Int. j. adv. multidisc. res. stud. 2023; 3(5):1550-1560

Received: 10-09-2023
Accepted: 20-10-2023

International Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Research and Studies

ISSN: 2583-049X

Scaling Knowledge Exchange in the Global Data Community: The Rise of dbt Nigeria as a Benchmark Model

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.62225/2583049X.2023.3.5.4812
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Abstract

As the global data ecosystem evolves, knowledge exchange has become a foundational pillar for advancing analytics capabilities, particularly in emerging markets. This explores the rise of dbt Nigeria as a benchmark model for scaling collaborative data practices, fostering local capacity building, and bridging the global-local knowledge gap in analytics engineering. With the proliferation of dbt (data build tool) as a standard for transforming and managing analytics workflows, communities like dbt Nigeria have played a pivotal role in contextualizing these practices within the unique constraints and opportunities of the Nigerian data landscape. Established as a grassroots initiative, dbt Nigeria has grown into a vibrant hub of learning, mentorship, and open collaboration. Through structured programming—including hands-on workshops, localized content creation, GitHub contributions, and peer-led mentorship—dbt Nigeria has enabled the development of a new generation of analytics engineers equipped with modern tooling and best practices. Moreover, the community has catalyzed cross-sector collaboration, bringing together stakeholders from startups, enterprises, academia, and non-profits to foster an inclusive and sustainable data culture. The model's impact is evident in increased dbt adoption across Nigerian organizations, improved job readiness of local talent, and global recognition through contributions to the wider dbt ecosystem. Despite challenges such as infrastructure limitations and sustainability concerns, dbt Nigeria offers valuable lessons in community leadership, localization of global tools, and democratized knowledge dissemination. This argues that the success of dbt Nigeria provides a replicable blueprint for other emerging data communities across the Global South. As data-driven decision-making becomes increasingly strategic, investing in scalable, transparent, and community-led knowledge ecosystems is essential. The rise of dbt Nigeria underscores the power of collective learning in shaping the future of analytics, not just locally but globally.

Keywords: Scaling Knowledge Exchange, Global Data Community, dbt Nigeria, Benchmark Model

1. Introduction

The evolution of the global data community has been marked by a significant shift toward open, collaborative, and tool-driven approaches to analytics and data engineering (Kufile *et al*., 2022; Evans-Uzosike *et al*., 2022 [31]). As organizations increasingly rely on data for strategic decision-making, the demand for scalable knowledge exchange and standardized practices has grown across sectors and geographies. Central to this shift is the adoption of modern analytics engineering workflows, facilitated by tools such as dbt (data build tool), which empower teams to transform, document, test, and deploy analytics code in a modular and version-controlled environment (Otokiti and Onalaja, 2022; Ibitoye and Mustapha, 2022) [58,

[40] By enabling analysts to work like software engineers, dbt has played a crucial role in democratizing access to robust data infrastructure and reducing the dependency on siloed, ad hoc reporting systems (Fagbore *et al*., 2022 [33]; Kufile *et al*., 2022). Within this broader context, open knowledge exchange—fueled by community-led learning, reusable code patterns, and shared documentation—has become a cornerstone of innovation in data practices (Along *et al*., 2023; Akinboboye *et al*., 2023).

In parallel, Nigeria's data ecosystem has witnessed remarkable transformation over the past decade. The country's rapidly growing tech scene, often referred to as "Africa's Silicon Valley," has given rise to numerous startups and enterprises leveraging data for product development, growth marketing, and operational efficiency (Adewale *et al*., 2023 [15]; Along *et al*., 2023). From fintech and healthtech to agritech and edtech, Nigerian organizations are increasingly recognizing data as a strategic asset. However, this growth has not been without challenges. Many companies still face critical gaps in adopting structured analytics workflows, including poor documentation practices, limited testing protocols, and insufficient version control in data pipelines (Adesemoye *et al*., 2023; Hamza *et al*., 2023). Additionally, the absence of well-supported, community-led infrastructure has made it difficult for analysts and data engineers to share knowledge, onboard junior talent, and build institutional memory (Hamza *et al*., 2023; Charles *et al*., 2023 [28]).

In this environment, the emergence of dbt Nigeria represents a timely and impactful intervention. As a local chapter of the global dbt community, dbt Nigeria was founded to promote modern analytics engineering practices tailored to the Nigerian context (Collins *et al*., 2023; Okolie *et al*., 2023) [29, 55]. Its mission extends beyond tool adoption to include inclusive knowledge exchange, peer mentorship, and the cultivation of a vibrant community of practice. By providing structured learning opportunities—such as hands-on workshops, GitHub-driven collaborations, and public showcases of local use cases—dbt Nigeria has positioned itself as a model for how grassroots initiatives can bridge the global-local divide in data capabilities (Ogeawuchi *et al*., 2023 [52]; Akpe *et al*., 2023).

The purpose of this, is to explore how dbt Nigeria has successfully scaled knowledge exchange in a way that is both locally grounded and globally connected. It investigates the strategies employed by the community to address skills gaps, foster collaboration, and advocate for best practices in analytics workflows. This includes examining how dbt Nigeria has localized global tools and frameworks, built cross-sector partnerships, and cultivated a sense of ownership among its members. This also contextualizes the broader implications of this model for other emerging markets seeking to build resilient, inclusive, and future-ready data communities.

Ultimately, dbt Nigeria offers a compelling case study of how a community-led, open-source-oriented movement can drive technical excellence, professional development, and institutional change at scale. By drawing on global standards while remaining sensitive to local realities, it exemplifies the strategic potential of knowledge-sharing ecosystems in transforming the analytics landscape in Nigeria and beyond. As the world becomes increasingly data-driven, the ability to scale knowledge exchange equitably and sustainably will be vital—and dbt Nigeria stands as an early exemplar of what such a future might look like (Collins *et al*., 2023; Okolie *et al*., 2023) [29, 55].

2. Methodology

This study employed the PRISMA 2020 (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) methodology to systematically identify and analyze initiatives, case studies, and knowledge-sharing frameworks related to grassroots data communities, with a specific focus on the emergence and development of dbt Nigeria. The aim was to contextualize dbt Nigeria's growth within the broader global data ecosystem, assess its replicability, and understand the mechanisms by which it has facilitated scalable, community-driven knowledge exchange.

A comprehensive literature and grey literature search was conducted across multiple databases including Scopus, Google Scholar, IEEE Xplore, SSRN, and ProQuest Dissertations. This was complemented by manual reviews of organizational blogs, community forums (e.g., dbt Discourse, GitHub discussions), conference proceedings from events such as dbt Coalesce, and institutional reports on open-source analytics adoption. The search covered materials published between 2015 and 2025, capturing the rise of dbt as an analytics engineering tool and the subsequent localization of its use and community support across emerging markets, particularly in Nigeria.

Inclusion criteria were defined to select materials that discussed grassroots data communities, open-source data stack adoption, regional adaptation of analytics engineering practices, and case studies of knowledge transfer within low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Special emphasis was placed on documentation of community-led learning, peer mentoring programs, localized training initiatives, and stakeholder engagement strategies. Excluded were commercial vendor reports without open methodological disclosures, marketing-only white papers, or resources that focused solely on technical tooling without reference to community or capacity-building elements.

The search strategy used combinations of terms such as "analytics engineering", "dbt community", "open-source data stack", "peer learning in data", "knowledge exchange in Africa", "data engineering Nigeria", and "community-based analytics training". After deduplication, records were screened based on titles and abstracts, followed by full-text reviews for relevance and methodological rigor. Two reviewers independently assessed the materials, and conflicts were resolved through consensus.

A standardized data extraction framework was used to capture key variables from the selected sources, including initiative origin, geographic context, type of knowledge-sharing mechanism, institutional support structures, impact metrics (e.g., community growth, replication, employment outcomes), and documented challenges. The analysis incorporated both qualitative synthesis of case narratives and quantitative mapping of community expansion indicators.

Risk of bias was evaluated using adapted criteria from the ROBINS-I tool, focusing on potential selection bias, funding bias, and limitations in reporting contextual outcomes. Where applicable, triangulation was performed using multiple data sources to validate claims related to community impact or scalability.

The synthesis highlighted recurring patterns across global and regional data communities, enabling comparative insights into the distinctiveness of dbt Nigeria's model. These patterns informed an emergent framework for evaluating and scaling grassroots data communities, offering lessons for replication in other LMICs. The PRISMA methodology ensured that the study's findings are grounded in a transparent and replicable review process, positioning dbt Nigeria as both a case study and a benchmark within the evolving global data landscape.

2.1 The Foundations of dbt Nigeria

The emergence of dbt Nigeria as a vibrant, locally anchored community of data practitioners exemplifies the confluence of global best practices with regional innovation. At its core, dbt Nigeria reflects a strategic adaptation of analytics engineering principles to support capacity building, education, and collaboration within the Nigerian data ecosystem (Ogeawuchi *et al*., 2023 [52]; Akpe *et al*., 2023). Its foundations lie not only in the adoption of the dbt (data build tool) framework but in the deliberate cultivation of a community that prioritizes shared learning, localized implementation, and sustainable growth.

dbt Nigeria was founded in response to a growing need for structured, collaborative, and open-source analytics workflows within the country's data and technology landscape. Spearheaded by a group of pioneering data professionals—many of whom had direct experience with dbt through remote work, global fellowships, or participation in the broader dbt community—the initiative formally coalesced in the early 2020s. The founding leadership brought together a unique blend of technical expertise, community organizing experience, and deep contextual knowledge of the Nigerian business environment (Myllynen *et al*., 2023 [50]; Hassan *et al*., 2023).

From its inception, dbt Nigeria positioned itself not just as a technical user group, but as a platform for education, mentorship, and community-led capacity building. Its objectives were threefold: to make modern analytics engineering accessible to Nigerian practitioners; to create spaces for peer-to-peer collaboration on real-world data challenges; and to enable local organizations to adopt data transformation best practices that improve decision-making and operational efficiency. This vision aligned closely with dbt's global emphasis on modular, testable, and well-documented data models—but extended it to encompass social and institutional development within the Nigerian context (Hassan *et al*., 2023; Adekunle *et al*., 2023).

Key to the community's early success was its inclusive approach to outreach and engagement. Events were designed to accommodate varying levels of experience—from university students and junior analysts to senior data engineers and product leaders. Workshops, meetups, and virtual sessions were anchored around core dbt concepts such as modular SQL development, data testing, version control, and documentation. These were frequently contextualized using locally relevant case studies, including e-commerce, fintech, and logistics data scenarios that resonated with Nigerian professionals.

A defining characteristic of dbt Nigeria has been its ability to translate global methodologies into workflows that are technically rigorous yet practical for the Nigerian business environment. Many local organizations—particularly startups and SMEs—face constraints such as limited infrastructure, fragmented data sources, and inconsistent data literacy among teams (Ilori, 2023; Ugbaja *et al*., 2023 [60]). To address these, dbt Nigeria advocates for the use of lightweight, scalable data stacks that prioritize maintainability and transparency.

Central to this localization has been the promotion of analytics engineering principles such as test-driven development, automated documentation, and version-controlled SQL models—elements often missing in traditional BI practices in Nigeria. dbt Nigeria members have developed open-source templates and boilerplate projects that integrate with popular tools such as PostgreSQL, BigQuery, Airbyte, and Metabase, tailored for common use cases in Nigerian businesses. This has allowed data teams to move away from ad hoc data pipelines toward structured, reproducible transformation workflows.

Moreover, the community actively emphasizes the importance of documentation culture as a foundation for data trust and collaboration. Recognizing that many Nigerian organizations rely on multi-functional teams where institutional knowledge may be siloed or undocumented, dbt Nigeria has positioned documentation as a key mechanism for onboarding, auditing, and stakeholder communication. By encouraging the adoption of dbt's built-in documentation and testing features, the community promotes data practices that align with both technical quality and business accountability (Adekunle *et al*., 2023; Adeyemo *et al*., 2023 [18]).

Equally important is the role of version control—particularly Git integration—in enabling reproducible analytics. Through hands-on sessions and project-based learning, dbt Nigeria has demystified Git workflows for analysts and business users, bridging the gap between data teams and software engineering standards. This focus on reproducibility and modularity is not just a matter of technical excellence; it is a strategic lever for building organizational data maturity across Nigeria's rapidly digitizing sectors (Adekunle *et al*., 2023; Odionu and Ibeh, 2023 [51]).

The foundations of dbt Nigeria are rooted in a community-led effort to adapt and scale modern data practices in ways that are contextually relevant, technically robust, and socially inclusive (Alonge *et al*., 2023; Ilori, 2023). By localizing the principles of analytics engineering, dbt Nigeria is not only advancing the country's data capabilities but also contributing a replicable model for global knowledge exchange in the open-source analytics movement.

2.2 Strategies for Scaling Knowledge Exchange

Scaling knowledge exchange in the data community, particularly in emerging ecosystems, requires a deliberate, multi-faceted approach that balances technical rigor with accessibility, inclusivity, and contextual relevance. In the case of dbt Nigeria, a growing community centered around the adoption of the data build tool (dbt), a combination of structured learning programs, open content creation, and cross-sector collaboration has proven essential in driving sustainable and impactful knowledge transfer as shown in figure 1 (Ezeh *et al*., 2023 [32]; Lawal *et al*., 2023). These strategies not only bridge technical skill gaps but also foster a culture of continuous learning, peer support, and innovation.

One of the foundational strategies deployed by dbt Nigeria to scale knowledge exchange is the implementation of structured learning and mentorship initiatives. These programs provide accessible entry points for individuals at various stages of their analytics journey, from newcomers to experienced professionals looking to deepen their expertise in dbt and analytics engineering.

Workshops, bootcamps, and office hours are core formats used to deliver hands-on, practical education. These sessions are often built around real-world data problems and use cases relevant to the Nigerian market, such as financial data modeling, sales analytics, and public sector reporting. By embedding dbt principles—modularity, documentation, version control, and testing—into these workshops, learners gain both conceptual understanding and tool-specific proficiency. Bootcamps provide more intensive, cohort-based training programs that guide participants through end-to-end dbt projects over several weeks, culminating in demo days or capstone presentations (Ozobu *et al*., 2023 [59]; Kufile *et al*., 2023).

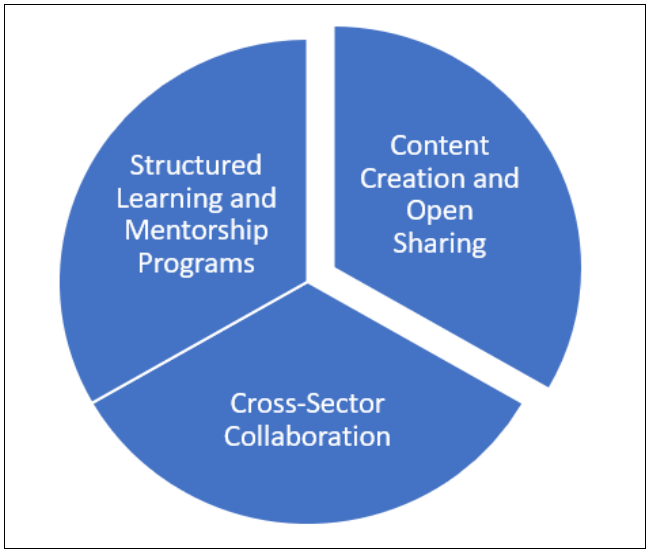

Fig 1: Strategies for Scaling Knowledge Exchange

Office hours and peer mentorship programs complement these formal training sessions by creating spaces for informal, ongoing support. More experienced community members volunteer as mentors, guiding newcomers through setup challenges, project scoping, and troubleshooting tasks. This mentorship model has proven effective in building confidence among beginners while reinforcing knowledge among mentors through teaching. Additionally, dbt Nigeria has initiated onboarding pathways, including starter templates, walkthroughs, and curated learning tracks to help users get started with dbt at their own pace.

In line with the open-source ethos of the global dbt ecosystem, dbt Nigeria places a strong emphasis on content creation and open knowledge dissemination. This strategy helps to capture local expertise, promote reusable patterns, and expand access to high-quality learning materials tailored to the regional context (Kufile *et al*., 2023; Oguejiofor *et al*., 2023 [53]).

Community members contribute blogs, GitHub repositories, and custom dbt packages that address use cases relevant to Nigerian industries and public institutions (Lawal *et al*., 2023; Adanigbo *et al*., 2023). For instance, dbt packages have been developed for common reporting tasks in sectors such as fintech (e.g., mobile money transaction pipelines), e-commerce (e.g., product performance dashboards), and public health (e.g., aggregating health center data). These contributions not only provide starting points for others working in similar domains but also showcase how dbt can be applied to diverse data environments beyond the global North.

Additionally, content such as case studies, tutorials, and recorded webinars are published regularly to promote transparency and learning. These resources often include detailed explanations of project architecture, modeling decisions, and testing strategies, thus serving as living documentation for the community. dbt Nigeria also actively contributes to the global dbt community, participating in global Slack channels, submitting community showcases, and speaking at events such as Coalesce, dbt's annual analytics engineering conference. These engagements strengthen the link between local innovation and global best practices, allowing Nigerian voices to shape the evolution of the tool itself (Kufile *et al*., 2023; Umezurike *et al*., 2023 [61]).

Another critical strategy in scaling knowledge exchange is collaboration across sectors, enabling a richer diversity of perspectives, funding models, and use cases. dbt Nigeria has built bridges between academia, startups, enterprises, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to create a holistic ecosystem of learning and application.

Universities and academic institutions have been engaged to introduce dbt into curricula and research labs, exposing students to modern data transformation workflows early in their careers. Collaborations with tech startups have led to real-world project partnerships, where community members work on live dbt implementations, thereby gaining practical experience and industry exposure (Alonge *et al*., 2023; Uwaoma *et al*., 2023) [62].

Enterprises, including fintech firms and telecom providers, have sponsored community events, provided datasets for learning, and co-hosted knowledge-sharing sessions. These partnerships demonstrate industry commitment to nurturing local talent pipelines and modernizing internal data operations. NGOs and development organizations, on the other hand, have supported capacity-building initiatives aimed at improving data literacy in underserved communities. By working with organizations focused on open government, health, and education, dbt Nigeria has extended the benefits of analytics engineering to civic tech initiatives and social impact programs.

Furthermore, sponsorship and partnership models have enabled dbt Nigeria to sustain its programming. These include direct funding from corporate partners, in-kind support such as internet access and venues, and technical mentorship from international data professionals. Such partnerships are often structured around mutual value creation: sponsors gain access to a growing talent pool and a platform for brand visibility, while the community receives the resources needed to operate and scale.

dbt Nigeria's approach to scaling knowledge exchange is rooted in a combination of structured education, open content, and collaborative ecosystems. By investing in mentorship, creating locally relevant resources, and partnering across sectors, the community has built a resilient foundation for analytics education and practice (Adanigbo *et al*., 2023; Ezeh *et al*., 2023 [32]). These strategies not only support skill development but also foster a shared sense of

purpose and ownership—critical ingredients for a sustainable, inclusive data culture.

2.3 Impacts and Outcomes

The rapid growth of dbt Nigeria has generated measurable impacts across multiple dimensions of the local and global data ecosystem. From cultivating a new wave of analytics engineering talent to elevating the maturity of data practices within Nigerian organizations, dbt Nigeria has become a cornerstone of Africa's emerging analytics landscape. Through community-driven knowledge exchange and localization of global best practices, it has catalyzed both individual empowerment and institutional transformation (Adanigbo *et al*., 2023; Friday *et al*., 2023 [34]). Furthermore, its influence now extends beyond national borders, positioning Nigeria as a credible contributor to global analytics discourse.

One of the most significant outcomes of dbt Nigeria is its role in upskilling a new generation of analytics engineers. Prior to its establishment, exposure to analytics engineering tools and methodologies—particularly those based on open-source technologies like dbt—was limited in Nigeria. Through targeted workshops, open projects, bootcamps, and mentorship programs, dbt Nigeria has trained hundreds of professionals in modular SQL development, data transformation best practices, and Git-based version control.

These efforts have provided not only technical proficiency but also career leverage. Many participants who began their journey through dbt Nigeria have transitioned into roles as data analysts, analytics engineers, and data platform specialists across leading Nigerian startups, international consultancies, and global remote teams. The community has also served as a soft infrastructure for career mobility, helping members refine their portfolios, build GitHub project histories, and gain visibility through speaking engagements or project showcases. As a result, dbt Nigeria has effectively become a talent accelerator, nurturing a local workforce equipped to meet the demands of modern data teams.

Beyond individual upskilling, dbt Nigeria has had a transformative impact on data maturity within Nigerian organizations. Historically, many companies in Nigeria have struggled with ad hoc, unscalable data workflows—relying heavily on spreadsheet-based reporting, manual ETL, and undocumented queries. With dbt Nigeria's advocacy and technical support, there has been a growing adoption of dbt and analytics engineering principles in production environments, particularly in fintech, healthtech, logistics, and digital commerce sectors.

Local companies are now incorporating dbt into their data stacks to enable modular SQL development, enforce data quality testing, and create self-documenting transformation pipelines. This adoption has improved data trust, reduced technical debt, and enhanced collaboration across analytics, engineering, and business teams. dbt Nigeria has also created a forum for cross-organization learning, where practitioners share implementation experiences, performance tips, and governance models—thus accelerating collective ecosystem maturity.

Concurrently, the emergence of data leadership within African tech communities is gaining momentum. Community members are increasingly stepping into roles that combine technical proficiency with strategic vision, influencing how data is prioritized, governed, and integrated into product and business decision-making (Crawford *et al*., 2023; Agboola *et al*., 2023) [30, 19]. This rise in data leadership is not only reshaping internal organizational dynamics but also fostering new standards of excellence across the African data ecosystem.

The impact of dbt Nigeria has not gone unnoticed on the global stage. The community has earned recognition from dbt Labs, the creators of the tool, for its exceptional grassroots growth and contextual innovation. Members of dbt Nigeria have been featured as speakers at international conferences such as Coalesce, the annual dbt summit, where they share insights on localization, infrastructure challenges in LMICs, and community-led learning. Several Nigerian-led case studies have been published or referenced by dbt Labs and other industry forums, highlighting the technical and social strategies used to scale analytics engineering in emerging markets.

This global recognition reinforces the significance of community-led models in democratizing access to high-quality data tooling and knowledge. It also opens new channels for collaboration, funding, and visibility for African data professionals, establishing dbt Nigeria not only as a national asset but as a benchmark for what is possible when global methodologies meet localized leadership.

The impacts of dbt Nigeria span talent development, institutional transformation, and global positioning. By enabling skills acquisition, fostering organizational change, and earning international credibility, dbt Nigeria exemplifies how localized data communities can shape the future of analytics in the Global South—offering a scalable model for equitable knowledge exchange and technical empowerment.

2.4 Challenges and Lessons Learned

The success of dbt Nigeria as a model for scaling knowledge exchange in the global data community is both impressive and instructive. However, its journey has also been shaped by a series of challenges that reflect the broader realities of building technical communities in emerging ecosystems. These challenges range from infrastructural and technological limitations to organizational sustainability and issues of inclusion as shown in figure 2 (Adewuyi *et al*., 2023; Anyebe *et al*., 2023 [27]). By examining these barriers and the strategies used to address them, valuable lessons emerge for replicating or adapting the model in other contexts.

A central challenge faced by dbt Nigeria, and indeed many similar initiatives in developing regions, is the limited infrastructure and inconsistent access to digital resources. Internet connectivity remains a significant barrier for both community members and organizers. Many participants in remote or underserved regions experience unstable broadband access, slow download speeds, and frequent network interruptions, making it difficult to attend virtual sessions, download open-source tools, or contribute meaningfully to collaborative coding projects hosted on platforms like GitHub.

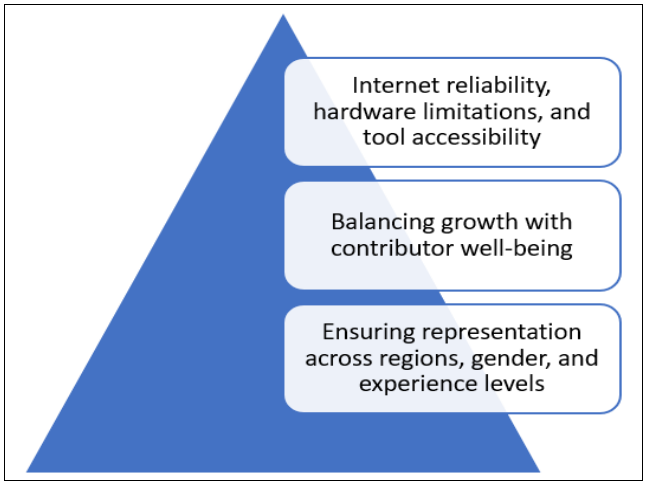

Fig 2: Challenges on scaling knowledge exchange

Similarly, hardware limitations—including outdated laptops, insufficient memory or storage, and lack of local development environments—impede the ability of learners to fully participate in hands-on analytics engineering workflows. Unlike cloud-native environments with consistent compute resources, many Nigerian users operate with basic consumer hardware, which may struggle to run dbt locally or integrate with modern data warehouses without performance issues.

Additionally, tool accessibility remains a challenge due to cost, compatibility, or lack of documentation for offline contexts. While dbt is open-source, full utilization often requires integration with tools like Snowflake, BigQuery, or dbt Cloud—many of which are cost-prohibitive or have limited regional support.

Lessons learned here include the importance of promoting low-bandwidth, offline-friendly resources such as downloadable PDFs, pre-configured learning environments (e.g., dbt with DuckDB), and alternative teaching platforms like WhatsApp or Telegram for asynchronous learning. The community has also explored pooled resources, such as cloud credits, shared workspaces, and hardware donation schemes, to mitigate access inequities (Adelusi *et al*., 2023; Ajuwon *et al*., 2023 [20]).

As with many grassroots, community-led initiatives, sustainability is an ongoing concern for dbt Nigeria. Much of the community's progress has been driven by a small cohort of passionate volunteers who invest time, energy, and expertise into organizing workshops, maintaining learning materials, mentoring newcomers, and facilitating collaborations. While this commitment has fueled the initiative's rapid growth, it has also led to periods of volunteer burnout—especially when demand outpaces capacity or when core contributors juggle these responsibilities alongside full-time jobs.

This challenge is compounded by the lack of institutional support or long-term funding models. Events, infrastructure, and content creation are often supported by ad-hoc donations or short-term sponsorships, which may not be sufficient to cover operational needs over time. In some cases, contributors have had to cover personal costs or pause community activities due to resource constraints.

To address this, dbt Nigeria has begun developing distributed leadership models, where responsibilities are shared among rotating volunteer teams or working groups. This decentralization reduces overreliance on a few individuals and creates pathways for broader member engagement. Moreover, the community is exploring formal partnerships with universities, enterprises, and non-profits to create more stable funding streams and institutional backing for long-term programming.

The lesson learned here is clear: to ensure the longevity of any knowledge-sharing initiative, intentional investments must be made not just in technical content, but in organizational health, leadership development, and contributor well-being.

Ensuring equity and inclusion has been a priority for dbt Nigeria but not without its challenges. Given the geographic, economic, and gender disparities that exist in the broader tech ecosystem, the community has faced difficulties in achieving balanced representation across regions, gender identities, and experience levels.

For instance, many early participants and contributors came from major urban centers such as Lagos and Abuja, where access to tech meetups, co-working spaces, and broadband infrastructure is more readily available. This concentration risks marginalizing potential contributors from smaller towns or rural areas (Adewuyi *et al*., 2023; Adelusi *et al*., 2023). Similarly, the underrepresentation of women and non-binary individuals has mirrored broader patterns in tech, particularly in technical subfields like data engineering.

To tackle this, dbt Nigeria has implemented a number of inclusive programming strategies. These include targeted outreach to women in data networks, scholarships for underrepresented learners, and the inclusion of diverse speakers and mentors in events. Efforts have also been made to decentralize activities, with regional meetups, multilingual resources, and community liaisons in different states to promote localized ownership and participation.

A critical lesson learned is that building a truly inclusive community requires intentionality at every stage—from event design and speaker selection to the moderation of online spaces and the development of culturally relevant materials. Metrics around diversity and participation are now being tracked to inform future programming.

While dbt Nigeria has demonstrated the potential of community-led knowledge exchange in the global data landscape, its path has been shaped by real and recurring challenges. Infrastructure limitations, sustainability concerns, and equity gaps remain persistent barriers—but they have also catalyzed creative, context-aware solutions. The lessons learned from these experiences emphasize the importance of adaptability, shared leadership, and inclusion in scaling knowledge effectively. By proactively addressing these challenges, dbt Nigeria continues to set a precedent for how emerging communities can build resilient, impactful ecosystems grounded in open collaboration and local empowerment.

2.5 Scaling Beyond Nigeria

The success of dbt Nigeria in building a vibrant, technically skilled, and globally connected data community provides a replicable model for other emerging markets seeking to strengthen their local analytics ecosystems. As the demand for modern data infrastructure and analytics engineering capabilities expands across Africa and the Global South, the strategic challenge is how to scale this community-driven model in ways that are both context-sensitive and globally interoperable. dbt Nigeria offers a unique case study in local innovation with global relevance—one that can serve as

both a blueprint and a partner for scaling similar initiatives worldwide (Adelusi *et al*., 2023; Oladuji *et al*., 2023).

The foundational design of dbt Nigeria—a combination of localized learning, peer mentorship, and open-source tools—has proven particularly adaptable to the structural realities of many emerging markets. Countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America often share similar challenges: underdeveloped technical education pipelines, limited access to paid enterprise software, and fragmented data cultures. The dbt Nigeria model addresses these constraints by emphasizing low-barrier, community-led learning and the adoption of open tools like dbt Core, Git, and SQL.

Replicating this success in other regions requires a clear framework for localization and sustainability. At the core of this blueprint are four key pillars: (1) identifying committed local leadership; (2) establishing context-relevant learning materials and case studies; (3) fostering open knowledge exchange with minimal gatekeeping; and (4) embedding data practices into real-world business problems through partnerships with local startups, NGOs, or public institutions.

In practice, this could mean tailoring workshops to local languages or regulatory environments, addressing sector-specific use cases (e.g., agriculture in Kenya, mobile banking in Bangladesh), and establishing cross-sectoral stakeholder engagement to build legitimacy. Importantly, while dbt Nigeria's architecture is highly adaptable, any replication strategy must prioritize community ownership and contextual relevance over simple replication of form. Rather than being exported as a static model, dbt Nigeria's framework should be seen as a set of adaptable design patterns that other communities can mold to fit their own needs and realities.

For dbt-inspired communities to thrive beyond national or regional boundaries, they must be interoperable with the broader global analytics ecosystem. dbt Nigeria has already demonstrated the value of such interoperability by engaging in cross-chapter dialogues with communities in South Africa, Kenya, India, and Brazil. These exchanges enable mutual learning, spotlight shared challenges (e.g., unreliable data pipelines, limited cloud access, low Git fluency), and foster a spirit of co-creation rather than knowledge transfer.

Interoperability also requires aligning local technical practices with global standards. dbt Nigeria has adopted modern analytics engineering workflows—such as modular SQL, CI/CD pipelines, and test-driven development—not only for internal quality but to facilitate collaboration with international partners and open-source contributors. As other regions adopt similar practices, the potential for cross-pollination of knowledge, tools, and shared repositories becomes exponential.

Formalizing these connections through a network of Global South dbt communities could yield compounding benefits: shared curricula, distributed mentorship programs, localized documentation projects, and multi-country data storytelling initiatives. This would also open avenues for global contributors to learn from LMIC-specific innovations—such as frugal data infrastructure, offline-first analytics designs, or hybrid community governance models—that are often overlooked in global forums dominated by high-resource contexts.

A key enabler of dbt Nigeria's scalability—and its potential replication elsewhere—has been the strategic use of digital collaboration platforms. Tools such as Slack, GitHub, Notion, Zoom, and community forums have allowed the group to operate as a distributed but cohesive network, eliminating many of the geographic and infrastructural barriers that typically constrain community development in emerging markets.

Slack serves as the primary real-time communication channel, with thematic channels dedicated to onboarding, mentorship, job opportunities, and technical troubleshooting. GitHub functions not only as a version control system but as a living archive of community-led projects, dbt packages, and sample repositories that enable asynchronous learning and collaboration. Notion has been used to centralize documentation, event planning, contributor roles, and curricula, making knowledge assets easily accessible and continuously improvable (Oladuji *et al*., 2023; Adelusi *et al*., 2023).

These platforms have created a shared digital memory that new communities can build upon. New dbt community chapters—whether in Accra, Kampala, Jakarta, or Bogotá—can fork GitHub repositories, replicate learning paths, and tap into existing Slack conversations or documentation libraries. This allows them to start from a place of momentum rather than reinvention, accelerating the time from initiation to meaningful activity.

Moreover, these tools support the decentralized governance that has been critical to dbt Nigeria's sustainability. Community members self-organize to lead sessions, create content, or moderate discussions, guided by transparent norms and values rather than top-down mandates. This model of platform-enabled coordination lowers the dependency on any single organizer or funding source, a critical advantage in resource-constrained settings.

Scaling dbt Nigeria's model beyond national borders is not only feasible but increasingly necessary to democratize access to analytics engineering across the Global South. With the right balance of localization, global alignment, and digital collaboration, emerging markets can replicate and extend this blueprint to build their own data communities—ones that are technically proficient, socially grounded, and globally connected. As such, dbt Nigeria is more than a community—it is a living prototype for scalable, distributed data empowerment in the age of open analytics.

2.6 Future Directions

As dbt Nigeria continues to mature as a knowledge-sharing hub within the global data community, its evolution presents critical opportunities to deepen impact, scale capacity, and align with emerging frontiers in analytics engineering. To sustain and expand its influence, future directions must focus on institutionalization, formal recognition of learning outcomes, and technological integration with advanced data workflows as shown in figure 3. These pathways not only consolidate the gains made thus far but also ensure that the community remains adaptable to the rapid evolution of the global data ecosystem (Ojika *et al*., 2023 [54]; Adelusi *et al*., 2023).

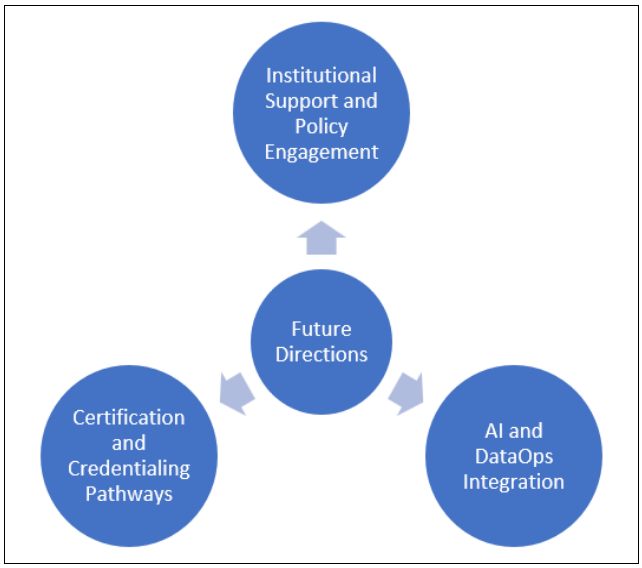

Fig 3: Future Directions

One of the most significant avenues for future growth lies in fostering institutional partnerships and policy alignment. While dbt Nigeria has thrived as a grassroots initiative, scaling its reach and sustainability will require deeper engagement with educational institutions, government agencies, and policy-makers.

Partnering with universities and technical colleges can help integrate dbt-based analytics engineering into formal curricula, ensuring that students graduate with market-ready, standardized skills. Joint research projects, guest lectures, and faculty training in dbt workflows can reinforce a pipeline of talent grounded in both theory and practice. Additionally, collaborations with education-focused government bodies, such as the National Universities Commission or the Nigerian Communications Commission, can support curriculum accreditation, resource funding, and digital infrastructure development for under-resourced institutions.

Government engagement also opens opportunities for public sector use cases, such as health data pipelines, national statistical reporting, and infrastructure analytics. Embedding dbt-based frameworks in civic data platforms not only expands local capacity but also models transparency and reproducibility in public data workflows. Advocacy efforts could focus on promoting open-source tooling and data governance best practices in national data policy, positioning dbt Nigeria as a thought leader in public-private data innovation.

A second priority is the development of recognized certification pathways that formalize the skills acquired through community participation. While many learners gain valuable hands-on experience via workshops, GitHub projects, and peer mentorship, the lack of formal credentials often creates a gap between skills and employability in traditional labor markets.

Establishing certification programs—either independently or in partnership with global entities like dbt Labs, online learning platforms, or regional academic institutions—can address this gap. Tiered certifications (e.g., foundational, intermediate, advanced) can validate competencies in dbt modeling, testing, documentation, and deployment. Practical assessment components and project-based evaluations would ensure alignment with industry expectations.

Credentialing also supports social mobility and workforce

integration. In a country where unemployment and underemployment among youth remain high, recognized credentials can differentiate job candidates, increase visibility to recruiters, and support career transitions from adjacent fields such as business intelligence, software engineering, or academia. Furthermore, certifications can enhance the community's appeal to sponsors and partners by providing measurable impact indicators and success metrics. Long-term, certification efforts may be embedded into national skills development frameworks, offering further legitimacy and support.

Finally, the future of dbt Nigeria must include strategic alignment with the emerging convergence of analytics engineering, machine learning, and DataOps. While dbt has historically focused on transforming and testing data in modern data stacks, its integration with tools for orchestration (e.g., Airflow, Prefect), observability (e.g., Monte Carlo, OpenLineage), and ML pipelines (e.g., MLflow, Feature Stores) is becoming increasingly important.

As Nigerian organizations become more data-mature, the demand is rising for end-to-end pipeline visibility, version control, automation, and real-time feedback loops. dbt Nigeria can extend its focus to include these broader DataOps concepts, equipping learners with the skills to manage complex, production-grade workflows. This includes teaching concepts like CI/CD for analytics, deployment automation, and model observability, as well as ethical AI and model governance—especially critical in sectors like healthcare, finance, and education.

Moreover, the integration of AI-driven analytics will drive demand for hybrid roles that combine dbt modeling with ML pipeline management and data science collaboration. Providing structured exposure to these tools and frameworks will ensure that the community remains at the forefront of global analytics trends (Adelusi *et al*., 2023; Hassan *et al*., 2023).

Looking ahead, dbt Nigeria is poised to move beyond its initial grassroots phase and evolve into a strategically positioned platform for nationwide and continental data capacity building. By pursuing institutional partnerships, implementing certification pathways, and embracing AI and DataOps integration, the community can scale impact, attract long-term support, and prepare members for future-proof careers. These future directions reflect a commitment not only to technological excellence but also to inclusive, systemic change across Nigeria's growing digital economy.

3. Conclusion

The emergence and maturation of dbt Nigeria reaffirm the strategic value of community-led data movements as catalysts for inclusive, scalable, and contextually relevant analytics transformation. In a global landscape increasingly defined by data-intensive decision-making, dbt Nigeria stands as a compelling model of how localized leadership, open-source tools, and collaborative learning can coalesce to upskill practitioners, empower organizations, and reframe the narrative around what is possible in the Global South. Rather than replicating practices from the Global North wholesale, dbt Nigeria has innovated through adaptation—embedding analytics engineering principles into local business contexts while maintaining alignment with global standards. Its growth has demonstrated that the future of data transformation lies not in centralized expertise but in distributed, community-driven ecosystems.

The lessons of dbt Nigeria should not remain insular. To accelerate knowledge exchange and analytics capacity-building across emerging markets, a multi-stakeholder commitment is urgently needed. This includes broader participation from local data practitioners, investment from philanthropic and impact-driven capital, and policy alignment that supports open-source education, digital infrastructure, and workforce development. Governments, academic institutions, and the private sector all have a role to play in replicating and sustaining similar communities. Platforms like Slack, GitHub, and Notion offer the infrastructure—but the real engine is people-centered innovation rooted in shared purpose.

As dbt Nigeria continues to scale and inspire adjacent communities, it offers not just a case study, but a blueprint for rethinking global data equity—one grounded in local agency, global interoperability, and the transformative power of open collaboration.

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