

## **Digital Storytelling in African Higher Education**

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Higher education is considered a field in which students, teachers, and researchers develop a broader view of concepts in a detailed and profound manner. Education in Africa has been seen as a field of continuous progress due to the historical and cultural entity of the continent. Efforts to keep educational content innovative and modern have been documented by many researchers in the field of digital narratives in education. Digital narratives are a new method of reporting various content in education. This research aims to unveil the promoted skills and domains in which digital narratives are incorporated in African higher education. To achieve the said aim, a qualitative document analysis was performed on several selected studies performed in African contexts. The findings suggest that digital narratives aid in improving motivation, self-confidence, cultural exposure, expression, and analytical skills among students.

*Keywords:* digital narratives, higher education, African education, skills, motivation, skills.

### **Introduction**

Education is a fundamental human right and an essential contributing component to the development of nations (United Nations, 1948). The process of acquiring knowledge, skills, and developing values and attitudes guarantees the effective functionality of society members. The quality of education provided, and its effect, influence national and economic development, personal and ethical growth, and global citizenship (Boccanfuso, Larouche & Trandafir, 2015; Samuelsson, Lindstorm, 2022). Education in Africa can be labeled as a complex issue, many challenges and disparities can be found across the continent. Despite the efforts of numerous organizations over recent years, access to quality education remains a significant problem for African nations (Teferra, 2014). According to UNSICO (2010) reports demonstrate the growth in enrollment in African regions such as the sub-Saharan region and how it remains the lowest in the world at 6%. These numbers are the outcomes of many influencing factors such as poverty, lack of infrastructure, and conflict.

In recent years of research, the efforts performed to enhance and develop the sector of education in Africa have been documented. In the scope of this study, we elaborate on the attempts at modernization and digitalization of the field through digital storytelling. In recent years, digital storytelling has become a useful tool for research in social and educational contexts. It involves using different digital media

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to create personal narratives and stories, like short films told from a personal perspective (Robin 2008). Digital storytelling allows us to explore individuals' experiences more deeply, and is part of the traditional individual narrative framework, but with a technological interference (Bolivar and Domingo 2019).

Digital storytelling is a versatile approach that can be used for research, combining both digital and traditional media to produce accurate results. Exposure to digital content is a part of learners' daily lives, therefore, its integration into education can promote long-term learning outside the formal educational context. It can also serve as a mean of promoting creativity and narrative skills, while simultaneously acting as a representation of personal and group identity with an artistic touch. Learners can either present their experience or reflect on peer presentation which promotes critical thinking and analytical skill development. Additionally, digital storytelling can create virtual learning environments that utilize web applications, mobile technology, and social networks, making it suitable for both formal and informal educational contexts as it modernizes learning and can help teachers be involved regardless of distance.

Several research studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling as an instructional tool. The use of digital storytelling eases the transition from a traditionally low-tech setting to a high-tech world outside the classroom. It has been proven to motivate students to engage in learning by allowing them to create personal stories (Smeda, Dakich, & Sharda, 2014; Ware, 2006). Moreover, digital storytelling provides students with the opportunity to train and nourish their problem-solving skills and enhance their technological competencies through practice and experimentation based on theory (Kajder, 2004; Robin, 2008). Robin (2008) argues that digital storytelling allows students to develop digital literacy by using technological tools during the content production process. Therefore, integrating it into teaching methods can facilitate student engagement and motivation, and foster the development of essential technological and problem-solving competencies, ultimately leading to more effective learning outcomes.

Due to the growing interest in modernizing education through digital storytelling, this article explores the efforts performed to introduce this contemporary concept to the developing African higher education and teacher training sectors.

### **Research Questions**

- What skills are promoted with digital storytelling in education in Africa?
- In what context is digital storytelling integrated into African higher education?

### **Literature Review**

#### **The Concept of Multimedia**

Technology is considered one of the most groundbreaking innovations in human history. Over the past thirty years, there has been significant advancement in

developing concepts that can secure a more comfortable and ambitious lifestyle in general, and education is no exception (Norhayati & Siew, 2004). The concept of multimedia has been introduced based on the notion of mixing and merging media forms, for example, text, pictures, graphs, audio, animation...etc. can be used to create a product in which every tool serves a purpose (Eskicioglu & Kopec, 2003).

It is argued that the current technological advancement cannot be tracked or properly integrated to a certain extent due to the rapid growth of multimedia concepts (Fu, 2013). However, despite these challenges, the potential technology exhibits in transforming academic aspects, such as motivation, knowledge access, content, and instruction quality, has led researchers to invest endless resources to investigate and maximize multimedia use in education (Eskicioglu & Kopec, 2003).

### **Digital Storytelling**

The pedagogical practice of incorporating digital storytelling has been extensively employed in various educational sectors worldwide (Mills, 2010; Ohler, 2006; Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). This practice is defined as the art of storytelling using digital tools such as text, graphics, sound, and video (Robin, 2006). Typically, a digital story is a short narrative accompanied by a video and music that conveys ideas on a particular theme (Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008). A digital story usually includes seven essential elements: a point of view, a dramatic question, emotional content, a voice, the power of the soundtrack, economy, and pacing (Lambert, 2010, p. 7; Robin, 2008, p. 223).

Digital storytelling is a form of multimedia that offers significant potential for enhancing cognitive learning within specific educational contexts (Fu, 2013). It is defined as the use of computer-based tools to create and share stories. Robin (2008) explains that "digital storytelling is a technological application well-suited to leverage user-generated content and assist teachers in overcoming challenges in effectively using technology in the classroom.

Creating a digital story encourages the storyteller to mix both traditional and modern literacy skills. Sylvester & Greenidge (2010) emphasize the fact that telling stories and creating a digital story allows teachers and learners to explore their knowledge of media as the storyteller creates a digital story, they explore and demonstrate multiple digital literacies. The process of combining different media formats enables storytellers to convey complex meanings in their stories (Warschauer, 2009, Cited in Chigona, 2013). Kompar (2007) supports this, suggesting that creators, specifically teachers, can integrate digital storytelling into their curriculum for several reasons, such as using multimedia to enhance curriculum content or combining storytelling with social networking to improve collaboration and communication skills.

Sylvester and Greenidge (2010) assert that the process of developing digital stories in an educational setting typically begins with students composing their narratives through traditional methods, either in written form using a notebook or via a word processor. This initial text is then transformed into a digital narration, where the students record their voices, often with emotional expression, to engage the audience. Following the narration, students incorporate personal photographs,

images, or visual scenes to enhance the storytelling experience. Sound effects or background music are frequently added to further support the narrative's tone and mood. The production process is finalized with the addition of a title frame and rolling credits to appropriately acknowledge any sources or contributors. When students utilize media from online platforms, they are required to provide citations and copyright information to ensure proper attribution. The final step in the digital storytelling process is the publication of the completed stories, where they are shared with the class or a broader audience. Although this framework outlines the general steps involved, the creation of digital stories is often more nuanced, as it becomes a complex and personalized experience for the creators.

According to Robin (2008), the process of creating a digital story involves four phases:

### **Pre-Production Phase**

Robin (2008) states that narrative creation starts by the essence existing in the creators' minds. Owning your insights and deciding what should be told in relation to your communicative motive is the first step. Next, creators should understand their emotional position in the story. Owning your emotions can support accurate experience sharing. Moreover, creators must adhere to the context of the audience. Finding the moment and the proper audience to present your work to in a major pre-production step which is essential to achieving the objective of the storyteller.

### **Production Phase**

Lambert (2010) communicates the necessity of visualization. Seeing the story is the first phase of production, and the narrator should know what visuals communicate his exact narrative. After visualizing, it is time to hear the story. The creator can either chose music, different audios produced by external individuals, or record his personal audio and narration.

### **Post-Production Phase**

The final phase is assembling the story and examining the harmony of all the incorporated elements. Finally, the creator will distribute the story and present it to the chosen audience who can provide feedback and interact with the narrative and its objective (Lambert, 2010, pp. 7-22).

### **Benefits of Digital Storytelling**

As outlined by various scholars (Chung, 2007), by utilizing digital storytelling in education, students can improve their digital and media literacy skills, gain experience with technology, and enhance their creative abilities. This innovative teaching method can provide students with a more interactive and engaging learning experience and enable them to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills, allowing them to express themselves uniquely and creatively.

## **Digital Storytelling for Skill Development**

Barrett (2006) identifies the key elements in digital storytelling which students must employ and develop in the process; from student engagement, deep learning, project-based learning, to the integration of technology, digital storytelling fosters multiple skills. Reinders (2011) supports the nature of digital storytelling as a tool for fostering classroom discussions and progressing toward the writing phase, particularly in language education. Furthermore, Abdel-Hack and Helwa (2014) highlight the motivational nature of the concept. Due to the inclusion of modern technological tools, the content encourages students to read and write more.

Previous research suggests that digital storytelling can boost motivation, academic achievement, while also helping students acquire digital literacy skills (Di Blas & Paolini, 2013; Wake, 2012). Additionally, digital storytelling is believed to enhance students' writing skills on specific topics (Di Blas & Paolini, 2013). It is also argued that digital storytelling contributes to the development of students' soft skills such as creativity, imagination, and engagement (Duveskog, Tedre, Sedano, & Sutinen, 2012). Moreover, it is believed to promote learning autonomy (Kim, 2014), alongside critical thinking, higher order thinking, and academic achievements (Yang & Wu, 2012).

## **The Interdisciplinary Nature of Digital Storytelling**

Digital storytelling, by its very nature, is an interdisciplinary practice that brings together multiple domains of knowledge, fostering a dynamic blend of creativity, technology, and communication skills (Barrett,2006). It integrates various forms of media such as text, images, audio, and video to construct engaging narratives, making it a powerful tool for education, cultural expression, and personal reflection. The multidimensional approach of digital storytelling enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills as students engage with diverse modes of representation and meaning making (Duveskog, Tedre, Sedano, & Sutinen, 2012). The process encourages learners to not only absorb knowledge from various fields but also to synthesize and apply it creatively, which is a hallmark of interdisciplinary learning. Research shows that digital storytelling (DST) can enhance students' learning performance across various subjects. For instance, multiple projects have been conducted to evaluate the notions efficiency in multiple subjects. Hung, Hwang, and Huang (2012) demonstrated through their empirical experiments that students who use digital storytelling in their science classes achieve better results. Similar results have been reported in other subjects, including mathematics (Niemi, et al, 2018), psychology (Sheafer, 2017), and social studies (Rolon-Dow, 2011).

## **Digital Storytelling in African Higher Education**

Digital storytelling has emerged as a powerful tool in African education, offering new ways to share, preserve, and teach cultural narratives (Bello,2022). Storytelling has always been central to African cultures, serving as a medium for passing down history, values, and traditions (Sofowora & Agbedokun, 2010). With

the rise of digital tools, this ancient practice has taken on new forms, allowing for a broader reach and more interactive experiences. Digital storytelling combines multimedia elements such as text, audio, video, and animation to create rich, immersive narratives that can be used in educational settings (Lambert, 2013). In many African universities, digital storytelling is being used as a pedagogical tool to engage students in creative learning processes.

By producing their own digital stories, students can reflect on their experiences, express their identities, and engage critically with social and cultural issues (Gachago, et al, 2013). For example, digital storytelling projects in South Africa have empowered students to explore topics such as social justice, gender equality, and historical memory, while also developing their technical and communication skills (Lundby, 2008). Furthermore, digital storytelling is being used to preserve indigenous knowledge and languages that are at risk of being lost. Digital platforms allow for the recording and dissemination of oral histories, traditional knowledge, and cultural practices, ensuring that these valuable resources are accessible to future generations. In this way, digital storytelling in Africa serves both educational and cultural purposes, providing a bridge between traditional forms of knowledge transmission and modern technology (Rambe & Mlambo,2014).

### **Method**

The present study is a qualitative document analysis, following the orientation of the research questions, it aims to identify the main points and build a qualitative synthesis in connection to digital storytelling in African higher education. To achieve the aims of this study, an analysis is conducted on the selected literature. The data presentation includes the objectives, context, and design of the study. The thematic scheme that is derived from the research questions is developed based on the elements and results of the chosen studies.

### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

- The literature was researched on the Google Scholar search engine, the database ERIC, JSTOR, ResearchGate, and other platforms depending on the research equation selected.
- The literature selected is in the form of scientific articles and research studies done in an African context.
- Literature must fall under the themes of education, higher education, social sciences, and digital storytelling.
- The time frame of the selected studies is 2000-present.
- Studies belonging to the research areas of social sciences and educational research.
- The literature corresponds to the research objectives and research questions.

### Search Strategy, Data Selection and Analysis

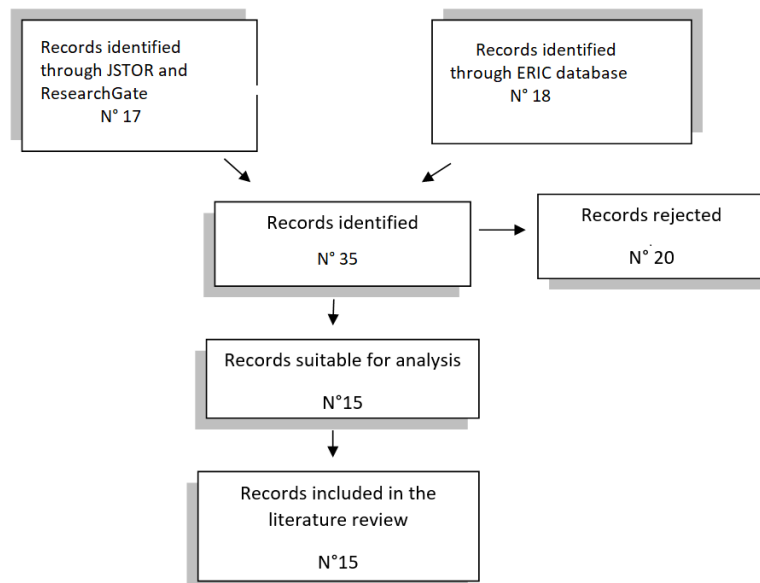
The research equation:

Table 1. Research Equation

DATABASE	Search Platform	
EQUATION	African studies	Digital education
	Education	Higher education
	Digital storytelling	African education

The selected studies represent 15 scientific articles derived through the presented research equation. The initial number of studies (35) articles, the filtering process was conducted through a Prisma Protocol based checklist. Documents that do not fit the selected keywords and studies that seem duplicated have been omitted through the selection. The final number (15) reflects the studies that fit the specific context chosen, methodology, and keyword preferences. The following graph demonstrates the filtering process.

Figure 2. Selection Chart based on Prisma Protocol



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Post the selection of documents, the records were read and categorized. To explore the selected data the following section gives an overview of the topics and paves the way to provide a background for the analysis.

Table 2. Selected Studies' Elements

Study Location	Aim of the study	Sample	Methodology	Results
South Africa	This article discusses a digital storytelling initiative in a higher education institution located in the Western Cape. The goal was to implement the idea of the "pedagogy of discomfort" in a pre-service teacher training program for final-year students.	19 self-selected students.	This research adopted an interpretative qualitative approach.	This study examined the complex emotional dynamics that exist in a classroom setting, including power relations between individuals and groups. Using digital storytelling, students were able to explore and express their identities, shedding shame and building a sense of pride. However, the study also found that students often focus mainly on race and construct identities which reflect stereotypes. Despite this, the sharing of personal stories provided an opportunity to introduce indirect knowledge that may have a transformative impact on social engagements. Overall, the study highlights the potential of digital storytelling to facilitate open dialogue and transform relationships among students.
South Africa	The article discusses how digital storytelling can improve students' interest and involvement in their academic pursuits.	29 final year pre-service student teachers University of Technology in South Africa.	The study collected data through focus group interviews with both students and facilitators of the project.	The study findings showed that digital storytelling is beneficial in increasing student engagement with their studies. The study identified several factors that contributed to said claim, such as students having more time to study, being motivated to interact with the subject matter, having control over their own learning and the process of creating digital stories, it promotes peer learning, increases interactions with the lecturer, and reflection.
South Africa	This study demonstrates how the utilization of multimedia aids pre-service teachers to create a community of practice through developing their personal digital stories for evaluation.	7 pre-service teachers. Education Institution in Cape Town.	The study used a qualitative research approach to collect and analyze data. The information was obtained by conducting focus group interviews as well as collecting written reflections.	The study findings demonstrate that utilizing multimedia tools to create digital stories in a diverse classroom setting fostered the development of a community among pre-service teachers. Through this process, participants gained a better understanding of each other's cultures, leading to increased respect and understanding. The pre-service teachers reported that participating in the project helped prepare them to teach in multicultural classrooms.
South-West Nigeria	The research aims at exploring the effectiveness of utilizing digital storytelling in	242 students in Southwest Nigeria.	A pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design, which	Findings show that the use of digital storytelling has been proven to be successful in enhancing geography students' performance in map reading. This finding highlights the effectiveness of DST in



	enhancing students' performance in reading maps within the Ibadan urban area located in the southwestern region of Nigeria using 2 digital storytelling models; individual based and group based.		included two modes of teaching: group-based and individual-based DST.	keeping learners engaged during the learning process, which ultimately leads to improved performance in map reading. moreover, the group learning approach has shown better results in comparison to individual learning mode.
South Africa	The primary objective of this research is to explore the potential advantages of utilizing digital storytelling (DST) for teaching and learning purposes, identify and examine any factors that may hinder the implementation of DST, and contribute to the development of effective teaching strategies.	50 volunteers pre-service teachers.	In this research, a qualitative approach was taken through conducting focus group interviews.	The findings of this study indicate that pre-service teachers have a positive perception of the potential benefits of digital storytelling (DST) in the classroom. The participants acknowledged that DST has the capability to enhance and sustain students' motivation and engagement levels during learning activities. Furthermore, DST was deemed valuable in promoting self-expression and facilitating collaborative learning, which in turn can help students acquire a broad range of skills. However, despite the perceived benefits, pre-service teachers recognized that a shortage of resources, a lack of self-confidence, and time constraints due to rigid curricula may hinder their ability to incorporate DST into their teaching practices.
Egypt	The main objective of this research is to examine the impact of digital storytelling on the oral proficiency of learners. Also, to assess the level of satisfaction among learners regarding their experience with DST.	8 first-year college students at Zewail University of Science and Technology in Egypt.	The study employed a one-group pre-test posttest design.	The results indicate a statistically significant and positive improvement in learners' oral performance as they practiced grammar and pronunciation through multiple attempts to record their narratives. Additionally, the participants expressed high levels of satisfaction with the experience.
Tanzania	The aim of this study is to explore the notion of one-to-one narrative forming approach in developing education in rural areas. Also, to examine and help develop computer	17 students and teachers.	Exploratory study using teaching materials, provided technology.	The digitalized stories enabled the students to share their experience to the global community, enhanced creativity, imagination, self-image, motivation, and future expectation projection. it also shows the permanent factor of DST through presenting and sharing of oral traditions in a contemporary way.

	aided education and life planning.			Moreover, the research proves the expended special and temporal dimensions the stories can overcome.
South Africa	The researcher aims to study the connection between digital storytelling, reflective practices, and higher-order thinking. Also, explore the use of digital stories as a tool for teaching and learning in higher education in Africa.	29 final-year pre-service student teachers at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT), South Africa.	The methodology adopted was pure qualitative with the aid of focus group interviews.	According to the scholars, digital storytelling offers a promising instrument for reevaluating and reinventing evaluation methods in higher education, facilitating students in acquiring advanced reflective capabilities, and consequently fostering profound learning and the growth of higher-order thinking abilities. Nevertheless, the researchers advise that when incorporating digital storytelling into assessments, emphasis should be placed on the narrative content rather than on the technology itself.
Uganda	The study aims at Evaluating the alteration of DST techniques and recognizing the prospective utilization of DST in Uganda and various East African environments.	6 participants representing several interdisciplinary faculty branches;	Participatory Action Research.	Through the research, DST provided a culturally fitting frame for updating traditional oral narrative customs, it also displayed promise for extensive application within Uganda. Adapting DST might help tackle moral and practical values connected to collaborating with diversified and marginalized demographics within the nation. The notion of educating local facilitators was seen as beneficial in tackling the concerns of the community.
Nigeria	This study aims at analyzing the perspectives of geography teachers on the efficiency of digital storytelling in terms of map reading.	Nine teachers and 381 students from Nigerian secondary schools.	Qualitative study, with the aid of semi structured interviews and focus group discussions.	The results suggested that both geography instructors and students viewed digital storytelling as a suitable teaching instrument that could make map interpretation more practical and link it to the real-world. Obstacles such as inconsistent electricity availability, insufficient digital equipment, and a deficiency in technological proficiency were recognized by teachers and students as significant obstacles to the success of the approach.
South Africa	This study aims at exploring the efficiency of digital narratives in transmitting information by postgraduates to entry-level students.	7 post graduate students.	The researchers adopted a participatory ethnography research approach.	The outcomes of the study indicate that the utilization of DST proves to be exceptionally well-suited for the purpose of generating information, fostering collaborative participation, and monitoring the progressive path of postgraduate students who are engaged in intricate and mentally challenging research endeavors. This innovative approach not only does it facilitate the process of acquiring relevant data, but also encourages a dynamic and interactive engagement among individuals, allowing for a more

				comprehension of their developmental journey as they navigate through their research.
Nigeria	The primary focus of this research is to examine how pre-service educators perceive digital education and their levels of unease towards technology, and their state of preparedness in adopting digital storytelling in instructional output.	583 pre-service teachers; the Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan.	A mixed method research design was adopted with the aid of a questionnaire and focus group discussion.	The outcome revealed an impressive degree of preparedness among pre-service instructors to employ digital storytelling as a teaching tool within the classroom setting. Furthermore, the perceived significance of digital storytelling held by these pre-service teachers emerged as a noteworthy factor influencing their readiness to utilizing digital storytelling for instructional purposes.
South Africa	The study aims at identifying the social and moral benefits of digital storytelling in marginalized groups.	8 university students from Eastern Cape, South Africa;	The adopted approach was a participatory media production. Method.	The results demonstrate the possibilities carefully crafted digital storytelling initiatives have in raising awareness and giving a voice to the voiceless. Moreover, showcasing their capacity to serve as not only a means of psychological expression but also as a valuable instrument for educating communities and driving social activism among marginalized young individuals.
South Africa	The aim of this study is to conduct an in-depth examination into the creative methodologies employed by digital storytellers within the specific context of South Africa.	9 student facilitators at the university of technology in the Western Cape of South Africa.	Qualitative case study with the use of interviews and observation.	The results established a connection between digital storytelling and a productive classroom environment, which allows students to redefine their identities beyond established historical boundaries. Storytelling circles have demonstrated their effectiveness in involving students in a process that encourages both introspection and a discerning examination of their own writing methods. This demonstrates the harmonious relationship between expression and constructing narratives.
Kenya	The objective of this study is to investigate educational approaches that promotes cultural preservation through the governmental motivation of progressive pedagogy and the universal acquisition of digital skills among students.	91 teachers from Trans Nzoia County in Kenya.	A case study approach was adopted with the use of pre-and post-surveys, participant-generated artifacts, and interviews.	Educators indicated the employment of technology for tasks such as lesson preparation and administrative record-keeping, as opposed to actively involving students in activities related to digital literacy. To address obstacles tied to technology, teachers mentioned implementing group work among students through using smartphones as tool due to lack of facility equipment.

### **Findings and Implications**

The above table represents the selected studies by adhering to the previously demonstrated research equation. All 15 studies fall under the same theme which is the use of digital narratives in higher education and teacher training in African contexts. The table demonstrates the aim, sample, methodology, and results of each study. It is evident, through observing the results, that most researchers seek to understand the benefits and the skills promoted to students and teachers through digital narratives in their educational practices. The studies selected vary in location and methodology to offer a diversified view of the notion. However, most studies adopt a qualitative research approach in which they try to understand views and opinions toward digital narratives referring to educational, personal, and cultural growth. According to Barrett 2005, a qualitative approach is the most appropriate when attempting to evaluate the use and effectiveness of DST in education due to the lack of data in research.

### **Results**

Digital storytelling (DST) has emerged as a versatile and impactful tool across diverse educational landscapes, as evidenced by an array of scholarly works. In the exploration of complex emotional dynamics within a classroom setting, digital storytelling provided a platform for students to express their identities, mitigating shame and instilling a sense of pride. However, a nuanced understanding is essential, as students often center their narratives around race, inadvertently reinforcing stereotypes. Despite this, the sharing of personal stories through digital storytelling created an opportunity to introduce transformative indirect knowledge into social engagements, highlighting the potential of DST to facilitate open dialogue and reshape relationships among students. Significant findings emerge in the spectrum of student engagement. The incorporation of digital storytelling in educational settings resulted in increased student engagement with their studies (Barrett, 2005; Hayes, 2011). The study identified several contributing factors, such as students having more time for study, motivation to interact with the subject matter, and a sense of control over their learning process (Menezes, 2012). Moreover, the process of creating digital stories promoted peer learning, increased interactions with the lecturer, and facilitated reflective practices (Sanders, Murray, 2009) contributing to a more dynamic and participatory learning environment.

In the context of pre-service teachers in South Africa, digital storytelling fostered the development of a sense of community within a diverse classroom setting (Condy, Chigona, Gachago & Ivala, 2013). Participants gained a better understanding of each other's cultures, leading to increased respect and understanding (Darcy, 2008). The project was reported to prepare pre-service teachers for teaching in multicultural classrooms, emphasizing the potential for digital storytelling to bridge cultural gaps in educational contexts. The students in the geography education study witnessed a positive transformation through digital storytelling, particularly in map reading skills. Findings, as demonstrated above, indicate that utilizing multimedia

tools for creating digital stories in a diverse classroom setting fostered the development of a community among geography students (Kolapo, 2020). Despite obstacles like insufficient digital equipment, both instructors and students viewed digital storytelling as a suitable teaching instrument that could make map interpretation more practical and relevant to the real world. In the realm of oral performance improvement, participants engaging in multiple attempts to record their narratives showed statistically significant improvement in their oral performance (Robin, 2008). High levels of satisfaction were expressed by the participants, indicating the effectiveness of the experience in enhancing language skills.

Scholars emphasize the potential of digital storytelling to reevaluate and reinvent evaluation methods in higher education, facilitating advanced reflective capabilities among students and fostering higher-order thinking abilities (Gregori-Signes, 2010). However, the emphasis should be on narrative content rather than technology itself when incorporating digital storytelling into assessments. In monitoring postgraduate research, digital storytelling proves to be exceptionally well-suited for generating information, fostering collaborative participation, and monitoring the progressive path of students engaged in intricate research endeavors (Rambe, Mlambo, 2014). The innovative approach, as described by the study authors, not only facilitates the acquisition of relevant data but also encourages dynamic and interactive engagement among individuals, allowing for a deeper comprehension of their developmental journey (Rambe, Mlambo, 2014).

The impact of digital storytelling extends to social activism, as it offers possibilities for raising awareness and giving a voice to the voiceless, this notion was presented in the south African study and is heavily defended in the research (Darcy, 2008). This demonstrates its capacity as a means of psychological expression and as a valuable instrument for educating communities and driving social activism among marginalized young individuals. However, challenges persist in effectively utilizing technology for educational purposes, as educators often prioritize administrative tasks over actively involving students in activities related to digital literacy. Addressing these obstacles requires innovative solutions, such as implementing group work among students through smartphones due to a lack of facility equipment (Ahadiat, 2005).

## **Discussion**

The results of the diverse applications of digital storytelling (DST) in African higher education unveil a rich tapestry of skills promoted and the contextual obstacles of integration. Addressing the question of what values are promoted with DST in education in Africa, the findings echo a resounding narrative of empowerment, cultural enrichment, and transformative learning experiences (Otto, 2018). The multifaceted impact of DST extends far beyond traditional pedagogical approaches, offering a unique avenue for students to express their identities, overcome stereotypes, and engage in meaningful cultural exchanges (Gachago et al, 2013). One of the predominant skills promoted through DST is empowerment. The ability of students to explore and express their identities through digital storytelling was found to be a

powerful mechanism for shedding shame and fostering a sense of pride. This empowerment is not only individual but extends to the collective, as DST was identified as a tool that provides a voice to the voiceless, particularly among marginalized young individuals. The narratives created through DST become a vehicle for social change, fostering awareness and activism within the community (Stewart, 2017). Cultural enrichment emerges as another significant value. In the context of Africa's diverse cultural landscapes, DST serves as a culturally fitting frame for updating traditional oral narrative customs (Stewart, 2017).

Transformative learning experiences represent a core skill promoted by DST in African higher education. The narratives shared through digital storytelling open avenues for indirect knowledge that may have a transformative impact on social engagements; moreover, in connecting the past and the present (Trindade, Moreira, 2023). It facilitates a dynamic and interactive engagement among individuals, allowing for a deeper comprehension of their developmental journey as they navigate their research. DST becomes a catalyst for profound learning, fostering advanced reflective capabilities and the growth of higher-order thinking abilities (Robin, 2008; Sadik, 2008; Coutinho, 2010). The emphasis, as advised by researchers in the presented studies, should be placed on the narrative content rather than on the technology itself when incorporating DST into assessments. Understanding the context of how DST is integrated into African higher education is pivotal. The findings suggest a diverse array of applications, from pre-service teacher training to geography education, each highlighting the adaptability of DST in different academic settings. In geography education, for instance, DST not only enhances map-reading skills but also fosters a sense of community among students. Similarly, pre-service teachers view DST as a valuable tool for motivation, engagement, and collaborative learning, despite acknowledging challenges like resource shortages and time constraints (Gibson & Manuel, 2003).

The contextual integration of DST extends beyond the classroom, as seen in the application of digitalized stories enabling students to share their experiences globally. This global exposure not only enhances creativity, imagination, self-image, and motivation but also serves as a contemporary means of presenting and sharing oral traditions to a broader audience. Scholars emphasize the promising instrument DST offers for re-evaluating and reinventing evaluation methods in higher education, fostering profound learning and advanced reflective capabilities (Duveskog, Tedre, Sedano, & Sutinen, 2012).

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the findings across these diverse studies collectively underscore the multifaceted impact of digital storytelling across various educational domains. The benefits and challenges of incorporating DST are evident from identity exploration to oral performance improvement. The scholarly works cited contribute to a comprehensive understanding of DST's potential in fostering creativity, engagement, community building, and transformative learning experiences. While challenges exist, the positive outcomes presented in these studies provide a

compelling case for the continued exploration and integration of digital storytelling in diverse education. The skills promoted by DST in African higher education, encompass empowerment, cultural enrichment, and transformative learning experiences. The contextual integration of DST is diverse, extending from geography education to pre-service teacher training, emphasizing its adaptability in various academic settings. The findings suggest that DST is not merely a technological tool but a transformative force that empowers students, enriches cultural understanding, and fosters profound learning experiences. As the educational landscape in Africa continues to evolve, these insights into the skills and contexts of DST integration provide a foundation for future research and innovative educational practices.

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