



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

Bridging the Skill Gap between Business Education Graduates and Industrial Requirement in Nigeria: A path way for National Sustainability

ODIGILI, Chuks Bishop¹
bishop.odigili@unidel.edu.ng
08037567355

&

OMOROJIE, Stella¹
stella.omorojie@unidel.edu.ng
08036763133

¹Faculty of Education, University of Delta Agbor, Delta State, Nigeria

Abstract

Business education has been identified as a fundamental pillar in equipping individuals with entrepreneurial, managerial, and technological competencies necessary for sustainable national development. However, across Africa and other developing economies, a significant disparity persists between the competencies of business education graduates and the dynamic needs of modern industries. This widening skill gap threatens employability, innovation, and productivity, thereby undermining national sustainability goals. This opinion paper critically explores the implications of this skill gap and argues for a paradigm shift in business education to align curriculum design, teaching methodology, and institutional collaboration with industrial realities. Drawing insights from current literature and policy frameworks, this paper argues that the repositioning of business education is not merely an academic necessity but an economic and social imperative. When business education graduates are equipped with both employable and entrepreneurial skills, they become agents of productivity, sustainability, and national development. The paper highlights the urgent need for curriculum innovation, digital literacy integration, work-based learning, and public-private partnerships as mechanisms to bridge the gap. It concludes that a sustainable and competitive national economy can only be achieved when business education becomes both industry-driven and innovation-oriented, equipping graduates with employability and entrepreneurial competencies that respond to the evolving demands of the global market.

Keywords: Business education, skill gap, industry needs, employability, national sustainability.

Introduction

Business education is globally recognized as a major contributor to human capital development and economic progress. In Nigeria and other developing economies, the discipline was designed to produce competent graduates who could function effectively in both public and private sectors. Across Africa and other emerging economies, education has been recognised as a catalyst for sustainable national growth and industrial advancement. Among the diverse educational disciplines, *business education* occupies a unique position because of its dual purpose: developing human capital for the corporate sector and fostering entrepreneurship for self-reliance and job creation (Okoro & Akpotohwo, 2023). Yet, the growing mismatch between the skills of business education graduates and the expectations of industries has become a major concern in educational and economic policy circles. The disconnect manifests in graduate unemployment, low productivity, and limited innovation, which collectively impede efforts towards national sustainability (Adebayo, 2022; Ogbuanya et al., 2023). The *skill gap* between business education graduates and industrial requirements reflects both structural and pedagogical deficiencies. Industries in Africa today operate in technologically complex environments requiring analytical, digital, communicative, and managerial competencies (OECD, 2022). However, many business education programmes remain anchored in traditional pedagogies and outdated curricula that emphasise theory over practice (Ezeani & Oladimeji, 2024). This gap not only reduces graduates' employability but also hinders industries from accessing a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and competitiveness. According to Bello and Adamu (2025), aligning educational outcomes with industrial needs is crucial for achieving economic sustainability in developing contexts.

The purpose of this paper is to critically examine how business education can be repositioned to bridge the widening skill gap between graduates and industry expectations in order to promote sustainable national development. Drawing from contemporary literature and global best practices, this paper advocates for curriculum reform, competency-based learning, and university-industry collaboration as strategic imperatives for addressing this challenge. The argument aligns with the



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which calls for inclusive, equitable, and quality education that promotes lifelong learning and employability (United Nations, 2023). This paper also argues that the repositioning of business education is not merely an academic necessity but an economic and social imperative. When business education graduates are equipped with both employable and entrepreneurial skills, they become agents of productivity, sustainability, and national development. The paper therefore proposes a comprehensive framework involving curriculum innovation, pedagogy reform, digital integration, and collaborative governance as strategic tools for bridging the skill gap and achieving national sustainability.

Concept of Business Education Graduates

The primary foundation of business education is the acquisition of knowledge in core business disciplines, including accounting, finance, marketing, management, operations, and human resource management. This knowledge equips graduates with the analytical frameworks necessary to understand organisational behaviour, market dynamics, strategic decision-making, and financial planning (Ezeani, 2022). However, the mere acquisition of theoretical knowledge does not automatically translate into employability or industrial relevance. A business education graduate is thus characterised not solely by academic attainment but by the ability to apply this knowledge practically to real-world business challenges. Beyond theoretical knowledge, skill development is central to the concept of business education graduates. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, digital literacy, data analysis, effective communication, leadership, and teamwork. The contemporary business environment demands graduates who can interpret data, adapt to technological innovations, manage organisational change, and communicate effectively across diverse cultural and professional settings (Ogunode, Adepoju, & Nwankwo, 2024). In this regard, business education graduates are expected to serve as both implementers and innovators within industrial systems, bridging the gap between academic understanding and practical execution.

Industrial Expectations and the Future of Work

The twenty-first century has ushered in an era of profound transformation in the global economy. The forces of digitalisation, automation, artificial intelligence (AI), sustainability imperatives, and the green transition have radically redefined what industries expect from graduates and employees. The industrial landscape of today is characterised not merely by technical proficiency but by adaptability, creativity, collaboration, and continuous learning (Schwab, 2023). For business education to contribute meaningfully to national sustainability, it must therefore align its learning outcomes and pedagogical approaches with these evolving industrial expectations.

1. The Changing Industrial Landscape; Industrial requirements are no longer confined to traditional business operations. Organisations across sectors increasingly demand employees who can integrate business insight with technological fluency, environmental awareness, and social responsibility (OECD, 2023). The Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) has blurred the boundary between business management and technology application, leading to the emergence of hybrid professions such as digital business analysts, sustainability consultants, e-commerce strategists, and AI project coordinators (World Economic Forum [WEF], 2023).

2. Core Competencies Demanded by Industry; Recent employer-based surveys across Africa, Asia, and the Middle East converge on several key competencies that determine graduate employability and organisational success. These include:

1. **Digital and technological competence** - fluency in data analytics, AI tools, enterprise software, and e-commerce systems (Bhorat et al., 2023).
2. **Critical thinking and problem-solving** – the ability to analyse complex situations, evaluate alternatives, and implement solutions within constraints (ILO, 2024).
3. **Emotional intelligence and teamwork** – interpersonal skills that facilitate collaboration, leadership, and cultural adaptability in diverse workplaces (Goleman, 2023).
4. **Sustainability literacy** – understanding environmental, social, and governance (ESG) issues and integrating them into business strategy (United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024).
5. **Entrepreneurial agility** – creative thinking and innovation required to launch ventures or intra-organisational projects that generate sustainable value (Okoro & Akpotohwo, 2023).



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

3. Digitalisation and Automation; Automation is transforming industries at a rapid pace. According to McKinsey Global Institute (2024), nearly 30% of work activities in manufacturing, retail, and services can now be automated using existing technology. However, automation does not eliminate jobs; it redefines them. Workers increasingly perform tasks that require human creativity, decision-making, and technological collaboration. Consequently, graduates must be equipped to work *with* machines not compete *against* them (Brynjolfsson & McAfee, 2022).

4. The Green Economy and Sustainability Demands; The global shift towards sustainable production and climate-conscious industries also has profound implications for business education. Sustainability is no longer a corporate afterthought but a core business function. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and Africa's Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) sustainability agenda are examples of policies that link environmental performance with market access (OECD, 2024).

5. The Human Side of Industrial Transformation; While technology is at the centre of modern industry, human skills remain indispensable. Employers repeatedly stress the importance of communication, leadership, empathy, and adaptability qualities that enable workers to navigate uncertainty (CIPD, 2023). As industries evolve, the capacity for *learning to learn* becomes more valuable than static technical knowledge. In the African context, where informal employment remains high, these human skills are essential for entrepreneurship, resilience, and inclusive growth (Adeoye, 2023).

6. Bridging the Expectation Gap; To realign business education with these industrial expectations, universities must:

1. Adopt Competency-Based Education (CBE) frameworks that map learning outcomes directly to industry standards.
2. Establish partnerships with employers to co-design curricula and offer work-integrated learning.
3. Invest in digital infrastructure and faculty development to teach emerging technologies.
4. Integrate sustainability and ethics modules across all business disciplines.
5. Encourage continuous professional development and lifelong learning mindsets.

These measures ensure that graduates are not only academically qualified but practically equipped to meet modern industry's multidimensional demands.

7. Reimagining Industrial Partnership Models; An essential dimension of the future of work is the *collaborative model* between universities and industry. This model includes industrial sabbaticals for lecturers, guest lectures by practitioners, shared research projects, and digital internship platforms. In South Africa, for example, partnerships between universities and private companies have resulted in co-designed programmes in business analytics and entrepreneurship (Mahomed, 2024). Nigeria can emulate this approach by creating "Business Innovation Hubs" that serve as bridges between theory and practice.

Repositioning Strategies for Business Education for National Sustainability

The discourse on bridging the skills gap between business education graduates and industrial expectations inevitably culminates in the question of *how* business education can be strategically repositioned to meet the demands of the twenty-first-century economy. In the context of Africa and Nigeria in particular this repositioning is not merely a curricular exercise but a transformative national development imperative. As emerging industries continue to expand under the pressures of digitalisation, sustainability, and global competitiveness, business education must evolve into an engine for innovation, inclusive growth, and sustainable industrialisation (Egberi & Ojo, 2023). Repositioning business education involves a systematic alignment of its objectives, pedagogy, curriculum, institutional culture, and stakeholder engagement mechanisms with contemporary industrial realities. The following strategies, grounded in both empirical evidence and theoretical insights, offer a holistic roadmap for this transformation.



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

1. Curriculum Reengineering for Industrial Relevance

Curriculum reengineering is the cornerstone of any educational reform aimed at bridging the skill gap. The existing business education curriculum in many African universities is often overloaded with theoretical content and outdated management models that fail to address new economic realities (Ogbuanya, 2023). A repositioned business education curriculum must therefore be competency-based, interdisciplinary, and industry-responsive.

First, competency-based curriculum design (CBCD) should replace traditional content-based structures. This model defines learning outcomes in measurable performance terms aligned with real workplace tasks (Bassey & Udofia, 2024). For instance, rather than teaching “Principles of Marketing” as a conceptual course, CBCD would require students to demonstrate ability in *digital campaign management*, *data analytics*, and *consumer insight development*.

Second, curricula must embrace interdisciplinarity, integrating elements of technology, environmental science, and entrepreneurship. Courses like *Sustainable Supply Chain Management*, *Digital Business Intelligence*, and *Corporate Ethics in AI Systems* would reflect contemporary industrial realities (ILO, 2024).

Third, business education should introduce modular learning pathways short, stackable credentials that allow learners to update skills without completing entire degree programmes. This flexibility aligns with lifelong learning trends and the needs of working professionals in rapidly changing sectors (UNESCO, 2024).

2. Strengthening University–Industry Partnerships; One of the most recurrent critiques of business education is its isolation from industry. Effective repositioning demands a symbiotic relationship between universities and industrial sectors. According to Mahomed (2024), collaborative partnerships between higher institutions and corporations enhance the contextual relevance of teaching, expose students to real-life business challenges, and foster innovation ecosystems.

Universities should institutionalize mechanisms for continuous dialogue with industry stakeholders through:

- 1) Advisory Boards composed of employers, alumni, and policymakers to guide curriculum updates;
- 2) Industry-based internships and cooperative education programmes that count towards credit accumulation;
- 3) Joint research and innovation projects, where students and lecturers work on live business problems;
- 4) Guest lectures and professional workshops facilitated by practitioners; and
- 5) University-industry innovation hubs, particularly in regions such as Delta State, where academia and private enterprise can jointly nurture small-scale startups.

3. Pedagogical Transformation; Repositioning business education also requires a pedagogical revolution. The dominant lecture-based, examination-driven approach limits creativity, collaboration, and experiential learning. According to Goleman (2023), the contemporary workplace rewards emotional intelligence, adaptability, and teamwork skills that can only be developed through participatory learning.

Pedagogical transformation entails:

1. Adopting problem-based learning (PBL) and case study methods that simulate industrial decision-making scenarios;
2. Incorporating simulation laboratories, virtual business games, and digital learning platforms that reflect real business environments;
3. Encouraging cross-disciplinary project work involving students from business, engineering, and computer science; and
4. Developing reflective learning models, where students analyse their growth through portfolios and professional diaries.



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

4. Capacity Building for Academic Staff; Another crucial dimension of repositioning business education is faculty competence. Lecturers who teach outdated material or lack industry exposure cannot prepare students for dynamic workplaces (Okorie & Bello, 2025). Continuous professional development is therefore indispensable. Universities should institutionalise academic–industry exchange programmes, where lecturers spend sabbatical periods within companies to acquire current skills and insights. In return, professionals from industry can serve as adjunct lecturers or mentors. Additionally, national accreditation bodies should link academic promotions to evidence of industry collaboration and pedagogical innovation (NABTEB, 2024).

5. Integrating Entrepreneurship and Innovation; Given Africa’s youth demographics and employment challenges, business education must shift from a job-seeking orientation to a job-creating mindset. Integrating entrepreneurship into business education involves both curricular and extracurricular interventions. Curricular reforms could introduce *Design Thinking*, *Venture Creation*, and *Startup Finance* modules, while universities should establish incubation centres and innovation accelerators that support students’ business ideas (Okoro & Akpotohwo, 2023). Such initiatives align with Nigeria’s national development priorities under the *Youth Enterprise with Innovation in Nigeria (YouWiN)* and *National Digital Economy Policy* (Federal Ministry of Education, 2024).

6. Policy Alignment and Government Intervention; No educational repositioning can succeed without supportive policy frameworks. Governments play a catalytic role by setting national qualification standards, financing reforms, and incentivizing private-sector participation (OECD, 2023).

In Nigeria, policy alignment should focus on:

1. Revising the National Policy on Education (NPE) to include explicit competencies for digital, entrepreneurial, and sustainability education;
2. Updating the Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards (BMAS) for business education to reflect global industry trends;
3. Funding collaborative research between universities and industries on employability, innovation, and sustainability; and
4. Providing tax incentives for companies that offer internship placements and skills-development partnerships.

7. Adoption of Technology-Enhanced Learning; Digital transformation within universities is no longer optional it is central to the survival of business education. Technology-enhanced learning (TEL) offers opportunities for adaptive, personalised, and interactive education (UNESCO, 2024). Online simulations, virtual internships, and AI-driven learning analytics can track students’ skill acquisition in real time.

8. Evaluation, Quality Assurance, and Continuous Improvement; Repositioning efforts must be guided by evidence-based monitoring and evaluation. Universities should establish *Employability and Skills Development Units (ESDUs)* to collect graduate tracer data, employer feedback, and labour-market insights. These units will serve as feedback mechanisms for curriculum improvement (UNDP, 2024).

9. Cultural and Ethical Reorientation; Finally, repositioning business education requires a **cultural shift** that transcends technical skills. A culture of integrity, accountability, and ethical leadership must be cultivated. Corruption, malpractice, and lack of professionalism undermine the credibility of graduates and institutions alike (Floridi, 2023). Business ethics and civic education should therefore be central pillars of all business programmes.

Policy Implications

The policy implications of this discourse are multidimensional.

Firstly, business education policy must be reoriented from a content-based to a competency-based framework. Current educational policies, including those guiding teacher education and curriculum planning in Nigeria, still largely emphasise subject content mastery rather than demonstrable employability competencies (National Policy on Education, 2013; Okoye



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

& Onyekwere, 2022). In an era of digital transformation and automation, this policy orientation is obsolete. A competency-based approach ensures that learners develop applied skills, problem-solving capacity, digital literacy, and entrepreneurship awareness aligned with industry 4.0 expectations (World Economic Forum, 2023).

Secondly, national educational agencies such as the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) must collaborate with industry associations and employers in revising benchmark minimum academic standards (BMAS). This collaboration should be institutionalised, not occasional. By integrating industrial representatives into curriculum review panels, feedback on employability skills, emerging technologies, and labour-market forecasts can be continually incorporated (Adebayo & Jimoh, 2023). Such policy coordination promotes agile education capable of adapting to rapid industrial shifts.

Thirdly, government funding and accreditation frameworks must prioritise outcomes rather than inputs. In Nigeria, accreditation processes often assess infrastructure and staffing ratios, but rarely evaluate graduate outcomes in relation to industry performance (Ezeani, 2022). A forward-looking policy framework would include industry-based performance metrics, employability indicators, and tracer studies to track graduates' relevance. In essence, policies should link educational financing to measurable industrial impact.

Fourthly, the policy implications extend to teacher preparation and continuous professional development. Business educators themselves must be re-skilled to teach new competencies such as digital entrepreneurship, sustainability accounting, green business practices, and artificial intelligence in management (Ogunode et al., 2024). A national policy on digital pedagogy could ensure that teacher education institutions integrate practical ICT and industry collaboration experiences into their programmes. Without retooling educators, any reform in curriculum content remains superficial.

Finally, the broader implication is that business education must be integrated into national industrialisation and sustainability strategies. The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Goals 4 (Quality Education), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), provide a framework for aligning education policy with industrial and environmental sustainability. Business education must therefore serve as a national development lever rather than a mere academic discipline.

Challenges to Implementation

Despite the clarity of policy imperatives, implementation challenges remain complex. One major barrier is bureaucratic inertia within government agencies and educational institutions. Curriculum review cycles are often lengthy, politicized, and resistant to innovation. The lack of flexible regulatory mechanisms stifles creativity and responsiveness, resulting in an education system that moves slower than technological and industrial change (Okoye & Onyekwere, 2022).

A second challenge is chronic underfunding. Nigeria's education sector has consistently received below the UNESCO-recommended minimum of 15–20% of the national budget (UNESCO, 2024). Without adequate financing, it becomes difficult to modernize laboratories, adopt digital learning infrastructure, or fund teacher training. Consequently, many business education departments remain under-resourced and disconnected from practical industry realities. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) could mitigate this, but policy instruments to attract and protect such partnerships remain weak.

Thirdly, there is the issue of institutional fragmentation. Business education in Nigeria is dispersed across universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education with overlapping mandates but weak coordination. This fragmentation leads to duplication of efforts and inconsistent quality standards (Ezeani, 2022). A coherent national framework that aligns curricula, credit transfer systems, and outcome standards across these institutions is needed.

A fourth challenge concerns industry participation itself. Employers often complain about graduate quality but invest minimally in training collaborations. The private sector's limited engagement in curriculum co-design, internship supervision, or research funding limits the effectiveness of education -industry alignment (Adebayo & Jimoh, 2023). Tax incentives or policy mandates could encourage firms to invest more meaningfully in talent development.



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

Fifth, digital inequality remains a formidable constraint. Access to high-speed internet, modern digital tools, and ICT-enabled learning environments remains limited across Nigerian tertiary institutions, particularly in rural and public universities. This digital divide undermines efforts to integrate technology-based pedagogy or simulation-based learning both critical to bridging the skills gap in modern business contexts (Ogunode et al., 2024).

Finally, socio-cultural perceptions also impede progress. Many parents, students, and policymakers still view business education as a secondary or non-technical discipline. This misconception marginalises its strategic importance to entrepreneurship and industrial growth. Therefore, policy communication and advocacy must reframe business education as a key driver of industrial competitiveness and national sustainability.

The Path Forward

Addressing these challenges requires an integrated and multi-stakeholder approach. The path forward must be framed around five interrelated strategies.

1. Curriculum–Industry Synergy Framework; A dynamic curriculum-industry synergy model should be institutionalised across higher education. This model would involve periodic industry–academia roundtables, sectoral needs analyses, and joint development of competency matrices. For instance, Delta State University could partner with chambers of commerce, SMEs, and multinational firms in the Niger Delta region to identify local industrial needs and integrate them into business education modules.

2. National Digital Skills and Entrepreneurship Agenda; Nigeria’s industrial sustainability depends on building a digitally literate workforce. Business education must be repositioned to function as the national hub for digital entrepreneurship training. Government and universities should establish “innovation hubs” and business incubators within faculties of business education to support experiential learning. Policies should also mandate compulsory short courses in digital marketing, data analytics, and financial technology for all business students (World Economic Forum, 2023).

3. Strengthening Teacher Competence and Industry Exposure; No reform succeeds without competent educators. Policies should make it mandatory for business educators to undergo periodic industry internships and certification in emerging technologies. This exposure will not only refresh their practical skills but also enhance the relevance of classroom instruction (Ogunode et al., 2024). Institutions should also collaborate internationally to attract guest lecturers from industry and organise continuous professional learning communities.

4. Institutionalising Research–Policy–Practice Linkages; Research in business education should directly inform policy decisions and industrial practices. Government funding agencies should prioritise applied research that explores how business graduates contribute to innovation, productivity, and sustainability. Establishing policy research centres within universities can strengthen this link, ensuring that policy is evidence-based and locally relevant (Ezeani, 2022).

5. Promoting Sustainable Partnerships and International Benchmarking; Finally, Nigeria must benchmark its business education policies and standards against global best practices. Successful models such as the German dual system of vocational training, Finland’s competency-based learning, and the UK’s employer-led apprenticeship schemes can provide valuable templates. Strategic alliances with international universities and development partners can facilitate staff exchange, joint research, and quality assurance processes (UNESCO, 2024).

Conclusion

The persistent skill gap between business education graduates and industrial needs remains one of the most pressing challenges facing developing economies such as Nigeria. The argument developed in this paper has consistently shown that while the quantity of graduates continues to rise, the quality and relevance of their skills lag behind the demands of an increasingly digital, innovation-driven, and sustainability-conscious industrial sector. This mismatch threatens not only employability but also broader goals of national sustainability and economic transformation. Business education, when properly designed, is an indispensable engine for developing managerial, entrepreneurial, and adaptive capacities within a nation’s workforce. However, as demonstrated in the preceding sections, many institutions remain constrained by outdated curricula, theoretical teaching methods, and insufficient industry collaboration (Adebayo & Jimoh, 2023; Ezeani, 2022). The industrial revolution underway driven by artificial intelligence, data analytics, automation, and green innovation



Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)

requires a redefinition of what it means to be “business-educated.” Graduates must not only understand accounting and management theories but also possess competencies in digital tools, sustainable business models, and innovation management (World Economic Forum, 2023). The transformation of business education is not only a question of employability but a moral imperative for national sustainability. A country’s future productivity, inclusivity, and environmental responsibility are inseparable from the skills and values embedded in its educational systems. Hence, repositioning business education to close the skill gap represents both an economic necessity and a developmental opportunity.

Suggestions

Building on the preceding analysis, this paper offers the following Suggestions targeted at policymakers, academia, industry, and development partners:

- 1. Policy Reorientation and Curriculum Redesign;** The Federal Ministry of Education, in collaboration with the NUC and NBTE, should overhaul business education curricula using a competency-based and outcome-oriented framework. Curricula must integrate digital literacy, sustainability management, entrepreneurial innovation, and industry exposure as core components (Okoye & Onyekwere, 2022). Periodic curriculum reviews every three to five years should be mandated to reflect industrial dynamics.
- 2. Establishment of Business–Industry Collaboration Councils;** Each university should institutionalise Business–Industry Collaboration Councils (BICCs) to strengthen the feedback mechanism between educators and employers. These councils can coordinate internships, case study development, and curriculum evaluation. Partnerships with industrial clusters, SMEs, and multinational corporations should be formalised through Memoranda of Understanding (Adebayo & Jimoh, 2023).
- 3. Digital Infrastructure and Experiential Learning;** Government and private sector investments should prioritise digital transformation within faculties of business education. Modern laboratories, simulation centres, and innovation hubs must be established to facilitate experiential learning. Students should be required to complete industry-based digital projects, not just written dissertations. Development partners such as UNESCO and the World Bank can support this through grants and technical assistance (World Bank, 2025; UNESCO, 2024).
- 4. Teacher Capacity Development;** Continuous professional development for business educators is essential. Lecturers should undergo industry internships and digital skill certification to remain current with technological and industrial trends (Ogunode et al., 2024). Incentives such as research grants, international fellowships, and industry secondments should be embedded in higher education policy.
- 5. Entrepreneurship and Employability Integration;** Universities should embed entrepreneurship and employability modules across all business courses. Such modules should focus on innovation, business start-up processes, sustainability leadership, and ethical entrepreneurship. A functional entrepreneurship incubation centre should exist within every business education faculty to provide mentoring and access to funding networks (Ezeani, 2022).
- 6. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Graduate Tracer Studies;** A comprehensive national framework should be developed for tracking graduate employability, employer satisfaction, and skills utilisation. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) can collaborate with educational institutions to generate annual Graduate Employability Reports. The findings should inform future curriculum reforms and funding allocations.
- 7. Incentivising Private Sector Investment;** Government policy should introduce **tax rebates and recognition awards** for industries that invest in training, curriculum development, or research collaboration with universities. This will foster a mutually beneficial ecosystem where private firms view educational investment as strategic rather than philanthropic (World Economic Forum, 2023).
- 8. Embracing Sustainability-Oriented Education;** Business education must embed sustainability consciousness as a transversal skill across all courses. Students should be equipped to manage sustainable supply chains, evaluate ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) impacts, and develop green innovations. Integrating the United Nations’ SDGs into business education ensures alignment with global sustainability imperatives (UNESCO, 2024).

References

Adebayo, T., & Jimoh, F. (2023). *Industry collaboration and curriculum reform in Nigerian universities: Implications for employability*. *African Journal of Business Education*, 9(2), 45–61.



- Bridging the Skill Gap between... Odigili, C. B. & Omorojie, S. (2025)*
- Ezeani, N. S. (2022). *Re-engineering business education for employability and industrial relevance. Journal of Educational Policy and Reform*, 18(1), 102–120.
- Adeoye, J. (2023). *Soft Skills and Youth Employability in Africa*. Lagos: University Press.
- Bassey, E., & Udofia, P. (2024). *Competency-Based Business Education and Employability Outcomes in Nigeria. Journal of Educational Policy Studies*, 18(2), 45–62.
- Bhorat, H., Naidoo, K., & Ncube, M. (2023). *Digital Skills for Africa's Future of Work*. Brookings Africa Growth Initiative.
- Brynjolfsson, E., & McAfee, A. (2022). *The Second Machine Age: Work, Progress, and Prosperity in a Time of Brilliant Technologies*. W. W. Norton.
- CIPD. (2023). *The Skills Outlook: Human Competencies for the Future Workplace*. London: CIPD.
- Ezeani, N., & Ugwoke, C. (2023). *Embedding Sustainability in Business Education Curricula: Lessons for Africa. African Journal of Vocational and Technical Education*, 14(1), 88–102.
- Goleman, D. (2023). *Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- ILO. (2024). *Digital Transformation and Skills Development in Emerging Economies*. Geneva: ILO Publications.
- Mahomed, F. (2024). *University–Industry Collaboration in the Age of 4IR: South African Lessons. Journal of African Higher Education Policy*, 11(3), 67–84.
- McKinsey Global Institute. (2024). *Automation and the African Workforce*. London: McKinsey Insights.
- OECD. (2023). *Future of Work and Skills 2030: Global Insights*. Paris: OECD Publishing.
- Egbri, T., & Ojo, L. (2023). *Transforming Business Education for National Sustainability in Africa. Journal of African Development Studies*, 9(1), 23–40.
- Floridi, L. (2023). *Ethics of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Responsibility*. Oxford University Press.
- NABTEB. (2024). *National Skills Development Framework for Tertiary Institutions*. Abuja: Federal Government Press.
- Okoro, P., & Akpotohwo, F. (2023). *Entrepreneurship and Employability in Business Education. International Journal of Business and Vocational Studies*, 10(1), 1–18.
- National Policy on Education. (2013). *Federal Republic of Nigeria: NERDC Press*.
- Ogunode, N. J., Adepoju, M., & Nwankwo, C. (2024). *Teacher competence and digital transformation in business education: The Nigerian context. International Journal of Vocational and Technical Education Research*, 12(4), 75–92.
- Ogunyemi, S., & Bello, A. (2023). *AI Adoption and Graduate Employability in Nigeria's Banking Sector. Journal of Business and ICT Integration*, 5(1), 12–29.
- Okorie, P., & Bello, C. (2025). *Industrial Relevance and Educational Transformation in Developing Economies. Nigerian Journal of Sustainable Business*, 7(2), 55–71.
- Okoro, P., & Akpotohwo, F. (2023). *Entrepreneurship and Employability in Business Education. International Journal of Business and Vocational Studies*, 10(1), 1–18.
- UNDP. (2024). *Skills for a Sustainable Future: Africa Report*. Addis Ababa: UNDP.
- Okoye, K. R. E., & Onyekwere, C. A. (2022). *Competency-based business education and national development: Challenges and prospects. Journal of Technical Education and Training in Africa*, 10(3), 55–69.
- UNESCO. (2024). *Education financing in Sub-Saharan Africa: Policy gaps and investment priorities*. Paris: UNESCO.
- World Bank. (2025). *Skills for a productive Africa: Closing the gap between training and employment*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- World Economic Forum. (2023). *The future of jobs report 2023*. Geneva: WEF.