

DECOLONISING ARCHITECTURAL EDUCATION: INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, LOCAL BUILDING PRACTICES, AND CONTEMPORARY DESIGN PEDAGOGY IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian architectural education remains significantly dependent on the curricula borrowed from colonial predecessors, Beaux-Arts, and Bauhaus schools, which were never intended to respond to Nigeria's specific material and spatial requirements. The aim of this paper is to review the literature on decolonizing Nigerian architectural education with a specific focus on the potential of indigenous knowledge and building traditions as a tool to intervene into the colonial curricula. The study scope included 29 articles identified and analyzed in terms of key themes: decolonization of curricula and pedagogy, vernacular geometry and its digital documentation, climate responsive and passive design, socio-political aspects and built heritage, and decolonizing African and Global South pedagogy. Most of the reviewed articles were published between 2019 and 2026, with 29 articles published between 1996 and 2026. The findings demonstrate the mismatch between the curricula knowledge and its practical application, which was also aggravated by the recent revision of professional accreditation. Nevertheless, the review also shows that new pedagogical concepts such as geometries' digital documentation, Afrofuturist design studios, open-air museum collaborations, and remote learning technologies for indigenous knowledge codification have already been proposed and implemented. However, the review also demonstrates that these solutions remain largely isolated and do not comprise a coherent strategy for decolonizing Nigerian architectural education. Situated within the larger global south context, this study integrates the decolonization discourse by arguing that indigenous knowledge should be utilized as a critical methodological resource to advance climate-responsive and culturally relevant design capabilities rather than an optional topic for theoretical investigations. The paper concludes by identifying critical research gaps related to Nigerian architectural education requiring further attention.

Keywords: decolonising architecture; indigenous knowledge systems; architectural education; vernacular architecture; design pedagogy

1. Introduction

Architectural education across sub-Saharan Africa retains the institutional and pedagogical characteristics of the colonial universities and technical schools from which it emerged. Nigeria's early curricula were developed around Beaux-Arts and later Bauhaus-derived studio models transplanted with minimal adaptation to local climate, material and culture, a process that Stanek (2020) charts through Cold War-era Comecon and Western modernist networks that jointly generated institutions like Lagos's Festac Town as Nigeria transitioned to independence. This historical continuity is significant because architectural education implicitly encodes and perpetuates assumptions about which knowledge and building traditions are legitimate, and whose climatic and cultural knowledge a competent architect must know.

Decolonising architectural education, as this review understands the term, does not entail rejecting technical rigor or international design discourse, but rather critically interrogating what knowledge traditions a curriculum privileges, and elevating indigenous building knowledge to methodological parity with imported design theory. Ncube (2025) provides the most theoretically sophisticated analysis situated within the literature, deploying Critical Race Theory and epistemic freedom to argue that decolonisation necessitates transforming what an institution considers legitimate knowledge, not merely infusing African content into an unaltered curriculum. Fisher et al. (2017) make a related point for South African teaching: decolonised pedagogy must hold indigenous and imported traditions in productive tension rather than treating one as foundational and the other supplementary. Nigeria's regulatory environment has recently been revised in ways relevant here: Enwerekowe and Akah (2025) evaluate the revised National Universities Commission Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards against comparable global curricular modules, finding that policy-level revision has not resolved persistent physical and technological studio deficits in public universities, a tension this review returns to throughout.

The central problem this review addresses is the disconnect between the theoretical case for decolonising Nigerian architectural curricula and the concrete pedagogical, technical and institutional mechanisms through which such decolonisation might actually occur in the studio and be evaluated against accreditation standards. A substantial literature argues in general terms that Nigerian curricula should integrate indigenous knowledge; considerably less literature specifies how this should occur in practice. This gap has professional consequences: Okoye et al. (2020) found built-environment professionals in South-Eastern Nigeria possessed high theoretical knowledge of bioclimatic design ($M = 4.36$) but comparatively low implementation ($M = 2.89$), a knowledge-implementation gap this review argues begins in education itself. If indigenous building knowledge is taught, where taught at all, as historical background rather than active design method, graduates carry that same separation into professional life. Jibrin (2026), documenting mathematical knowledge embedded in indigenous building and trade practices across six geopolitical zones, shows this knowledge is technically substantive rather than decorative, strengthening the case that its curricular exclusion is a genuine loss. Vernacular knowledge is also disappearing from the built environment faster than it is documented: Nnamdi et al. (2025), combining visual inventories, AutoCAD documentation, GIS mapping and statistical analysis of forty-two Okigwe structures, show colonial administrative planning and postcolonial development have produced measurable, ongoing loss of traditional Igbo compound architecture, meaning the raw material future decolonial pedagogy would need to draw upon risks becoming unavailable.

This review therefore synthesises the literature on decolonising Nigerian architectural education across three objectives: mapping curricular reform and pedagogical innovation; examining empirical evidence on vernacular knowledge, its documentation and climate-responsive value; and identifying gaps limiting the field's move from isolated experiment to systemic reform. Its significance lies in bringing together four literatures that have developed largely in parallel, Nigeria-specific curricular critique, empirical vernacular documentation, digital codification methods, and the broader African decolonial-pedagogy literature, no prior source combines for the Nigerian architectural-education context specifically.

2. Review Methodology

This review adopts a systematic, thematically organised synthesis appropriate to the heterogeneous theoretical, historical, empirical and pedagogical-design literature involved, rather than a narrowly protocol-driven, effect-size systematic review of the kind used in clinical or quantitative social-science research. Sources were assembled from a structured evidence corpus generated through notebook-based literature review software, supplemented by independent, targeted search for verifiable 2019-2026 literature, and organised into the five thematic clusters named above; a source was included where it reported theoretical, empirical, historical or pedagogical-design evidence bearing on at least one cluster in a Nigerian or directly comparable African or Global South context.

A substantial verification step was required because several sources in the initial corpus were attributed only to "Anonymous," with journal, year and page information but no named author. Independent search traced four of these to verified named authors: Nnamdi et al. (2025) on colonial impact in Okigwe; Aigboduwa et al. (2025) on Edo vernacular mud-modular design, whose publication year was corrected from 2024 to 2025; Malonza and Ndacyayishima (2022) on indigenous landscape urbanism in Rwanda and Burundi, whose volume and issue details were corrected; and Changwe and Mwanza (2026) on indigenous knowledge in Zambian curricula. Two further anonymous entries could not be independently verified despite dedicated search and were excluded from citation rather than referenced under an anonymous placeholder, consistent with the evidentiary standard applied throughout. Following verification and exclusion, the review synthesises twenty-nine independently verified sources, short of an initial thirty-five-reference target, a deliberate choice to prioritise verifiable, directly relevant scholarship over volume for its own sake.

3. Thematic Literature Synthesis

3.1 Theoretical Foundations

The theoretical foundation draws on the broader decolonisation-in-African-higher-education literature from which architecture-specific scholarship draws its conceptual vocabulary. Ncube (2025) offers the most systematically developed statement located in this review, distinguishing structural transformation from the cosmetic addition of African content to an unchanged Eurocentric curricular architecture, a distinction that recurs throughout the architecture-specific literature as this review's central evaluative criterion for judging whether a given intervention constitutes genuine decolonisation or merely cosmetic inclusion. Tunstall (2023) extends this into design practice directly, arguing modernist design across its architectural, industrial and graphic manifestations has historically advanced colonisation and that decolonising design requires

recentring theory and practice within Indigenous, Black and other historically marginalised knowledge traditions, offering concrete pedagogical tools, participatory design charrettes and community-based assessment redesign, that the more theoretically oriented African higher-education literature does not always operationalise to the same degree. Akinsola (2025), studying theatre-in-education as a decolonial pedagogical tool, contributes an important methodological precedent applied directly to design studios in Section 3.2: socio-cultural competence is best cultivated through active, participatory formats rather than passive content delivery.

3.2 Decolonial Curricular Reform and Pedagogical Innovation

Enwerekowe and Akah's (2025) review of Nigeria's revised NUC standards provides the most direct institutional evidence: policy revision has proceeded without resolving studio infrastructure deficits, constraining even well-designed decolonial frameworks. Ahmad et al. (2026) propose a response to this constraint, reviewing Afrofuturist cinema against Nigerian curricular standards to argue that speculative visual media can serve as a "speculative laboratory" letting students visualise hybrid indigenous-contemporary design without capital-intensive modelling infrastructure. Adeyeye and Mason (2020) address the predominantly oral transmission of indigenous architectural knowledge, proposing Open and Distance Learning platforms to codify it at institutional scale without depending on intensive single-institution fieldwork. Watt (2021) and Datey (2023) extend this pedagogical-innovation literature beyond Nigeria: Datey's (2023) framing, that architectural pedagogy was shaped in the Global North and transposed with limited adaptation, restates in curricular terms the same diagnosis Stanek (2020) develops historically and Ncube (2025) develops theoretically.

3.3 Vernacular Geometry, Documentation and Digital Codification

Johnson et al. (2026) provide the clearest methodological blueprint for documenting indigenous geometry, mapping Yoruba, Hausa and Nsibidi configurations into AutoCAD-based parametric models for direct studio use, while warning against romanticising indigenous form as static rather than a living, specifiable design resource. Nnamdi et al.'s (2025) Okigwe study demonstrates what rigorous documentation requires: visual inventories, AutoCAD drafting, GIS mapping and structured interviews combined to chart both physical decline and its socio-political drivers. Adeyemo et al. (2025) extend documentation into the semiotic and linguistic dimension of Yoruba spatial meaning, and Ale et al. (2025), surveying 240 respondents, corroborate that vernacular architecture communicates cosmological meaning extending well beyond aesthetics, indicating geometric documentation alone risks missing this content. Jibrin (2026) supplies a further register directly usable in structural or construction-technology curricula, demonstrating indigenous knowledge encompasses quantifiable engineering reasoning, not only qualitative or aesthetic content.

3.4 Empirical Climate-Responsive and Passive Design Frameworks

This cluster bridges cultural-heritage and technical-performance arguments. Ihunwo and Ezinwo (2025), combining thermo-hygrometer measurement, occupant questionnaires and visual inventories across forty-two Rivers State structures, develop a thermal-comfort framework adapting colonial and tropical passive strategies, showing measurable performance benefit. Aigbodua et al.'s (2025) hybrid Edo mud-modular prototype achieved a 40 per cent cooling-energy reduction and 25 per cent construction-cost reduction alongside 85 per cent user satisfaction, giving indigenous-modern hybrid design a quantified economic case. The African

Journal of Landscape Architecture editorial (2021) extends this to the urban landscape scale, arguing hybrid knowledge systems, including indigenous drainage and land-management practice, could inform sponge-city and water-sensitive design.

3.5 Socio-Political Legacies and Layered Built Heritage

Stanek (2020) traces how Cold War-era Comecon networks and Western modernist practice jointly shaped Nigerian institutional building, showing the colonial and postcolonial inheritance was never a simple bilateral relationship. Wahab (1996), the review's oldest source, established curriculum-integration guidelines for indigenous settlement knowledge in Yoruba urbanism nearly three decades before Enwerekwe and Akah (2025) documented persistent curricular deficits, a gap that is itself an important finding. Nnamdi et al. (2025) again provide the clearest single demonstration of how colonial administrative planning specifically has shaped South-Eastern Nigerian building decline.

Esimike and Ekhoegbe (2026) address how contemporary Nigerian architecture might achieve internationally recognised iconic status without severing indigenous ties. Bridging Critical Regionalism and decolonial theory across cases including the Burj Khalifa, CCTV Headquarters, NLE's Makoko Floating School and Demas Nwoko's Dominican Chapel, they conclude iconicity derives from cultural coding and technological syncretism rather than formal novelty, and that Nigeria's Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo vernacular systems constitute a design reservoir capable of underpinning globally relevant, culturally rooted architecture.

3.6 Comparative African and Global South Decolonial Pedagogy

Salama et al. (2025) develop the most systematically operationalised framework reviewed, their ADAPT2SDG typology, built through mixed-methods analysis across five educational initiatives spanning Africa, South America, Europe, South Asia and Australia, aligned with Sustainable Development Goal frameworks. Harriss et al. (2023), an edited volume of thirty-four chapters, provides the broadest comparative base, recentring Global South pedagogies around postcolonialism and "climate apartheid." Fisher et al. (2017) and Saidi (2005) extend this into South Africa's apartheid-to-post-apartheid curricular transition, a partial precedent for Nigeria. Olweny (2023) shows East African colonial curricular inheritance is a regional rather than uniquely Nigerian pattern, and Bosman (2015) identifies negative social perception of earth construction as a transferable barrier that Aigboduwa et al.'s (2025) performance data directly counters. Oberholster et al. (2023) offer a tested community-engaged international studio model, and Steyn (2020) grounds how spatial perception itself varies culturally. Changwe and Mwanza's (2026) Zambian study of sixty-one participants found 72.7 per cent of respondents citing entrenched colonial mindsets, weak teacher preparation and scarce documented resources as barriers, structurally mirroring the Nigerian gap Okoye et al. (2020) and Enwerekwe and Akah (2025) document. Malonza and Ndacyayishima (2022), examining Rwanda's Gahanga Cricket Stadium and Burundi's Library of Musinga, show indigenous-inspired projects can achieve context-responsive outcomes while still underusing elements, trees as shading and cultural markers, central to the logics they draw upon, a caution this review applies to Nigerian interventions.

3.7 Research Gap

Three gaps emerge. First, theoretical and comparative literature (Ncube, 2025; Salama et al., 2025; Harriss et al., 2023; Tunstall, 2023) offers more sophisticated frameworks than the Nigeria-specific literature has operationalised into implementable structures. Second, empirical vernacular and climate-performance evidence (Ihunwo & Ezinwo, 2025; Nnamdi et al., 2025; Aigboduwa et al., 2025; Johnson et al., 2026) is not yet incorporated into the curricular-reform debate, which remains focused on accreditation-standard comparison. Third, no source evaluates an implemented, decolonised Nigerian curriculum against measurable graduate competence; documented interventions remain individually promising but collectively untested as an integrated system.

4. Conceptual Framework

Colonial curriculum legacy is advanced as a source of three interconnected issues including epistemic marginalisation (Ncube, 2025; Fisher et al., 2017), loss of vernacular geometrical literacy (Nnamdi et al., 2025) and studio-curriculum mismatch (Enwerekowe & Akah, 2025). All are addressed by the article in a decolonisation narrative, which uses the tripartite model of recognition, redistribution and representation (Ncube, 2025), realised by two complementary strategies: digital codification of indigenous geometry (Johnson et al., 2026; Nnamdi et al., 2025) and speculative, community-oriented pedagogy (Ahmad et al., 2026; Oberholster et al., 2023). Both inform a contemporary pedagogy of design that is truly integrated with the indigenous knowledge systems, resulting in climate-responsive technical competencies (Ihunwo & Ezinwo, 2025) and design literacy rooted in culture (Aigboduwa et al., 2025). The article proceeds from the premise that the two strategies are equal both conceptually and in their application because the most effective interventions combine research-informed documentation with light-touch, speculative approaches.

5. Discussion

The evidence synthesised in Section 3 supports an argument distinct from, and more specific than, the general proposition that Nigerian architectural education should decolonise: the obstacle is not primarily an absence of relevant knowledge, theoretical, empirical or pedagogical, but a persistent gap between that knowledge's availability in the literature and its incorporation into curricular structure and studio practice. Wahab's (1996) proposal predates Enwerekowe and Akah's (2025) documentation of continued deficit by nearly thirty years; Okoye et al.'s (2020) professional-practice gap mirrors, at the level of policy, Changwe and Mwanza's (2026) Zambian basic-education gap. This recurring pattern, across decades, educational levels and at least two national contexts, suggests the problem is structural rather than a simple matter of insufficient awareness.

A second, analytically important finding concerns the relationship between cultural and technical arguments for integration. Ihunwo and Ezinwo's (2025) thermo-hygrometer measurements and Aigboduwa et al.'s (2025) quantified 40 per cent cooling-energy reduction and 25 per cent cost reduction demonstrate that indigenous and hybrid vernacular-modern strategies can outperform conventional alternatives on strictly technical and economic grounds. This matters strategically: accreditation bodies and sceptical faculty are more likely to accept integration presented, in the terms Jibrin (2026) and Johnson et al. (2026) both support, as a performance-validated technical resource than as cultural obligation alone. The reviewed literature indicates no genuine trade-off between technical rigour and cultural decolonisation; the two objectives are mutually reinforcing.

Resource constraint shapes which interventions succeed. Enwerekowe and Akah's (2025) documented studio deficits function as a critical constraint on interpretation: Ahmad et al.'s (2026) Afrofuturist proposal is significant precisely because it was developed as a low-capital alternative to physical modelling infrastructure many schools lack, and Adeyeye and Mason's (2020) distance-learning proposal is similarly significant because it operates at institutional scale without the intensive single-site fieldwork Nnamdi et al.'s (2025) rigorous Okigwe methodology demonstrates. Resource-appropriateness therefore functions as a genuine, frequently overlooked evaluative criterion alongside theoretical coherence and cultural authenticity.

Documentation must extend beyond geometry to semiotic and cosmological content. Johnson et al.'s (2026) AutoCAD-based parametric documentation is methodologically rigorous and directly usable in studio teaching, but Adeyemo et al. (2025) and Ale et al. (2025) together indicate that geometric documentation alone risks capturing indigenous form while missing the meaning it was designed to communicate, precisely the romanticisation risk Johnson et al. (2026) themselves warn against. Rigorous vernacular documentation should therefore be understood as a genuinely interdisciplinary undertaking, combining architectural, linguistic and anthropological method, with direct consequences for how programmes structure coursework and assign supervisory expertise.

The comparative literature confirms this knowledge-implementation gap is regional rather than uniquely Nigerian. Olweny's (2023) East African historical evidence, Fisher et al.'s (2017) and Saidi's (2005) South African curricular evidence, and Changwe and Mwanza's (2026) Zambian evidence together indicate a broadly shared African pattern in which colonial curricular inheritance has proven more institutionally durable than the scholarly case against it. Salama et al.'s (2025) cross-regional typology and Harriss et al.'s (2023) comparative volume suggest, however, that deliberately designed, tested, multi-institution interventions demonstrate transferable characteristics capable of informing Nigerian reform directly rather than requiring an entirely bespoke model.

At the same time, Malonza and Ndacyayishima's (2022) finding that even the Gahanga Cricket Stadium and Library of Musinga, genuinely inspired by indigenous landscape logic, still underutilised trees as a shading and cultural element central to the typologies they drew upon, cautions against reading this review's argument as a case that indigenous-informed design automatically succeeds once attempted. Curricular integration needs evaluating not only for whether indigenous references appear in student work but for whether the underlying logic has actually been understood and applied with functional completeness, a considerably more demanding standard than surface-level citation.

Finally, Esimike and Ekhoegbe's (2026) argument that architectural iconicity can be achieved through cultural coding rather than formal novelty alone offers a strategic resource the review's other findings do not by themselves supply: a positive professional aspiration capable of motivating reform beyond the compliance-oriented framing accreditation critique tends to produce. Their demonstration that architects including Demas Nwoko have achieved internationally recognised distinction through, rather than despite, sustained engagement with indigenous Nigerian building logic reframes indigenous knowledge integration as a route to professional distinction, a motivational dimension Ahmad et al.'s (2026) and Datey's (2023) studio methods depend upon but that curricular-critique literature does not itself supply.

6. Implications for Curriculum and Institutional Policy

Several implications follow for Nigerian architecture schools, accreditation bodies and curriculum planners. Given Johnson et al.'s (2026) and Nnamdi et al.'s (2025) demonstrated methodologies, programmes should make structured vernacular-documentation coursework, combining geometric recording with the linguistic and ethnographic depth Adeyemo et al. (2025) and Ale et al. (2025) demonstrate is necessary, a required rather than elective component of undergraduate education, ideally before the traditions being documented disappear further from the built landscape. Given Enwerekwe and Akah's (2025) documented infrastructure deficits, curricular reform proposals should explicitly account for resource constraint from the outset, prioritising interventions such as Ahmad et al.'s (2026) speculative-cinema pedagogy and Adeyeye and Mason's (2020) distance-learning platform, which were specifically designed for low-capital implementation, rather than assuming intensive digital-fabrication infrastructure many institutions cannot currently provide.

Given the quantified performance evidence Ihunwo and Ezinwo (2025) and Aigboduwa et al. (2025) each provide, accreditation bodies including the National Universities Commission and National Board for Technical Education should consider incorporating verified vernacular and hybrid indigenous-modern performance data directly into technical design-studio assessment criteria, presenting indigenous knowledge integration as a performance-validated technical competency rather than only a cultural elective. Given Malonza and Ndacyayishima's (2022) evidence that even well-intentioned indigenous-informed design can fall short of fully realising the logics it draws upon, studio assessment should evaluate the functional completeness of indigenous knowledge application in student work, not merely its stylistic presence, requiring faculty training programmes should budget for directly. Finally, given the consistent finding that the most promising interventions remain isolated rather than systemically coordinated, institutional policy should establish formal mechanisms, a national curriculum working group or a shared digital repository of documented vernacular geometry of the kind Johnson et al. (2026) demonstrate is technically feasible, through which individual programmes' innovations can be shared, tested and scaled across the wider sector rather than remaining confined to the institutions where they originated.

7. Limitations and Directions for Future Research

This review's principal limitation concerns the character of its evidence base. No dataset specific to Nigerian architectural education was generated for this study; the analysis instead synthesises secondary, documentary, historical and pedagogical-design literature, with the review's own methodological transparency regarding excluded and corrected anonymous sources, detailed in Section 2, itself indicating the corpus-verification challenges inherent in notebook-generated literature synthesis. This means the conceptual framework developed in Section 4, while grounded throughout in verifiable sources, remains a synthesis of existing evidence to be tested through direct empirical curriculum evaluation rather than an already-validated account of decolonised Nigerian architectural education in practice.

A second limitation concerns the review's reference count, twenty-nine independently verified sources rather than the thirty-five specified, reflecting a preference for verifiability over volume once several corpus entries proved unresolvable despite dedicated search. A third limitation concerns geographic distribution: the strongest empirical evidence located, Ihunwo and Ezinwo (2025), Nnamdi et al. (2025) and Aigboduwa et al. (2025), addresses South-Eastern and South-

South Nigerian contexts, with less equivalent empirical depth for Northern Hausa traditions or South-Western Yoruba traditions beyond the semiotic evidence Adeyemo et al. (2025) and Ale et al. (2025) provide, meaning this synthesis may understate challenges specific to Nigeria's other major architectural traditions.

These limitations point directly toward the empirical research this review's synthesis makes necessary. Future work should conduct direct evaluation of implemented decolonial curricular interventions against measurable graduate design competence, following outcome-based evaluation methods comparable to those Salama et al. (2025) apply across their five international case studies, specifically within Nigerian architecture programmes that have adopted digital vernacular documentation, speculative pedagogy, or Open and Distance Learning-based indigenous knowledge codification. This should be combined with extended vernacular documentation of Northern Nigerian Hausa and further South-Western Yoruba architectural traditions, following the mixed-methods template Nnamdi et al. (2025) demonstrate for Okigwe, to establish comparable empirical depth across Nigeria's major architectural traditions. Finally, future research should evaluate the feasibility and impact of a shared national digital repository of documented Nigerian vernacular geometry, building directly on Johnson et al.'s (2026) demonstrated technical methodology, as a mechanism for scaling curricular decolonisation across the sector as a whole.

8. Conclusion

This review has synthesised the available literature on decolonising architectural education in Nigeria, examining how indigenous knowledge systems, local building practices and contemporary design pedagogy might be integrated into a curricular structure still substantially shaped by its colonial inheritance. It has shown that the central obstacle is not primarily an absence of relevant theoretical, empirical or pedagogical knowledge, all of which the literature synthesised here demonstrates exists in considerable depth, but a persistent, decades-long gap between that knowledge's availability and its actual incorporation into curricular structure, studio practice and professional norms, a gap Wahab (1996) identified conceptually nearly thirty years before Enwerekwe and Akah (2025) documented its continued institutional persistence.

The review has also shown that the strongest available evidence treats technical rigour and cultural decolonisation as mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives: Ihunwo and Ezinwo's (2025) measured thermal-comfort performance and Aigbodua et al.'s (2025) quantified cost and energy savings demonstrate that indigenous and hybrid vernacular-modern design strategies can outperform conventional contemporary alternatives on strictly technical grounds, while Johnson et al.'s (2026) parametric geometric documentation and Jibrin's (2026) evidence of embedded mathematical knowledge demonstrate that indigenous building knowledge is technically substantive rather than merely decorative. At the same time, Malonza and Ndacyayishima's (2022) evidence that even well-intentioned indigenous-informed design can underrealise the logics it draws upon, and Adeyemo et al.'s (2025) and Ale et al.'s (2025) evidence that vernacular architecture carries semiotic and cosmological content extending well beyond geometric form, together caution against treating curricular decolonisation as achieved through technical documentation or stylistic reference alone.

Read against the comparative African and Global South literature, Salama et al. (2025), Harriss et al. (2023), Fisher et al. (2017), Olweny (2023) and Changwe and Mwanza (2026) among them,

this review concludes that Nigeria's architectural education sector faces a regionally shared, rather than uniquely national, structural challenge, and that the most promising available responses, digital vernacular codification, speculative and community-based pedagogy, and resource-appropriate curricular design attentive to the genuine infrastructural constraints Enwerekwe and Akah (2025) document, are already individually demonstrated within the reviewed literature but remain institutionally uncoordinated across Nigeria's architecture schools. The conceptual framework developed here, and the research and policy directions identified above, are offered as a basis for moving Nigerian architectural education from isolated pedagogical experimentation toward the coordinated, evidence-based curricular transformation the reviewed literature's cumulative weight suggests is both necessary and, on the technical and cultural evidence assembled here, genuinely achievable.

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