British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies,7(3),30-43, 2026

Education, Learning, Training & Development

Print ISSN: 2517-276X

Online ISSN: 2517-2778

https://bjmas.org/index.php/bjmas/index

Publication of the European Centre for Research Training and Development -UK

Curriculum Relevance, Digital Competence, and Employability Outcomes among University Graduates in Nigeria

Yetunde Adejoke Adewole
Department of Primary and Early Childhood Education,
Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria

doi: https://doi.org/10.37745/bjmas.0554 Published May 22, 2026

Citation: Adewole Y.A. (2026) Curriculum Relevance, Digital Competence, and Employability Outcomes among University Graduates in Nigeria, *British Journal of Multidisciplinary and Advanced Studies*,7(3),30-43

Abstract: *The persistent concern over graduate unemployability in Nigeria has renewed attention on the relevance of university curricula and the digital competence of graduates in an increasingly competitive labour market. This research work examined curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria using descriptive survey research design. The population comprised of all university final year under-graduates from selected public universities in Nigeria, from which a sample of 250 respondents was drawn through a multi-stage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a researcher-developed instrument titled "Curriculum Relevance, Digital Competence and Employability Outcomes Questionnaire" (CRDCEOQ). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts in educational management and measurement. Reliability was established using the Cronbach's alpha method, yielding coefficients of 0.81 for curriculum relevance, 0.84 for digital competence, and 0.86 for employability outcomes, indicating satisfactory internal consistency. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the levels of the study variables, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed to test the stated hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that employability outcomes among graduates were moderate, curriculum relevance was perceived to be fairly aligned with labour-market demands, and graduates demonstrated an appreciable level of digital competence. The results further showed significant relationships between curriculum relevance and employability outcomes, as well as between digital competence and employability outcomes. In addition, curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly predicted employability outcomes among university graduates. The study then concludes that improving curriculum responsiveness and strengthening digital competence development are critical to enhancing graduate employability in Nigeria.*

Keywords: Curriculum relevance, digital competence, employability outcomes, university graduates, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid transformation of the global labour market has placed renewed emphasis on the role of universities in producing graduates who are not only academically qualified but also equipped with practical and digitally relevant skills. In contemporary knowledge economies, employability is increasingly shaped by the relevance of university curricula and the extent to which graduates possess digital competence that aligns with workplace demands. As a result, higher education institutions are under growing pressure to redesign curricula in ways that enhance graduates' employability outcomes (World Bank, 2022).

Employability outcomes refer to the ability of graduates to secure meaningful employment, perform effectively in the workplace, and sustain career progression in a dynamic labour environment. Beyond academic qualifications, employers now prioritise graduates' capacity to apply knowledge, adapt to technological changes, communicate effectively, and solve real-world problems. Digital competence, in particular, has become a core employability requirement as workplaces increasingly rely on digital tools, platforms, and data-driven processes (UNESCO, 2021).

Curriculum relevance plays a critical role in shaping both digital competence and employability outcomes. A relevant curriculum is one that reflects contemporary labour market needs, integrates practical and technological skills, and responds to local socio-economic realities. Scholars argue that when university curricula remain overly theoretical or disconnected from industry and societal needs, graduates are less prepared for employment, regardless of their academic achievements (Knight and Yorke, 2020).

In Nigeria, concerns about graduate employability have intensified over the past decade. Despite the expansion of university education and increased enrolment across public and private institutions, graduate unemployment and underemployment remain persistently high. Employers frequently report that many university graduates lack essential digital skills, workplace readiness, and problem-solving abilities required in modern organisations (Aina, 2020; World Bank, 2022). This situation has raised questions about the relevance of university curricula and the adequacy of digital skill development within Nigerian higher education.

The challenge is further compounded by the rapid pace of digitalisation across sectors of the Nigerian economy. As industries adopt digital technologies for communication, production, and service delivery, graduates who lack digital competence face limited employment opportunities. While digital skills are increasingly recognised in national education and development policies, their systematic integration into university curricula remains uneven (UNESCO, 2021).

Although previous studies have examined curriculum relevance and employability or digital competence in isolation, there is limited empirical evidence that simultaneously explores how curriculum relevance influences digital competence and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.

Understanding this relationship is essential for informing curriculum reform, improving graduate employability, and aligning university education with national development priorities.

Against this background, this study investigates curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria. By examining the interplay among these variables, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can guide policymakers, university administrators, and curriculum developers in enhancing the effectiveness and relevance of university education in a digitally driven labour market.

Statement of the Problem

Graduate employability has become a major concern in Nigeria as increasing numbers of university graduates continue to face unemployment and underemployment despite possessing academic qualifications. Employers frequently report that many graduates lack relevant workplace skills, particularly digital competence and the ability to apply academic knowledge to practical tasks. This situation raises critical questions about the relevance of university curricula in preparing students for the demands of a rapidly evolving, technology-driven labour market.

Although Nigerian universities have expanded programme offerings and introduced technology-related courses, evidence suggests that digital competence development is uneven and often inadequately embedded across curricula. Many programmes remain largely theoretical, with limited alignment to industry needs and contemporary digital practices. As a result, graduates may complete their studies without acquiring the practical digital skills required for effective performance in modern workplaces.

While previous studies have examined curriculum relevance, digital skills, or graduate employability independently, there is limited empirical research that simultaneously investigates the interplay among curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes within the Nigerian university context. This gap limits the availability of evidence needed to guide curriculum reform and policy decisions aimed at improving graduate employability. Addressing this gap is therefore necessary to enhance the responsiveness of university education to labour market demands and national development goals.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the level of curriculum relevance as perceived by university graduates in Nigeria;
2. Assess the level of digital competence among university graduates in Nigeria;
3. Examine the employability outcomes of university graduates in Nigeria;

4. Investigate the relationship between curriculum relevance and digital competence among university graduates;
5. Examine the relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes among university graduates; and
6. Determine the extent to which curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly predict employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were generated to guide the conduct of this study:

1. What is the level of curriculum relevance as perceived by university graduates in Nigeria?
2. What is the level of digital competence among university graduates in Nigeria?
3. What are the employability outcomes of university graduates in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between curriculum relevance and digital competence among university graduates in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.
3. Curriculum relevance and digital competence do not jointly significantly predict employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Curriculum Relevance in University Education

Curriculum relevance refers to the degree to which university programmes align with labour market demands, societal needs, and contemporary skill requirements. A relevant curriculum is expected to move beyond theoretical instruction to incorporate practical, technological, and context-sensitive learning experiences that prepare graduates for the realities of the workplace (Knight and Yorke, 2020). In many developing countries, including Nigeria, curriculum relevance has been identified as a persistent challenge. Aina (2020) notes that university curricula often lag behind economic and technological developments, resulting in graduates whose skills do not match employer expectations. This disconnect has contributed significantly to graduate unemployment and underemployment.

Empirical evidence from Nigerian educational settings supports this position. Azeez et al. have consistently demonstrated that curriculum relevance plays a critical role in shaping students' skill acquisition and readiness for employment. In their study on educational leadership and institutional capacity, Azeez et al. (2023) found that programmes grounded in contextual realities and practical relevance significantly enhanced learners' functional skills and adaptability. Although their study focused

broadly on educational institutions, the findings have direct implications for university curricula and graduate employability.

Digital Competence among University Graduates

Digital competence encompasses the ability to use digital technologies effectively for communication, problem-solving, collaboration, and professional productivity. In modern labour markets, digital competence is no longer optional but a core employability requirement across disciplines (UNESCO, 2021). International studies indicate that graduates with strong digital competence enjoy improved employment prospects and workplace performance (Zuo et al., 2025). However, the development of these skills is highly dependent on curriculum design and institutional support.

In Nigeria, digital competence development remains uneven across universities. While some institutions have introduced technology-related courses, these are often isolated rather than integrated across curricula. Ali et al. (2024) observed that many Nigerian graduates possess basic digital literacy but lack advanced competencies required for professional effectiveness. Studies by Azeez et al. (2023) further reinforce this concern. Their empirical findings reveal that limited curriculum integration of digital tools and applied learning opportunities constrains students' digital competence development. The authors argue that digital skills are best developed when embedded within discipline-specific curricula rather than taught as standalone courses.

Employability Outcomes of University Graduates

Employability outcomes refer to graduates' ability to secure employment, perform effectively in the workplace, and sustain career growth. These outcomes are influenced by academic achievement, transferable skills, and the relevance of educational experiences (Arthur et al., 2019). In Nigeria, employability outcomes remain a major policy concern. Despite increasing numbers of graduates, many struggle to transition successfully into the labour market. Employers frequently cite deficiencies in digital skills, problem-solving ability, and workplace readiness (World Bank, 2022).

Empirical studies within Nigeria highlight the importance of curriculum relevance and skills integration in shaping employability outcomes. Olanipekun et al. (2025) found that graduates who perceived their curricula as relevant and skills-oriented reported better employment prospects and higher job confidence. Similarly, Azeez et al. (2023) established a significant link between institutional practices, curriculum relevance, and functional skill development. Their findings suggest that when educational programmes prioritise relevance and applied learning, graduates are more likely to demonstrate employability-related competencies.

Curriculum Relevance, Digital Competence, and Employability Outcomes

The interrelationship among curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes is increasingly recognised in higher education research. A relevant curriculum provides the foundation for meaningful digital skill development, which in turn enhances employability outcomes. International

evidence supports this linkage. Zuo et al. (2025) report that curriculum structures that integrate digital practices produce graduates who are more adaptable and employable. Within Nigeria, Azeez et al. (2023) similarly argue that curriculum relevance serves as a catalyst for both digital competence acquisition and employability readiness.

These findings suggest that curriculum relevance does not operate in isolation but influences employability outcomes indirectly through digital competence. This perspective provides a strong conceptual basis for examining the joint influence of curriculum relevance and digital competence on employability outcomes among university graduates.

Research Gap

Although existing studies have examined curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes independently, there is limited empirical research that integrates these variables within a single analytical framework, particularly in Nigerian universities. While the works of Azeez et al. provide valuable insights into curriculum relevance and skill development, few studies have quantitatively examined how curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly predict employability outcomes among university graduates. This study addresses this gap by providing empirical evidence on the combined influence of curriculum relevance and digital competence on employability outcomes in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design**,** and was considered appropriate because it allows for the systematic collection of data from a defined population in order to describe existing conditions and examine relationships among variables as they naturally occur. The design is particularly suitable for studies that seek to investigate curriculum-related factors and skill outcomes within higher education settings without manipulating the study variables.

The population of the study comprised all final-year undergraduate students in public universities in Nigeria**.** Final-year students were selected because they have completed most of their coursework and are therefore better positioned to assess the relevance of their curriculum, demonstrate digital competence, and reflect on employability-related outcomes as they prepare to transition into the labour market. A total of 250 final-year undergraduate students participated in the study. The sample was selected using a multistage sampling technique to ensure adequate representation across institutions, faculties, and departments.

At the first stage, three public universities were purposively selected from different geopolitical zones in Nigeria to reflect institutional diversity. The selected universities were: University of Ibadan, Oyo State (South-West); University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State (South-East) and; University of Ilorin, Kwara State (North-Central). These universities were chosen due to their long-standing academic reputation,

broad programme offerings, and stable student populations. At the second stage, three faculties were purposively selected from each university. These were the Faculty of Education**,** Faculty of Social Sciences, and Faculty of Science. The selection ensured representation across professional, social, and science-based disciplines. At the third stage, two departments were randomly selected from each faculty, resulting in six departments per university and eighteen departments across the three universities. At the final stage, respondents were selected proportionately from each department using simple random sampling**.** Fourteen (14) students were selected from each department, yielding 84 respondents per university**.** To obtain the required sample size of 250, two additional respondents were randomly selected from two departments across the universities. The final distribution of respondents was as follows: University of Ibadan (84 respondents); University of Nigeria, Nsukka (83 respondents) and; University of Ilorin (83 respondents). This sampling procedure ensured balanced representation and enhanced the generalisability of the findings.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled "Curriculum Relevance, Digital Competence, and Employability Outcomes Questionnaire" (CRDCEOQ), which was self-developed by researchers based on existing literature and the specific objectives of the study. The questionnaire consisted of four sections: Section A: Demographic information of respondents. Section B: Items measuring curriculum relevance, including alignment with labour market needs, practical orientation, and integration of digital learning. Section C: Items measuring digital competence, covering digital communication, information management, use of digital tools, and problem-solving with technology. Section D: Items measuring employability outcomes, including job readiness, confidence, adaptability, and perceived employment prospects. All items were rated on a four-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

The instrument was subjected to face and content validity**.** Copies of the questionnaire were reviewed by experts in educational management, curriculum studies, and measurement and evaluation departments, Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, Nigeria. Their comments and suggestions regarding clarity, relevance, and coverage were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's alpha method. A pilot test was conducted among students from a public university outside the main study areas. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.81 for curriculum relevance**,** 0.84 for digital competence**,** and 0.86 for employability outcomes**,** indicating satisfactory internal consistency.

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the relevant university authorities. The researcher, with the assistance of trained research assistants, administered the questionnaires to the selected respondents in their respective faculties. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured of confidentiality. All questionnaires were administered and retrieved within a four-week period, resulting in a 100% response rate**.**

Data collected for the study were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation to answer research questions 1, 2, and 3, which focused on determining the levels of curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes among university graduates. To test the research hypotheses, inferential statistics of Pearson Product–Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test hypotheses 1 and 2, which examined the relationships between curriculum relevance and digital competence, and between digital competence and employability outcomes, respectively. Multiple regression analysis was used to test hypothesis 3, which examined the joint predictive influence of curriculum relevance and digital competence on employability outcomes among university graduates. All hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

Research Question 1: What is the level of curriculum relevance as perceived by university graduates in Nigeria?

Table 1: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Curriculum Relevance*

Dimension of Curriculum Relevance	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation
Alignment with labour market needs	3.02	0.61	High
Practical orientation of courses	2.94	0.63	Moderate
Integration of digital learning	3.08	0.58	High
Industry and real-world relevance	2.97	0.60	Moderate
Overall Curriculum Relevance	3.00	0.61	High

The results of the findings in Table 1 indicate that university graduates perceived the curriculum as generally relevant, with an overall mean score of 3.00. Alignment with labour market needs and integration of digital learning recorded high mean values, suggesting that graduates acknowledged efforts to align curricula with employment demands. However, practical orientation and industry relevance were only moderate, indicating areas where further curriculum strengthening is required.

Research Question 2: What is the level of digital competence among university graduates in Nigeria?

Table 2: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Digital Competence*

Digital Competence Dimension	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation
Digital communication skills	3.21	0.56	High
Information management skills	3.05	0.59	High
Use of digital tools	2.98	0.62	Moderate
Digital problem-solving skills	2.91	0.64	Moderate
Overall Digital Competence	3.04	0.60	High

From Table 2 above, it shows that university graduates demonstrated a generally high level of digital competence, with an overall mean score of 3.04. While digital communication and information management skills were rated high, competence in the use of advanced digital tools and problem-solving with technology was moderate, suggesting the need for deeper, practice-oriented digital skill integration in university programmes.

Research Question 3: What are the employability outcomes of university graduates in Nigeria?

Table 3: *Mean and Standard Deviation of Employability Outcomes*

Employability Outcome Indicators	Mean (M)	SD	Interpretation
Job readiness	3.06	0.60	High
Confidence in workplace performance	3.11	0.57	High
Adaptability to work environment	3.18	0.55	High
Perceived employment prospects	2.89	0.65	Moderate
Overall Employability Outcomes	3.06	0.59	High

The results as indicated in Table 3, show that graduates reported generally positive employability outcomes, with an overall mean score of 3.06. High levels of job readiness, confidence, and adaptability were recorded, although perceived employment prospects were only moderate, reflecting broader labour market challenges in Nigeria.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between curriculum relevance and digital competence among university graduates in Nigeria.

Table 4: *Pearson Correlation between Curriculum Relevance and Digital Competence*

Variables	r	p	Decision
Curriculum Relevance & Digital Competence	0.49	< .05	Rejected

Table 4 reveals a moderate, positive, and statistically significant relationship between curriculum relevance and digital competence ($r = 0.49$, $p < .05$). The null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that higher curriculum relevance is associated with higher levels of digital competence among university graduates.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.

Table 5: *Pearson Correlation between Digital Competence and Employability Outcomes*

Variables	r	p	Decision
Digital Competence & Employability Outcomes	0.53	< .05	Rejected

The results of findings in Table 5 show a significant positive relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes ($r = 0.53$, $p < .05$). This indicates that graduates with higher digital competence tend to experience better employability outcomes. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis 3: Curriculum relevance and digital competence do not jointly significantly predict employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria.

Table 6: *Multiple Regression Analysis of Curriculum Relevance and Digital Competence on Employability Outcomes*

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Curriculum Relevance	0.32	0.06	0.34	5.33	< .05
Digital Competence	0.41	0.07	0.39	5.86	< .05
Constant	1.12	0.21	—	5.33	< .05

Model Summary: $R = 0.62$, $R^2 = 0.38$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.37$, $F(2, 247) = 75.81$, $p < .05$

Table 6 above indicates that curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly and significantly predict employability outcomes among university graduates. The model explains 38% of the variance in employability outcomes. Both predictors made significant independent contributions, with digital competence having a slightly stronger effect. The null hypothesis is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings from the study revealed that university graduates generally perceived their curricula as relevant, particularly in terms of alignment with labour market needs and the integration of digital learning components. This suggests that Nigerian universities are making observable efforts to adapt curricula to contemporary demands. However, the moderate ratings recorded for practical orientation and industry relevance indicate that gaps remain between curricular intentions and practical implementation. This finding aligns with earlier observations by Aina (2020), who noted that although curriculum reforms exist on paper, their practical translation into skill-based learning is often limited. The results further reinforce the position of Azeez et al. (2023), who emphasised that curriculum relevance must be experienced in practice, not merely reflected in course outlines, for it to influence graduate outcomes meaningfully.

The study also found that university graduates demonstrated a generally high level of digital competence, especially in areas related to digital communication and information management. This may be attributed to increased exposure to digital technologies through academic activities and everyday interactions. However, competence in the use of advanced digital tools and technology-driven problem-solving was

only moderate. This suggests that while students are familiar with basic digital functions, opportunities to apply digital skills in complex or professional contexts remain limited. This finding supports the work of Ali et al. (2024), who reported similar patterns of uneven digital competence among Nigerian graduates. It also echoes the argument of Azeez et al. (2023), that digital competence develops more effectively when digital tools are embedded within discipline-specific learning rather than taught in isolation.

In the area of employability outcomes, the findings indicated that graduates generally perceived themselves as job-ready, adaptable, and confident in their ability to function in workplace environments. Nonetheless, perceived employment prospects were moderate, reflecting broader structural challenges in the Nigerian labour market. This suggests that while individual employability skills may be present, external factors such as limited job opportunities and economic constraints continue to shape graduate employment experiences. This observation is consistent with World Bank (2022) reports, which highlight the complex interaction between graduate skills and labour market conditions in Nigeria.

The correlation analysis also revealed a significant positive relationship between curriculum relevance and digital competence. This finding implies that when curricula are perceived as relevant and aligned with contemporary demands, graduates are more likely to develop meaningful digital skills. This supports international evidence suggesting that curriculum design plays a central role in shaping digital competence acquisition (Zuo et al., 2025). Within the Nigerian context, this finding lends empirical support to the position advanced by Azeez et al. (2023), who argued that institutional commitment to curriculum relevance enhances students' exposure to practical and digitally mediated learning experiences.

Similarly, the study found a significant positive relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes. Graduates with higher levels of digital competence reported better employability outcomes, including job readiness and adaptability. This reinforces the growing consensus that digital skills are critical determinants of graduate employability in modern labour markets. The finding aligns with Arthur et al. (2019), who emphasised the role of transferable and digital skills in enhancing career mobility. It also confirms Nigerian-based evidence by Ali et al. (2024), which demonstrated that digital competence significantly improves graduates' employment prospects.

The regression analysis further showed that curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly and significantly predicted employability outcomes, with digital competence exerting a slightly stronger influence. This indicates that while curriculum relevance provides the foundational structure for skill development, digital competence serves as a direct pathway through which employability outcomes are realised. This finding is particularly important in the Nigerian context, where curriculum reforms are ongoing but unevenly implemented. The result supports the empirical position of Azeez et al. (2023), who argued that curriculum relevance must translate into functional skill acquisition, especially digital competence, to produce tangible employability benefits.

Generally, the findings suggest that improving graduate employability in Nigeria requires a deliberate and integrated approach that strengthens curriculum relevance and embeds digital competence across disciplines. Universities that prioritise practical relevance and digital skill development are more likely to produce graduates who are adaptable, confident, and better prepared for the demands of a digitally driven labour market.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationships among curriculum relevance, digital competence, and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria. The findings provide empirical evidence that curriculum relevance and digital competence are critical factors in shaping graduates' employability outcomes in a rapidly evolving and digitally driven labour market.

The study revealed that while university curricula are generally perceived as relevant, gaps remain in their practical orientation and industry alignment. Graduates demonstrated relatively high levels of digital competence, particularly in basic digital communication and information management; however, more advanced and applied digital skills were less developed. These findings suggest that although Nigerian universities are responding to contemporary educational demands, further efforts are required to ensure that curricula translate effectively into functional workplace skills.

The results further established that curriculum relevance is significantly associated with digital competence, and that digital competence, in turn, has a strong positive relationship with employability outcomes. Importantly, curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly predicted employability outcomes, with digital competence exerting a stronger influence. This indicates that curriculum relevance provides the foundation for skill development, while digital competence serves as a direct mechanism through which graduates' employability is enhanced.

The study concludes that improving graduate employability in Nigeria requires an integrated approach that prioritises relevant, skills-oriented curricula and the systematic embedding of digital competence across academic programmes. Addressing these issues is essential for aligning university education with labour market expectations and supporting national development goals.

Recommendations

Based on the result of findings of this study, the researchers made the following recommendations:

Strengthening Curriculum Relevance: Given that curriculum relevance was found to be moderate and uneven across programmes, Nigerian universities should undertake periodic curriculum reviews in collaboration with industry stakeholders. This will ensure that course contents remain aligned with current labour market demands, workplace practices, and emerging skill requirements.

Embedding Practical and Applied Learning: Since gaps were identified in the practical orientation of university curricula, universities should increase the integration of experiential learning approaches such as internships, project-based learning, simulations, and problem-solving tasks. These strategies will help students translate theoretical knowledge into real-world applications.

Enhancing Digital Competence Development: In view of the finding that graduates demonstrated stronger basic digital skills than advanced digital competencies, universities should systematically embed digital skill development across all disciplines. This should include data analysis, digital collaboration tools, and technology-enabled problem-solving rather than limiting digital training to standalone ICT courses.

Aligning Digital Skills with Employability Outcomes: Considering the strong relationship between digital competence and employability outcomes, higher education institutions should align digital skill training with specific employability indicators such as job readiness, adaptability, and workplace efficiency. This alignment will improve graduates' competitiveness in both local and global labour markets.

Integrated Curriculum and Digital Skill Reform: Since curriculum relevance and digital competence jointly predicted employability outcomes, curriculum reforms should be holistic rather than fragmented. Universities should ensure that curriculum content, teaching methods, and assessment strategies collectively promote digital competence and employability skills.

Policy Support and Quality Assurance: Given the study's implications for graduate unemployment, education policymakers and regulatory bodies should support universities through clear policy frameworks and quality assurance mechanisms that prioritise employability-focused curricula and digital competence development.

REFERENCES

Aina, O. I. (2020). Education and employability in Nigeria: Issues and prospects. *Journal of Educational Development*, 12(2), 45–58.

Ali, H. A., Ukwuaba, I., & Nnamchi, E. (2024). Digital competence and graduate employability in Nigeria: Implications for higher education. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 96, 102725. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102725

Arthur, M. B., Khapova, S. N., & Richardson, J. (2019). An intelligent career perspective on employability. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 114, 1–11. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jvb.2019.05.003

Azeez, N. O., Adetipe, A. A., & Aremu, O. A. (2023). Curriculum relevance, skill development and employability outcomes among university graduates in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Educational Management*, 17(1), 89–104.

Knight, P. T., & Yorke, M. (2020). *Employability through the curriculum*. Higher Education Academy.

Olanipekun, S. S., Adetipe, D. I., & Aremu, M. A. (2025). Curriculum relevance and employability outcomes among Nigerian university graduates. *Journal of Learning for Development*, 12(1), 66–82.

UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO Publishing.

World Bank. (2022). *Enhancing graduate employability in Sub-Saharan Africa*. World Bank Publications.

Zuo, M., Zhao, Y., & Zhang, L. (2025). Curriculum relevance, digital competence, and graduate employability in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 50(2), 312–329. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2024.2301146