

Curriculum Reforms for Quality and Career Readiness: A Pathway to Transforming Nigerian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The curriculum serves as the major master plan for defining the quality of education, graduate competency, and ultimately employability. However, Nigerian higher learning faces a crucial test due to the presence of outdated curricula that miss-target the emerging demands of the 21st-century global economy and national labor market.

This essay argues that such misalignment with content that is theory-intensive, industry-relevance-lacking, and deficient in practice and soft skills training is a major contributory factor to the high rate of graduate unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria. Against the backdrop of global trends in higher education aligning with competency-based education, digital fluency, and innovation, this study examines the Nigerian endemic gaps. It explores African regional initiative as a model to be emulated for reform. The article emphasizes the need for a systemic overhaul of the curriculum to address the skills gap and enhance career readiness. Key recommendations support a multi-stakeholder approach: the National Universities Commission (NUC) must drive policy processes that promote flexibility and innovativeness; universities must institutionalize periodic curriculum review regularly in conjunction with industry employers; and teaching staff must be continuously capacity built to deliver revitalized, practice-oriented content.

Ultimately, this paper contends that restructuring the curriculum through strategic and collective efforts is not merely an educational imperative but a critical key to Nigeria's transformation of higher education as a driving force for national development, economic growth, and global competitiveness.

INTRODUCTION

In the past several years, the Nigerian public has been increasingly concerned with the relevance and utility of Nigerian higher education to meet the evolving demands of the labor market in the new economy. In the midst of the high rates of underemployment and unemployment of Nigeria's youthful population, there is concern about the quality and curricular design of courses offered at Nigerian universities. It needs to be observed that a well-thought-out and responsive curriculum constitutes the backbone of quality education outcomes and ensuring graduates are not merely knowledgeable but employable and capable as well. The chronic divide between pedagogic

education and the professional competence required in various lines of profession has propelled the issue of curriculum reform to the forefront in debate in the education sector. Against these challenges, education stakeholders, policymakers, and educators react with demands for radical reforms in making higher education curricula more relevant, quality-enhanced, and responsive. The agenda for reforms speaks to the incorporation of industry-relevant skills, technical skills, and employability into the academic curriculum. These are not administrative changes but a paradigm shifts towards student-centered, skills-oriented, and outcomes-based education.

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KEYWORDS: Higher Education; Curriculum; Reform; Career; Nigerian.

However, many Nigerian universities still operate with outdated curricula that are heavily theoretical, offering limited opportunities for hands-on learning, innovation, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship (Mahi Uddin; Nazamul Hoque, 2025). Nigerian universities, which host the largest number of higher education institutions in Africa, continue to operate with curricula deeply rooted in colonial-era frameworks that emphasize rote memorization and theoretical knowledge over practical competencies as stated by. This has led to a persistent mismatch between graduates' skills and labor market demands. This situation undermines the capacity of graduates to compete in the global job market or contribute meaningfully to national development. Indeed, up to 47 percent of employers view new graduates as unprepared citing deficits in communication, digital literacy, and practical workplace norms. Furthermore, academic industry collaboration remains minimal, with inadequate infrastructure and pedagogical practices failing to support the development of employability skills.

As stated by service-learning and entrepreneurship education, while shown to foster practical skills, are still rarely integrated into undergraduate curricula. In response to this, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has initiated curriculum reforms such as the adoption of Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) to modernize content, promote entrepreneurial competence, and elevate Nigerian universities onto the global stage. However, significant systemic issues remain, notably insufficient funding, endemic corruption draining educational resources, and uneven implementation across institutions.

This article is to examine the contribution of curriculum reforms to the quality improvement in higher education and career readiness of Nigerian graduates. It seeks to explore the manner in which dysfunctional and misaligned curricula result in skill mismatch and unemployment, and how strategic reform can be a pathway to national development. The paper draws on published literature, policy documents, and theory to determine the most essential dimensions of effective curriculum reform. Its scope is limited to university-level education in Nigeria and does not extend to technical and vocational schools. Through a literature-conducted interview framework, it attempts to offer practical recommendations for the convergence of Nigerian higher education curricula to international standards and the requirements of the labor market. The scope of study is limited to non-empirical research based on literature available and does not involve the collection of primary data. The study only involves private and public universities in

Nigeria and excludes polytechnics and colleges of education. The discussion is always related to the curriculum content, structure, teaching, and assessment practices that determine graduate outputs. As stated by It also evaluates policy efforts like the National Universities Commission's CCMAS initiative and explores stakeholder roles in implementing reform.

Importance Of Curriculum in Shaping Quality and Employability

A well-designed curriculum plays a critical role in improving the quality of education and enhancing graduate employability. It serves as the fundamental bridge between academic theory and the dynamic requirements of the modern workplace. By deliberately incorporating practical, experiential elements such as mandatory internships, structured vocational training, and collaborative project-based learning, the curriculum moves beyond rote memorization to foster applied knowledge (Nwosu & Mlana, 2019). This strategic alignment does more than just strengthen students' technical competence in their chosen fields; it is also the primary mechanism for equipping them with essential soft skills like critical thinking, effective communication, and teamwork. These competencies are frequently cited by employers as being critically lacking in Nigerian graduates, creating a significant skills gap that hinders both individual career progression and national economic growth and (Awusa, 2025)

In direct recognition of these persistent gaps, the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced a significant reform: the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS). This new framework mandates a substantial shift towards integrating entrepreneurship, comprehensive digital literacy, and other industry-relevant competencies across all academic disciplines (Wordu & Timothy Kelechi, 2023). The CCMAS represents a proactive attempt to future-proof Nigerian graduates, ensuring they can navigate an increasingly digital global economy and contribute to sustainable development. The success of such curricular reforms, however, is profoundly dependent on a collaborative and inclusive design process. By actively and continuously involving a diverse array of stakeholders including academics, industry leaders, professional bodies, government policymakers, and even alumni in the curriculum review and reform process, higher education institutions can create educational programs that are not only relevant but also adaptable and highly responsive to evolving labor market demands (Adeleke & Adeleke, 2025). This ongoing dialogue ensures that graduate attributes are in sync with national development goals, ultimately boosting

educational outcomes, reducing unemployment, and driving sustainable national development by creating a pipeline of capable, skilled, and innovative human capital.

Global Trends in Higher Education

Globally, higher education is undergoing continuous transformation driven by the imperatives of globalization, technological advancement, and the evolving demands of the labor market. Curriculum reform has emerged as a crucial strategy for aligning educational outcomes, including critical thinking, creativity, digital literacy, and adaptability to meet the demand of the 21st-century skills. Countries such as Finland and Singapore have led innovations in curriculum design by integrating competency-based education and work-based learning pathways to enhance both academic quality and career readiness (Kwek et al., 2023; Schleicher, 2019). Similarly, the United Kingdom and Australia have prioritized employability frameworks within higher education to bridge the gap between academic learning and workforce expectations.

Within Europe, the Bologna Process initiated in 1999 helped harmonize degree structures, promote mobility, and foreground quality assurance and employability. According to Finland has emerged as a global standard, revamping its National Core Curriculum in 2014 to 2016 to embed seven transversal competences spanning learning to learn, cultural agency, sustainability, and collaborative problem-solving with heavy emphasis on project-based, inclusive pedagogy. As stated by Vocational education in Finland also shifted from time-bound programs to competency-based models focusing on authentic workplace readiness, signaling a decisive move from theory-heavy to outcome-driven curricula.

As posited by North America has witnessed significant curricular transformations in recent decades, largely driven by the global shift toward competency-based education (CBE). In Canada, the province of Quebec pioneered, this movement by implementing a socio-constructivist, competence-based curriculum in 2001, which emphasized active learning, cross-disciplinary skills, and student autonomy. Similarly, across various U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions, education systems began incorporating cooperative learning strategies, inquiry-based instruction, and STEM-focused models to promote 21st-century skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and technological literacy.

Beyond North America, countries in Latin America and Asia have also embraced CBE approaches, reflecting UNESCO's broader educational reform agenda. In Mexico, for instance, nationwide efforts to

overhaul primary and secondary school curricula have intensified in recent years, particularly with a renewed focus on competencies beginning in 2024, building upon reforms initiated in the early 2010s under UNESCO's guidance. These reforms aim to foster student-centered learning and better align educational outcomes with labor market and societal demands..

In Asia, according to several nations-initiated curricula restructuring as early as the late 1990s and early 2000s to integrate key competencies into national education frameworks. Vietnam and Japan, for example, emphasized problem-solving, ethical citizenship, and communication skills, while Kazakhstan adopted the CBE model to internationalize its education system and enhance graduate competitiveness. China and South Korea followed with similar initiatives, incorporating global competency frameworks into policy documents and curricula to ensure their students are prepared for participation in a knowledge-driven, interconnected world. These developments reflect a growing consensus that traditional rote-based education is insufficient in the context of global economic and technological transformation. These reforms share common, critical elements like the seamless integration of digital skills (e.g., data literacy, AI, cybersecurity), robust industry-academia collaboration through co-designed programs and internships, and a fundamental emphasis on fostering lifelong learning capabilities. This approach ensures graduates are not only job-ready but also resilient and adaptable to future market shifts (Or, 2024).

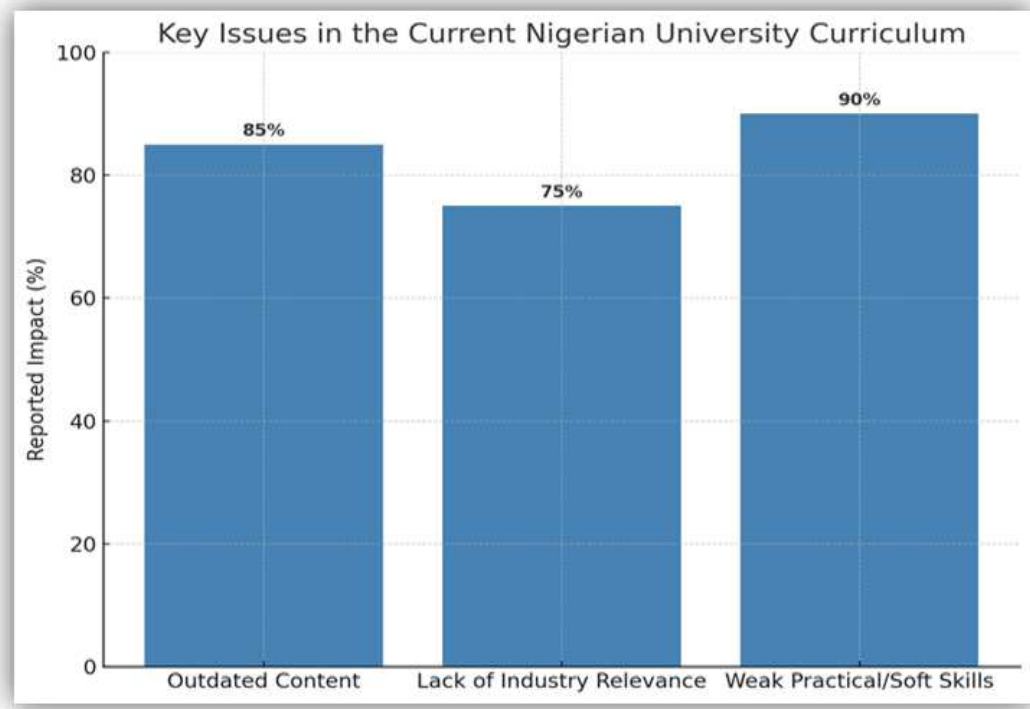
Universities in many developed countries are shifting from rigid, content-heavy curricula to more flexible, competency-based models that emphasize skills acquisition, interdisciplinary learning, and adaptability. This shift is critical in a global economy increasingly dominated by innovation, automation, and remote work. One of the most notable global trends is the integration of digital skills into the curriculum, including data literacy, artificial intelligence, coding, and cybersecurity areas is largely missing in traditional Nigerian curricula. Countries like Finland, Canada, and Singapore have successfully blended vocational training and university education to create more agile, job-ready graduates. Moreover, there is increasing collaboration between academia and industry through co-designed programs, internships, and research partnerships. Another trend is the emphasis on "21st-century skills" such as critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence, and lifelong learning which is lacking in Nigeria. Institutions are restructuring academic content around real-world challenges and introducing

personalized learning pathways that prepare students for diverse career trajectories not just predefined professions.

It is stated by that today's universities have a function not just to prepare students for the world of work but for resilience in a world of uncertainty. Nigerian universities have been slow, however, to embrace these innovations of the world. The national curriculum is theoretical, antiquated, and disconnected from economic needs, cut short by bureaucratic inefficiencies, funding gaps, and

substandard infrastructure. The lack of periodic and obligatory reviews that involve industry players creates a perpetual shortage of skills, resulting in graduate over- and underemployment. Without immediate and systemic reform involving insights from these international models most significantly their focus on adaptability, coordination among stakeholders, and measurable competencies Nigerian tertiary education is increasingly likely to fall behind world standards and imperil national development as well as youth opportunities.

ISSUES WITH CURRENT CURRICULUM IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITIES



Source: Education sector status report, Federal ministry of Education

According to (Sani, 2023) the bar graph above illustrates the relative prevalence of each issue, based on data trends reported in educational reviews and policy assessments. Weak practical/soft skills and outdated content are among the most commonly identified problems, followed closely by the lack of industry-aligned curriculum.

Outdated Content

A major concern in Nigerian higher education is the outdated nature of university curricula (Sani, 2023). Many academic programs have not been revised in decades, resulting in a significant knowledge gap between what is taught in classrooms and what is required in contemporary work environments. For example, courses in engineering, computing, and business often rely on textbooks and materials that do not reflect recent technological or methodological advancements. This lack of modernization limits students' exposure to current tools, practices, and theories, making them ill-equipped for innovation or problem-solving in real-world contexts.

Outdated curricula also hinder Nigeria's global academic competitiveness. While universities in developed countries integrate recent global challenges such as climate change, artificial intelligence, and the digital economy into their teaching, Nigerian institutions often struggle with curriculum inertia due to bureaucratic delays, limited funding, and lack of academic autonomy. As a result, graduates are less competitive in the global labor market and often need retraining.

Efforts by the National Universities Commission (NUC) to introduce the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) are steps in the right direction, but implementation across institutions remains uneven. Without consistent review cycles and input from industry and research experts, the curriculum will continue to

lag behind national development goals and international benchmarks. According to Amadi and Nwogu (2020), the absence of dynamic curriculum reform keeps Nigerian graduates confined to outdated knowledge, stifling innovation and progress.

Lack of Industry Relevance

One of the biggest shortcomings of the Nigerian university curriculum is its lack of relevance to the needs of industry. Most university programs are developed without consideration for labor market needs, and the consequence is a highly theoretical and abstract education that fails to prepare students for workplace activities. Employers perennially complain that graduates lack familiarity with the tools, technologies, and work methods in their industries. For instance, students of marketing might complete their degrees without learning about digital marketing analytics or customer relationship management systems that are pervasive in the modern business environment.

This mismatch is also caused by the limited involvement of industry stakeholders in reviewing and planning the curriculum. Learning institutions do not involve key sectors such as ICT, finance, health, and manufacturing in designing course materials. Essentially, graduates have to be retrained or undergo internships before they are ready for employment. This was brought to the fore by the Nigerian Economic Summit Group, which averred that the educational system must become more sensitive to the changing demands of the global economy. Some universities have introduced entrepreneurship and employability skills courses, but these are being taught as electives rather than being integrated into the core curriculum. Additionally, the lack of partnerships between academia and the private sector impedes joint opportunities for collaborative research, guest lectureship, mentorship, and industry internships. argue that industry-university collaboration is not just a want, it is a must-have in order to have curricula that can produce competent, job-ready graduates.

Weak Practical and Soft Skills Training

Another key limitation of the Nigerian university curriculum is its insufficient focus on practical training and soft skills development. Courses are typically lecture-heavy, with little emphasis on experiential learning, collaborative projects, or real-world problem-solving. As a result, many students graduate with strong theoretical knowledge but limited ability to apply it in professional settings. Skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, time management, and adaptability crucial in today's job market are either neglected or insufficiently taught.

According to a report by VerivAfrica, Nigerian employers consistently rate graduates low in interpersonal skills and initiative. This shortcoming is partly due to how assessment is structured: exams prioritize rote memorization over critical thinking or creativity. In addition, infrastructure deficits, such as under-equipped laboratories, outdated computer systems, and overcrowded classrooms, further reduce students' opportunities to gain hands-on experience. Entrepreneurship and vocational education have been introduced in some institutions, particularly through NUC's new CCMAS, but the effectiveness of these programs is still in question. Many are poorly implemented, with few practical components and limited access to mentorship or funding. To address this issue, universities must invest in pedagogical reform, teacher training, and industry-academic collaborations that bring practical skills into the classroom. contend that a curriculum without practical engagement and soft skill emphasis leaves graduates ill-prepared for the 21st-century workplace.

NEED FOR CURRICULUM REFORM IN NIGERIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Nigeria's current higher education curriculum is largely theoretical, failing to equip students with the practical and entrepreneurial skills necessary for the 21st-century workforce. In (Nnamani, 2023) studies, there is a widening gap between graduate output and labor market expectations, contributing to high unemployment rates among Nigerian graduates. The National Universities Commission (NUC) has acknowledged these gaps and launched the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) to address them (Commission, (2023)). In response to these challenges, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in the education sector are calling for comprehensive reforms aimed at improving the relevance, quality, and adaptability of higher education curricula. The reform agenda emphasizes the integration of industry-relevant skills, technological proficiency, and employability competencies into academic programs. Such changes are not merely administrative adjustments; they represent a paradigm shift toward a more student-centered, skills-oriented, and outcomes-based approach to education.

Moreover, the National Universities Commission (NUC) has initiated frameworks such as the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (Commission, (2023)), which are intended to standardize and modernize curricular offerings across Nigerian universities. Despite these efforts, the effectiveness of such

reforms in achieving career readiness and producing globally competitive graduates remains an area requiring critical investigation.

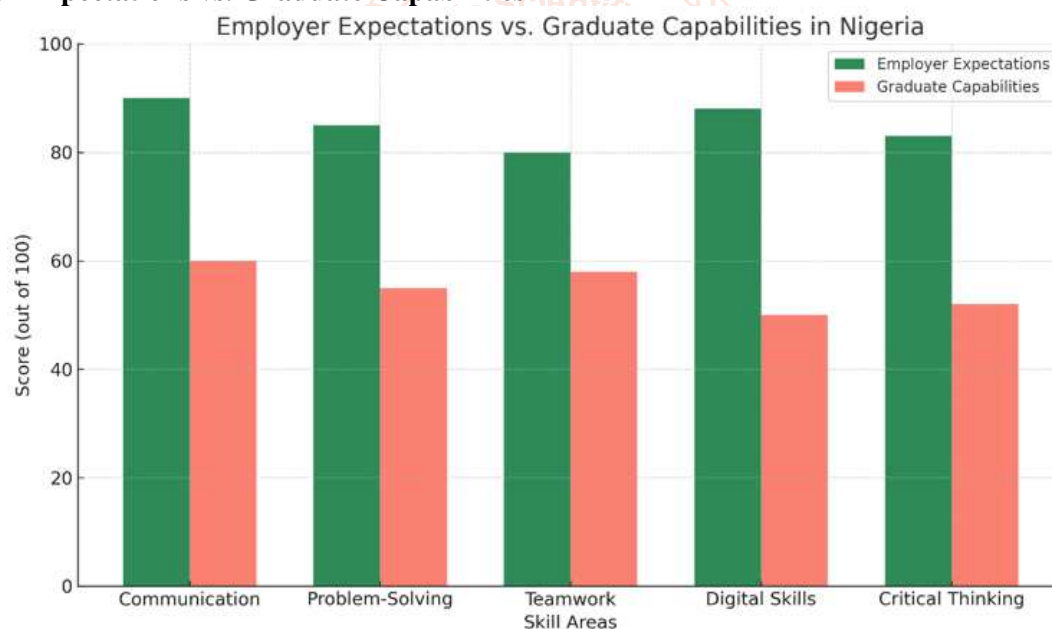
The Link Between Curriculum and Unemployment

There is a well-established link between an outdated or misaligned curriculum and graduate unemployment in Nigeria. The inability of university programs to reflect current labor market demands means many students are graduating without the skills employers require. Consequently, a growing number of degree holders remain unemployed or underemployed, contributing to Nigeria's high youth unemployment rate.

According to the National Bureau of , unemployment among graduates continues to rise, despite increases in tertiary education enrollment. This disconnect stems from curricula that prioritize theoretical knowledge over practical application. Many students are not exposed to hands-on experience, modern technology, or evolving industry trends during their studies. Additionally, entrepreneurial education, which could equip students to create jobs rather than depend on them, is often poorly integrated into the core curriculum. As a result, graduates struggle to adapt to a competitive, knowledge-driven economy that values versatility and innovation.

Curriculum rigidity also discourages interdisciplinary learning and problem-solving key components of success in modern workplaces. Without the flexibility to customize their learning toward market-relevant skills, students often find themselves mismatched with available job opportunities. As note, a static curriculum feeds a dynamic job market with unprepared graduates. Addressing unemployment, therefore, requires a fundamental restructuring of how and what students are taught in Nigerian universities, ensuring curricula are responsive, skills-focused, and labor-market aligned.

Employer Expectations vs. Graduate Capabilities



Source: field Survey, 2017 (Omoniwa & Adedapo, 2017)

Employers consistently expect high proficiency (80–90%) across key skills like communication, digital literacy, and critical thinking. However, graduates often fall short, with reported capabilities hovering between 50% and 60%. This visual highlight the urgent need for curriculum reform to better align university training with workplace demands

The mismatch between what employers expect and what Nigerian university graduates can deliver remains a key factor in youth unemployment and underemployment. Employers are increasingly looking for candidates who possess not just academic qualifications, but also practical experience, soft skills, and the ability to adapt and learn continuously.

However, many Nigerian graduates fall short in these areas due to a university system that emphasizes rote learning over applied knowledge and skill development.

Employers also voice that fresh graduates lack communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, team working, and IT skills. In highly changing industries like IT, finance, and healthcare, employers report that fresh graduates require months of retraining to perform at an optimal level within the company. This raises the recruitment cost and reduces the attractiveness of entry-level applicants from local institutions. On the contrary, the current curriculum design and implementation do not adequately cover

these weaknesses. Internships, teamwork, service learning, or even exposure to industry-grade software is of low priority. Further, the academic staff are not always updated with industry developments, thereby enhancing the discrepancy between classroom education and outside expectations.

Since the Nigerian Employers Consultative Association had emphasized, there is an immediate need for closer synergy between business and universities to ensure congruence between industrial requirements and graduate capabilities. Bridging the gap would require not only curriculum reform but more fundamental structural reform in pedagogy, assessment modes, and organizational alignment with employers.

KEY FEATURES OF A REFORMED CURRICULUM

Dynamic, Responsive, and Skills-oriented: Any curriculum reform aiming at enhancing quality and career readiness in Nigerian tertiary education must be dynamic, responsive, and skills-driven. Part of the minimum requirements is industry alignment to ensure that course material is consistent with prevailing market demands. This entails involving industry experts in curriculum development, using real-life case studies, and updating course content from time to time to reflect alterations in technology and the economy.

Integration of Digital Literacy and Soft Skills: One of the most important components of the curriculum is integration of digital literacy and soft skills. Curriculum is not just a matter of core academic proficiency but also should include communication, teamwork, leadership, and emotional intelligence deliberately. These are often cited by employers as necessary but lacking in graduates. Similarly, digital literacy like the utilization of productivity software, analysis of data, and web-based collaboration tools needs to be incorporated across different disciplines.

Entrepreneurship and Innovation Education: Entrepreneurship and innovation education are essential in preparing students with the flexible challenges of today's economy. Instead of being taught exclusively as an elective or confined within business schools, entrepreneurship must be woven throughout all academic departments from engineering and health sciences to arts and humanities. Entrepreneurial thought is applied across many departments that force students to approach their disciplines with a problem-solving mindset, enabling them to identify real-world issues and design contextually specific, innovative solutions. In order to have the greatest effect, entrepreneurial education needs to extend beyond abstract teaching. The

addition of experiential elements like hands-on business plan writing, startup incubators, pitch competitions, and exposure to seasoned mentors can greatly improve students' ability to innovate independently, think critically, and build creative enterprise. These experiential learning activities not only build entrepreneurial capacities but also confidence and resilience, empowering graduates to create value as job creators, intrapreneurs within established organizations, or leaders in the informal economy.

Overall, entrepreneurship mainstreaming throughout the curriculum will contribute to the development of a more agile and opportunity-oriented graduate pool, which is essential in addressing youth unemployment as well as advancing inclusive economic growth.

Flexible Pathways; this facilitates cross-disciplinary education and skill-stacking such as combining engineering courses with management or computer science with design to prepare students for hybrid jobs of the future. Asserting that a curriculum that integrates academic knowledge and workplace skills with civic engagement is necessary to produce globally competitive graduates, says. Finally, experiential learning through internships, capstone projects, and community service must become the norm.

African Regional Efforts

In the continental level, many African nations have recognized the need for education systems that contribute to economic diversification and sustainable development. The African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16–25) emphasizes the transformation of curricula to produce graduates with relevant, job-ready skills to bridge the gap between academic know-how and employability. Anglophone and Francophone African countries such as Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia, Senegal, Namibia, and Algeria have undertaken curriculum overhauls to integrate entrepreneurship, ICT, and problem-solving skills into tertiary education and TVET curricula.

However, implementation challenges, including policy inconsistencies, inadequate infrastructure, and weak industry-academia linkages, persist across those regions. Although in country like Kenya's adoption of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in 2017 represented a landmark reform in the country's education system, departing from the long-established 8-4-4 structure. The CBC aims to cultivate seven core competencies including digital literacy, communication, critical thinking, self-efficacy, and citizenship while reorganizing the structure of basic education into a 2-6-3-3-3 model. This shift is

designed to promote holistic learner development, focusing on what learners can demonstrably do, rather than solely what they know Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.

Within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector, the CBC reform has been accompanied by increased emphasis on practical, industry-aligned training. This includes the integration of occupational standards and work-based learning to enhance employability and align graduates' competencies with labor market needs. Early outcomes suggest improvements in learner engagement and career readiness, especially where institutions have strong partnerships with industries.

However, implementation challenges remain significant. These include an acute shortage of qualified trainers, limited infrastructure, inadequately piloted teaching materials, and persistent underfunding, particularly in rural regions. Critics also argue that the rapid rollout of CBC reforms has outpaced teacher preparedness and institutional capacity, thereby undermining the consistency and depth of skill acquisition across schools and TVET institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy and Institutional Steps for Reform.

Nigeria can take lessons from these by enhancing the curricular responsiveness, periodic monitoring, and integrating employability-focused competencies. This will include the strengthening of the regulatory role of organizations like the National Universities Commission (NUC), budgetary allocation to the development of the curriculum, and embedding collaboration between universities and industry stakeholders (Bello, K. Onifade, D., 2023). Moreover, adopting a demand-driven education system where curricula follow changing economic and technological trends can help bridge the gap between education and the job market. Nigeria can move away from a certificate-oriented system to one that prepares students for real problem-solving and innovation through concerted effort.

As shows, that the reform must be systemic, inclusive, and based on long-term national development priorities. To transform Nigeria's higher education system to quality and employability readiness, policy-level as well as institutional reforms are required. At the policy level, the National Universities Commission (NUC) and the Federal Ministry of Education must mandate periodic review of the curriculum preferably every 4 to 5 years jointly with professional bodies, industry stakeholders, and alumni. This maintains the academic programs relevant in a rapidly changing jobs market just as

presented by. National education policy needs to mandate the inclusion of entrepreneurship, digital literacy, and soft skills as all subjects. These should be mandatory credit-bearing components of each undergraduate degree and government funding systems should be revised to incentivize institutions that engage in competency-based education, industry partnerships, and outcomes-based student success.

At the institutional level, institutions of higher learning must establish curriculum development departments with teachers, employers, and students. These departments must track the translation of the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) into local contexts without compromising quality and employment-market worth. Institutions must also invest in lecturers' capacity to procure innovative pedagogy, methods of assessment, and ICT tools. Furthermore, collaboration between the industry and the institution ought to be legalized by Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) for internships, collaborative studies, co-designing the curriculum, and mentorship programs. Employability monitoring and evaluation units would track the employment status of graduates and use the data to inform further improvements to the curriculum, this was confirmed by (Akinyemi, L. Ogunbanwo, B, 2024) as he explained that political will, constant monitoring, and the industry-academia feedback cycles are required for effective implementation.

Role Of NUC, Universities, And Employers.

In order to enhance the quality and effectiveness of Nigeria's curriculum reform, it is imperative that all stakeholders government agencies, institutions of learning, and industry stakeholders actively undertake their distinct and collaborative role in the reform program.

The NUC (National Universities Commission): Should create regulatory guidelines, approve academic programs, and offer national curricula congruence with policy aims. It plays a pioneering role in recommending reforms, designing the Core Curriculum Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS), and enforcing conformity among institutions.

Universities: Universities have the challenge of interpreting national framework for curricula into a local context, formulating and operating appropriate courses, and integrating practical and soft skills into programmes. They must also create a culture for continuous review, innovation, and industry contact.

Employers: Employers provide important insights into shifting workforce needs and help ensure curricula are relevant to real demands in the

marketplace. Their feedback on curriculum planning, student placements for internships, and feedback mechanisms prepares graduates for greater job readiness.

Periodic Curriculum Reviews and Staff Training.

Regular curriculum assessments and continuous professional development of members of the faculty are important pillars for maintaining the quality, responsiveness, and appropriateness of academic programs in a fast-changing global context. While business companies continuously evolve due to technological advances, globalization, and shifting labor market requirements, curricula within academia must be regularly assessed and updated to keep up with trends currently and in the future. This type of review helps institutions eliminate outdated materials, integrating new knowledge, and adding cross-disciplinary competencies that correspond to challenges of the actual world.

Parallel to this, is workers continuous training and upskilling. Continuous staff development equips lecturers and teachers with contemporary pedagogic practices, information literacies, and inclusive approaches to teaching, enabling them to create vibrant, student-centered learning environments. These initiatives are critical in shifting from conventional, lecture-focused approaches to more active and skills-based models of instruction, placing greater emphasis on problem-solving, teamwork, and applied learning. In addition, professional development creates a culture of innovation and reflective instruction, enabling teachers to adopt diverse student needs and instructional technologies.

Lastly, through the sequential placement of curriculum renovation and faculty development, institutions are in a position to produce graduates who are both educationally qualified as well as work-ready and socially accountable. This content-delivery integration is key to attaining long-term educational impact as well as safeguarding the perpetuity of higher education in the context of a competitive world economy and knowledge society.

CONCLUSION

Curriculum reform is at the core of any serious effort to transform Nigerian higher education. Not only is it at the core of improving the quality of learning, but also crucial to filling the age-old gap between career readiness and academic credentials. By aligning curriculum with industry needs, integrating entrepreneurial and practical skills, and stimulating innovation, Nigeria can also produce graduates that are not only employable but can also lead national development. But for this transition to occur, it must be initiated by concerted efforts. It must be done by

the government through agencies such as the NUC by providing policy guidance and imposing standards. Universities must take ownership of reform at the institutional level, and employers must play an active role in contributing to designing content that reflects real expectations. Curriculum reform is not a temporary change, it requires sustained effort, periodic review, and ongoing engagement from all stakeholders.

Lastly, if Nigeria is to become a stakeholder in the global knowledge economy and maximize the potential of its youth, curriculum reform must be given national priority. It is in this shared responsibility that university education can provide an entry point for economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development.

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