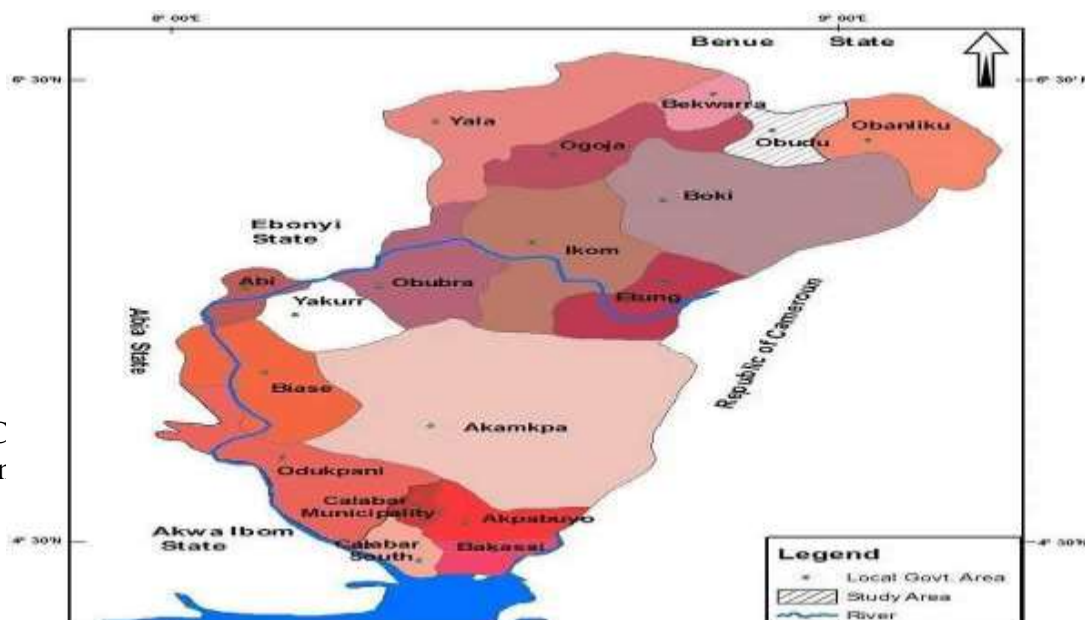
Figure 3: *Ekombi* Dancers

## Musical Arts Education

Musical arts education encompasses the teaching of music, dance, and related artistic expressions. It plays a crucial role in preserving cultural heritage and fostering creativity. Integrating modern educational technologies into musical arts education has been shown to enhance learning experiences and preserve traditional art forms (Adedokun et al., 2019).

## Vision 2030

Nigeria's Vision 2030 is a strategic framework aimed at achieving sustainable socio-economic development. It emphasizes leveraging technology for education and cultural preservation, aiming to enhance the quality of life and promote national development. Integrating digital technologies in cultural education aligns with these national goals (National Planning Commission, 2017).



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and education. However, challenges such as inadequate infrastructure and modernization pressures necessitate innovative approaches to cultural preservation (Smith, 2020).

### **Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)**

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), was introduced in 1989 by Fred Davis. He posits that two primary factors determine the acceptance and use of technology: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Davis, 1989). Perceived usefulness refers to the degree to which a person believes that using a particular technology will enhance their performance, while perceived ease of use is the extent to which a person believes that using the technology will be free of effort. In the context of *ekombi* dance music education, TAM can help educators and policy makers understand the factors that influence teachers' and students' willingness to adopt digital tools in formal education. For instance, if teachers find digital platforms such as Tiktok and youtube among others useful for enhancing students' engagement and comprehension of *ekombi* dance music, and if these tools are easy to use, they are more likely to integrate them into their formal teaching practices. Therefore, ensuring that digital technologies are user-friendly and demonstrate clear benefits in terms of educational outcomes is crucial for their successful adoption in *ekombi* dance music education.

### **Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT)**

Cultural-Historical Activity Theory (CHAT), was developed by Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s and in 1930s Alexei Leontiev expanded it as well as scholars like Yrjö Engeström in 20<sup>th</sup> century. CHAT provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing human activities as socially and culturally situated phenomena (Engeström, 2018). CHAT emphasizes the role of cultural artifacts, tools, and social interactions in mediating human activities and learning processes. Applying CHAT to *ekombi* dance music education highlights how digital technologies can serve as mediating tools that transform the traditional teaching and learning of this dance form. By incorporating digital tools such as virtual reality, online tutorials, and interactive applications, educators can create enriched learning environments that reflect the cultural and historical context of *ekombi* dance music. These tools can mediate the learning experience, making the dance more accessible and engaging for students while preserving its cultural essence.

Furthermore, CHAT underscores the importance of community and social interactions in the learning process. Integrating digital technologies in *ekombi* dance music education should not be an isolated effort but rather involve collaboration among educators, students, cultural practitioners, and the community. This collaborative approach ensures that digital integration respects and enhances the cultural and historical significance of *ekombi* dance music, aligning with the goals of Vision 2030.

Both TAM and CHAT offer valuable insights for the integration of digital technologies in *ekombi* dance musical arts education. By addressing factors that influence technology acceptance and understanding the socio-cultural dynamics of learning, educators and policymakers can develop effective strategies to preserve and promote *ekombi* dance music, contributing to the broader objectives of Vision 2030 in Cross River State, Nigeria.

## Vision 2030 and *Ekombi* Dance Music Education

Vision 2030, Nigeria's strategic framework for sustainable socio-economic development, emphasizes the importance of leveraging technology, enhancing education, and preserving cultural heritage. These goals align closely with the objectives of integrating digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education in Cross River State. By aligning with Vision 2030, the education and promotion of *ekombi* dance music can contribute significantly to national development priorities as follows:

### Enhancing Quality Education

Vision 2030 prioritizes improving the quality of education across all levels. Integrating digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education enhances the learning experience, making it more interactive and accessible. Digital tools such as online platforms, virtual reality, and mobile applications can provide students with immersive and engaging ways to learn *ekombi* dance music, thus fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of the art form. This approach not only enhances the quality of arts education but also promotes digital literacy, a critical skill in the modern world.

### Promoting Cultural Preservation

A key component of Vision 2030 is the preservation of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage. *Ekombi* dance music being a traditional dance of the Efik people, embodies the cultural identity and historical significance of Cross River State. By incorporating digital technologies, the dance can be documented, preserved, and shared more effectively. Digital archives, virtual performances, and online tutorials ensure that *ekombi* dance music is not lost to future generations. This does not only preserve cultural heritage but also fosters a sense of pride and identity among the Efik people and Nigerians at large.

### Fostering Economic Development

Vision 2030 also aims to drive economic growth through cultural and creative industries. By promoting *ekombi* dance music through digital platforms, new economic opportunities can be created. The global reach of the internet allows for wider dissemination and monetization of cultural products. Virtual dance classes, digital performances, and cultural tourism can attract a global audience, generating revenue and creating jobs within the cultural sector. This economic activity contributes to the broader goals of Vision 2030 by diversifying the economy and promoting sustainable development.

### Encouraging Social Inclusion

Vision 2030 underscores the importance of social inclusion and equitable access to opportunities. Integrating digital technologies into *kombi* dance music education ensures that more people, especially the youth and those in remote areas where there is internet coverage, can access and engage with their cultural heritage. Digital tools can bridge the gap between formal and informal education by providing equal opportunities for all students to learn and appreciate *ekombi* dance music. This is essential for fostering national unity and ensuring that all citizens benefit from the nation's cultural and educational advancements.

The integration of digital technologies in *ekombi* dance music education is a strategic approach to achieving Vision 2030 in Cross River State. By enhancing education quality, promoting cultural preservation, fostering economic development, and encouraging social inclusion, this initiative aligns with national development goals. It ensures that *ekombi* dance music remains a vibrant and integral part of Nigeria's cultural heritage, contributing to the overall vision of a prosperous and inclusive nation by 2030.

### **Challenges in the Integrating *Ekombi* Dance Music Education into Vision 2030**

**Lack of Infrastructure:** The Department of Music in the University of Calabar as well as Cross River State College of Education, Akampka and cultural institutions (Cultural Center and Museum Center) in Cross River State lack the necessary digital infrastructure, such as reliable internet access and modern technological equipment, which are essential for integrating digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education.

**Digital Literacy:** Both educators and students may have limited knowledge and skills in using digital tools and platforms effectively for educational purposes.

**Cultural Sensitivity:** There is a risk that the essence and authenticity of *ekombi* dance music could be diluted or misrepresented through digital platforms if not handled with cultural sensitivity.

**Funding and Resource Allocation:** Securing adequate funding and resources for integrating digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education is difficult, especially in a context with competing priorities and limited budgets.

**Resistance to Change:** There are resistance to adopting new technologies among educators, students, and the community due to traditional beliefs or skepticism about the benefits of digital tools.

Given the foregoing challenges on the integration of digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education in Cross River State, it is essential to address these challenges before achieving Vision 2030 goals. By investing in infrastructure, enhancing digital literacy, ensuring cultural sensitivity, securing funding, and managing resistance to change, these obstacles can be overcome. These possible solutions not only support the preservation and promotion of *ekombi* dance music but also contribute to the broader goals of educational improvement, cultural preservation, and socio-economic development outlined in Vision 2030.

### **Technological Tools to Promote Vision 2030 in *Ekombi* Dance Music Education**

**Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):** VR and AR technologies can create immersive experiences where students can virtually participate in *ekombi* dance music performances, explore historical contexts, and learn dance techniques in interactive environments.

**Mobile Applications:** Mobile apps can offer access to *ekombi* dance music tutorials, historical information, and interactive lessons. These apps can be designed to cater for different learning



styles and levels of expertise, making *ekombi* dance music education accessible to a wider audience



**Figure 5: Online interaction with app.**

**Figure 6: Online learning with app.**

**Online Learning Platforms:** Platforms like learning management systems (LMS) can host digital courses, videos, and quizzes related to *ekombi* dance music. They provide a centralized hub for students and educators to engage with educational content and collaborate on projects.

**Digital Archives and Documentation Tools:** Digital archives and documentation tools can preserve *ekombi* dance music performances, music scores, and historical records. These tools ensure that cultural heritage is documented and accessible for future generations, supporting both educational and preservation goals.

**Interactive Websites and Social Media:** Websites and social media platforms dedicated to *ekombi* dance music can share updates, event information, and educational resources. Interactive features such as live streaming of performances and community forums foster engagement and global visibility for *ekombi* dance music.





## Figure 6: Interacting with mobile apps

By leveraging these technological tools, *ekombi* dance music education can be enhanced, promoting cultural preservation, educational excellence, and contributing to the broader aspirations of Vision 2030 in Cross River State, Nigeria.

## Comparative Analysis of Integrating Digital Technologies into Traditional Dance Music Education

Integrating digital technologies into traditional dance music education has been a growing trend globally, aimed at preserving cultural heritage while enhancing educational outcomes. Two countries that exemplify this approach are South Korea and the United States.

- ❖ South Korea: South Korea has extensively integrated digital technologies into traditional dance music education as part of its broader cultural policy initiatives. The government's support through digital platforms and educational tools has revitalized interest in traditional Korean music (*gugak*) among the younger generation. Institutions like the National *Gugak* Center have utilized digital platforms to offer online courses, virtual performances, and interactive learning modules. This approach not only preserves traditional music but also makes it accessible to a wider audience domestically and globally (Lee, 2017).
- ❖ United States: In the United States, particularly among Native American communities, digital technologies have been crucial in preserving and promoting traditional dance music. Projects like the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian have employed digital archives and interactive exhibits to document and teach indigenous music and dance forms. These efforts have not only preserved cultural heritage but also empowered communities to reclaim and share their traditions in contemporary settings (Smithsonian Institution, n.d.).

In Cross River State, Nigeria, the *ekombi* dance music practice represents a unique cultural heritage. However, the integration of digital technologies in its preservation and education has been limited. Unlike South Korea and the United States, where government support and institutional initiatives drive digital integration, *ekombi* dance music primarily relies on oral tradition and occasional live performances for preservation. Challenges such as limited access to digital infrastructure, funding, and educational resources hinder comprehensive digital integration in *ekombi* dance music education. Efforts to bridge this gap could involve partnerships with educational institutions, cultural organizations, and government support to develop digital archives, online tutorials, and interactive platforms for learning and showcasing *ekombi* dance music. While South Korea and the United States have successfully integrated digital technologies into traditional dance music education, Nigeria, specifically Cross River State with its *ekombi* dance music, faces challenges in adopting similar approaches. Addressing these challenges through strategic partnerships and government support can potentially enhance the preservation and educational value of *ekombi* dance music in alignment with global trends.

## Findings

The integration of digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education in Cross River State, Nigeria has not gained wider implementation, if imbibed, it will yield significant potentials as pathway to achieving Vision 2030.

Digital tools such as virtual reality (VR) and mobile applications has not been instrumental in enhancing student engagement and learning outcomes. If students participate in virtual *ekombi* dance music sessions, there will be reported higher levels of motivation and understanding of dance techniques compared to traditional methods.

There is a fragmented use of online platforms and mobile apps to access to *ekombi* dance among urban audience. When students from remote areas and diverse backgrounds are introduced and could access such instructional materials, tutorials, and historical context that were previously inaccessible, the practice will be sustained.

Digital archives and documentation tools have played a crucial role in preserving and promoting cultural heritage of the Western cultures. Hence, video recordings of performances, historical narratives, and music scores of the *ekombi* dance music could be digitized and made available for future generations, ensuring the continuity and authenticity of the dance form.

There are interactive websites and social media platforms that could be dedicated to *ekombi* dance music to fostered community engagement and collaboration. These platforms serve as hubs for sharing knowledge, organizing events, and connecting with a global audience interested in Nigerian cultural heritage.

Despite the benefits, challenges such as infrastructure limitations and digital literacy gaps among educators and students persist. Addressing these challenges through targeted training programs and infrastructure investments remains crucial to fully harnessing the potential of digital technologies in *ekombi* dance music education.

## Conclusion

Integrating digital technologies into *ekombi* dance music education presents a transformative pathway towards achieving Vision 2030 in Cross River State, Nigeria. This initiative has shown immense potential in enhancing educational quality, preserving cultural heritage, promoting economic growth, and fostering social inclusion. Through virtual reality, mobile applications, online learning platforms, digital archives, and interactive websites, *ekombi* dance music will become more accessible and engaging for students and enthusiasts alike. These technological tools will not only revitalized teaching methods but also facilitated the documentation and dissemination of *ekombi* dance music traditions, ensuring their continuity for future generations.

By embracing digital technologies, Cross River State can leverage its rich cultural heritage to drive educational excellence, economic development through cultural tourism, and social cohesion. The integration of these technologies aligns with Vision 2030's goals of sustainable development, innovation, and inclusive growth, positioning *ekombi* dance music as a cornerstone of cultural preservation and educational advancement in Nigeria. The journey towards achieving Vision 2030 through *ekombi* dance music education is both promising and imperative. By continuing to innovate and adapt, stakeholders can ensure that *ekombi* dance music not only

survives but thrives as a dynamic expression of Nigeria's cultural identity and heritage on the global stage.

## Recommendations

By the following recommendations, stakeholders can effectively harness the possibilities of digital technologies to enhance *ekombi* dance music education, preserve cultural heritage, and contribute to the realization of Vision 2030 goals in Cross River State, Nigeria. These actions will not only support the sustainability of *ekombi* dance music education but also promote inclusive growth and educational excellence throughout the region.

- ❖ Awareness campaigns to demonstrating the benefits of digital technologies can preserve and enhance *ekombi* dance music education. Involving stakeholders in the planning and implementation process can foster acceptance and enthusiasm for the initiative. Initiatives such as providing grants, subsidies, and incentives for the acquisition of technology in schools and cultural centers can bridge this gap.
- ❖ Comprehensive training programmes should be implemented to improve digital literacy among teachers and students. Workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development courses can equip educators with the necessary skills to utilize digital technologies in teaching *ekombi* dance music education.
- ❖ Collaborating with cultural experts, community leaders, and practitioners of *ekombi* dance music is crucial to ensure that digital representations and educational materials accurately reflect the cultural significance and traditional practices of the dance.
- ❖ Diverse funding sources should be explored, including government funding, international aid, and private sector investment. Additionally, prioritizing the allocation of existing educational budgets to include digital integration projects can help manage funding constraints.

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