



A Review of Business Education Curriculum and Entrepreneurial Competency Development for Graduate Self-Reliance in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Business education is expected to prepare graduates with the knowledge, practical skills and entrepreneurial competencies required for employment, enterprise creation and economic independence. However, the extent to which business education curricula adequately prepare Nigerian graduates for these outcomes remains an important concern. This review examines the relationship between curriculum relevance, instructional practices, entrepreneurial competency development and graduate self-reliance in Nigeria. It synthesises literature addressing curriculum content, accounting and management education, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, practical learning, educational technology, institutional capacity and enterprise performance. The review also considers contextual factors, including access to finance, institutional resources, mentoring and market opportunities, that may influence the translation of acquired competencies into entrepreneurial action. The reviewed literature provides a basis for understanding curriculum relevance and instructional practices as important dimensions of competency development, while highlighting the distinction between perceived competence, entrepreneurial intention and demonstrated enterprise outcomes. An integrative conceptual framework is proposed to explain the potential relationships among curriculum and instructional inputs, entrepreneurial competencies, self-efficacy and graduate self-reliance. The review identifies priorities for curriculum reform, experiential learning, institutional collaboration and future empirical research.

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INTRODUCTION

Business education is significant in preparing students for employment, professional practice and entrepreneurship. Through courses in accounting, management, marketing, office technology and entrepreneurship, the programme is intended to develop the knowledge and practical competencies required to participate effectively in the labour market and establish sustainable business ventures (Saidu et al., 2017; Suleiman et al., 2017; Udo et al., 2017). Its contribution to self-reliance depends not only on the content of the curriculum but also on how knowledge is translated into practical skills. Samson and Yaduma (2021) examined the manpower and physical facilities required for implementing

undergraduate business education programmes, while Samson, Aliyu, and Abdulmutallib (2021) examined business education curriculum content in Nigerian universities. These areas provide complementary perspectives on curriculum design and the institutional conditions required for effective implementation.

Graduate unemployment and underemployment reinforce the need to examine whether business education adequately prepares students for changing employment and enterprise requirements. Self-reliance extends beyond obtaining paid employment to include the capacity to identify business opportunities, mobilise resources, manage financial activities and sustain productive economic activities. Samson and

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Abdulmutallib (2016) considered the contribution of sustainable business education programmes to poverty alleviation in North-East Nigeria, while Samson, Abdulmutallib, Chadi, and Gambo (2021) examined self-reliance features in business education programmes in relation to sustainable poverty alleviation. These studies provide a basis for examining the relationship between educational preparation and wider socioeconomic objectives.

Curriculum relevance is central to this relationship. Business education graduates require competencies that correspond to workplace expectations and entrepreneurial activities, including financial management, opportunity identification, communication, problem-solving and business planning. Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Gambo (2017) considered accounting education in relation to entrepreneurial development, while Abdulmutallib, Samson, Chadi, Umar, and Jirgi (2025) examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education curriculum content and entrepreneurial self-efficacy. Barkindo et al. (2024a, 2024b) also addressed curriculum content, entrepreneurial skill acquisition and accounting-related skills development. Collectively, these research themes demonstrate the relevance of examining curriculum content alongside the competencies' graduates need for independent economic activity.

Nevertheless, the development of practical competencies depends on more than curriculum content. Instructional methods, lecturers' professional development, educational resources and opportunities for practical application can influence students' learning experiences. Research on activity-based learning, blended learning, case-based teaching and technology-supported instruction provides relevant perspectives on these conditions (Abdulmutallib et al., 2013, 2015, 2024; Samson, 2014). Institutional constraints and unequal access to learning opportunities may further affect the implementation of business education programmes. The literature also covers different outcomes, including perceived competence, academic achievement, entrepreneurial self-

efficacy, business performance and enterprise survival. These outcomes are related but not interchangeable. A student may report confidence in entrepreneurial activities without establishing a business, while a graduate may possess relevant competencies but lack access to finance or markets. A review is therefore needed to integrate the evidence on curriculum relevance, competency development and self-reliance, clarify the relationships among these concepts, identify limitations in the existing literature and propose a framework to guide curriculum development, institutional practice and future research.

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Business Education and Its Scope

Business education is concerned with preparing learners for business-related employment, professional responsibilities and entrepreneurial activities. Its scope includes accounting, management, marketing, office technology, business communication and entrepreneurship. These areas provide complementary knowledge and skills for operating within established organisations and developing independent enterprises. Samson, Yaduma, and Aliyu (2021) examined the philosophy and objectives of undergraduate business education programmes in Nigerian universities, providing a relevant basis for considering how programme objectives relate to graduate preparation.

The scope of business education also encompasses the development of practical and transferable competencies. Accounting education supports financial recording, interpretation and control, while marketing develops an understanding of customer needs, promotion and market opportunities. Management education addresses planning, organisation and decision-making, whereas office technology and management support administrative efficiency and the use of workplace technologies. Jacob et al. (2023) examined competencies required for self-reliance among office technology and management students in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria.

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Okeke et al. (2025) similarly addressed venture creation skills, particularly opportunity identification and financial management in small and medium-sized enterprises. Business education should therefore be understood as both an academic programme and a form of professional preparation. Its relevance to self-reliance depends on the coherence between programme objectives, curriculum content, instructional approaches and the economic activities graduates are expected to undertake.

Curriculum Content, Relevance and Implementation

Curriculum content refers to the knowledge, skills, values and learning experiences selected to achieve the objectives of an educational programme. Curriculum relevance concerns the extent to which these elements correspond to learners' developmental needs, workplace expectations and wider socioeconomic requirements. Effective implementation requires suitable teaching personnel, learning facilities, instructional resources and assessment practices. Samson, Aliyu, and Abdulmutallib (2021) addressed curriculum content in Nigerian university business education programmes, while Samson, Yaduma, and Aliyu (2021) examined programme philosophy and objectives. Together, these areas provide a basis for evaluating the relationship between what business education programmes intend to achieve and the content through which those objectives are pursued. Barkindo et al. (2024b) focused specifically on accounting curriculum content and skills development for self-reliance, while Abdulmutallib, Umar, Samson, and Victoria (2023) examined business and entrepreneurship education curriculum content in relation to undergraduate competencies towards self-reliance.

Curriculum relevance must also be considered alongside implementation conditions. Samson and Yaduma (2021) addressed manpower and physical facilities, while Liadi and Samson (2025) examined professionalism and staff development in the management of business education programmes in South-South Nigerian

public universities. Ibrahim, Yaduma, and Samson (2023) discussed problems of teaching accounting, business and management, while Ibrahim, Samson, and Enemali (2023) examined problems of teaching economics. These publications provide contextual perspectives on the challenges that can affect the delivery of business-related programmes. Curriculum implementation is also influenced by the availability of educational technology and the quality of teaching. Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Umar (2023) examined educational technology learning resources in business education, while Samson and Okereke (2014) analysed computer training skills in business education programmes in colleges of education within North-East Nigeria. Such areas are relevant because contemporary business activities increasingly require digital competence alongside conventional business knowledge.

Entrepreneurial Competencies

Entrepreneurial competencies are the knowledge, skills and behavioural capacities required to identify opportunities, organise resources, make business decisions and establish or manage an enterprise. They include opportunity identification, financial management, business planning, communication, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving. Their development is relevant to both business ownership and employment because these competencies can support initiative, adaptability and effective decision-making. Okeke et al. (2025) examined opportunity identification and financial management skills in relation to venture creation and successful business operations. Jacob et al. (2023) addressed competencies required for self-reliance among office technology and management students. Samson (2025) examined the creativity and critical-thinking skill needs of business education students in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria. These areas indicate the importance of examining entrepreneurial competence as a multidimensional construct rather than treating it as a single skill.

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Accounting and financial management are particularly relevant to enterprise sustainability. Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Gambo (2017) linked accounting education with entrepreneurial development, while Barkindo et al. (2024b) examined accounting curriculum content in relation to students' skills development for self-reliance. Financial competence can support budgeting, pricing, cash-flow monitoring and business record-keeping. However, possession of accounting knowledge alone does not establish that a graduate can successfully identify opportunities, obtain start-up resources or sustain an enterprise. Entrepreneurial competencies must therefore be considered in relation to practical application and the wider conditions of enterprise development.

Entrepreneurial Self-Efficacy

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to perform tasks associated with entrepreneurial activity. These tasks may include identifying business opportunities, preparing business plans, managing finances and responding to operational challenges. Self-efficacy is conceptually distinct from actual competence: confidence can support action, but it does not independently demonstrate that the required skills have been mastered. Abdulmutallib, Samson, Chadi, Umar, and Jirgi (2025) examined the relationship between entrepreneurship education curriculum content and undergraduate students' entrepreneurial self-efficacy development for self-reliance. Barkindo et al. (2024a) considered the moderating role of attitude in the relationship between business education curriculum content and entrepreneurial skill acquisition.

Moreover, these research areas support examining how curriculum experiences may relate to students' confidence, attitudes and perceived capacity to undertake entrepreneurial tasks. The relationship should not be interpreted as necessarily causal without appropriate empirical evidence. Students may report higher self-efficacy after practical learning experiences, but the extent to which confidence translates into entrepreneurial behaviour may depend on access to resources,

social support and market opportunities. Self-efficacy is therefore treated in this review as a potential explanatory mechanism linking educational experiences with entrepreneurial action.

Graduate Self-Reliance

Graduate self-reliance refers to the capacity to use acquired knowledge, skills and available resources to pursue productive economic activity with a degree of independence. It can involve paid employment, self-employment, enterprise creation and the ability to sustain an income-generating activity. In business education, self-reliance is relevant to the extent that graduates can apply their learning to real economic situations. Samson and Abdulmutallib (2016) considered sustainable business education programmes in relation to poverty alleviation, while Samson, Abdulmutallib, Chadi, and Gambo (2021) examined self-reliance features in business education programmes.

Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Umar (2023) and Abdulmutallib, Umar, Samson, and Victoria (2023) addressed curriculum content and competencies towards self-reliance. These works establish a relevant research base for examining self-reliance as an educational and socioeconomic outcome. Self-reliance should nevertheless be assessed through outcomes that extend beyond students' intentions or perceptions. Indicators may include demonstrated practical competence, business start-up, continued enterprise operation, income generation and business survival. These outcomes require different forms of evidence. Consequently, the relationship between curriculum and self-reliance should be examined as a sequence of potentially connected stages rather than assumed to be automatic.

Business Education Curriculum and Competency Requirements

The effectiveness of business education depends partly on the alignment between curriculum content and the requirements of employment and entrepreneurship. Business environments require graduates to combine



subject knowledge with practical judgement, digital competence, communication and problem-solving. Curriculum design should therefore reflect the tasks graduates may encounter in professional and entrepreneurial settings.

Research addressing business education curriculum content and programme objectives provides a foundation for this discussion (Samson, Aliyu, & Abdulmutallib, 2021; Samson, Yaduma, & Aliyu, 2021). Abdulmutallib, Umar, Samson, and Victoria (2023) examined curriculum content in relation to undergraduate competencies towards self-reliance. Barkindo et al. (2024a) addressed entrepreneurial skill acquisition, while Barkindo et al. (2024b) focused on accounting curriculum content and skills development. These studies collectively identify curriculum design and competency development as important areas for reviewing graduate preparation.

Accounting, marketing, management and office technology make distinct contributions to entrepreneurial readiness. Accounting provides the basis for financial recording, budgeting and performance monitoring. Marketing supports customer analysis, market positioning and promotional decision-making. Management contributes planning, organisation and resource allocation, while office technology supports digital communication, information management and administrative efficiency. Entrepreneurship education integrates these competencies within opportunity identification and venture development. The emphasis on opportunity identification and financial management in Okeke et al. (2025) illustrates the relevance of combining entrepreneurial and financial capabilities.

Curriculum relevance also depends on the extent to which students apply knowledge in practical situations. Case-based teaching can expose learners to business problems and require them to evaluate alternatives. Abdulmutallib, Faruk, and Samson (2013, 2015) addressed case-based teaching of entrepreneurial skills in Nigeria. Activity-based learning provides another approach to translating knowledge into practice, as examined by Samson (2014) and Ikechukwu and Samson (2026). Blended learning may

combine classroom instruction with digital learning experiences; Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Umar (2024) examined its relationship with students' achievement in entrepreneurial skills in public universities in North-East Nigeria.

Other instructional approaches can contribute to the development of subject-specific competencies. Gondim et al. (2024) examined inquiry-based teaching in relation to achievement and retention in financial accounting, while Samson (2026b) addressed jigsaw teaching and academic performance and retention in financial accounting. Abdulmutallib, Samson, Enemali, and Mohammed (2024) examined peer tutoring and students' achievement in financial accounting. Magnus et al. (2016) considered good and caring teaching behaviours as perceived by business education students. These publications broaden the discussion of instructional quality, although findings concerning academic achievement should not automatically be interpreted as evidence of entrepreneurial competence or enterprise creation.

Institutional capacity is another requirement for effective curriculum implementation. Adequate staffing, professional development, equipment and access to learning resources influence the opportunities available to students. Samson and Yaduma (2021) examined manpower and physical facilities, while Liadi and Samson (2025) addressed professionalism and staff development. Abdulmutallib et al. (2018) discussed strategies for improving funding of technical and vocational education and training for sustainable development. These issues are relevant because competency-based curricula require resources for practical activities, instructional supervision and assessment.

Digital competence has become increasingly relevant to business operations. Abdulmutallib, Samson, and Gambo (2016) examined students' perceptions of information and communication technology accessibility and usage, while Samson and Okereke (2014) addressed computer training skills. Samson (2026a) examined determinants of educational technology adoption among undergraduate business education students. Research on



educational technology resources also provides a basis for considering the conditions under which digital learning can support curriculum delivery (Abdulmutallib, Samson, & Umar, 2023).

The implications of technological change extend to entrepreneurship and workplace preparation. Abdulmutallib, Samson, Umar, and Ladi (2024); Buba et al (2025) and Umar and Samson (2025) examined artificial intelligence in business education and management, while Samson and Abdulmutallib (2024b) addressed ethical considerations in integrating artificial intelligence into business education curriculum development. Samson, Abdulmutallib, and Jirgi (2025); Shadrach, David, & Samson (in press), examined stakeholders' perceptions of artificial intelligence integration in vocational education curriculum development and planning. These works suggest that curriculum review should consider emerging technologies alongside foundational business competencies. Nevertheless, technological adoption should be evaluated in terms of its contribution to learning and practical competence rather than treated as an outcome in itself.

Additional contextual research on educational technology, online learning and institutional transformation can inform this debate. Chukwudolue et al. (2025) examined small and medium-sized enterprise operators' perceptions of online learning for self-development and achievement. Samson and Jibrin (2024) examined interaction in open distance learning, while Samson, Chukwudolue, and Jibrin (2026) addressed digital transformation for sustainable development in higher education institutions in Bauchi State. Samson, Jibrin, Chukwudolue, Liadi, and Ohadiugha (2026) discussed ethical management of emerging technologies in educational assessment. These sources are relevant to the wider educational environment, although they do not all directly examine business education curriculum outcomes.

Curriculum implementation must also account for participation and inclusion. Abdulmutallib, Samson, Chadi, and Gambo (2017) examined factors influencing girls' enrolment in vocational and technical education in

Bauchi State. Inclusion is relevant because access to business education and opportunities for practical competency development may differ across learners. Research on teaching challenges in other subject areas also provides contextual information about educational delivery (Yaduma et al., 2023). The central implication is that curriculum relevance requires both appropriate content and equitable access to the resources and experiences needed to develop competence.

Entrepreneurial Competency Development

Entrepreneurial competency development involves translating theoretical knowledge into the capacity to identify opportunities, mobilise resources and manage business activities. Opportunity identification requires learners to recognise unmet needs, assess potential markets and evaluate possible products or services. Business creation additionally requires planning, financial management, marketing and operational decision-making. Okeke et al. (2025) explicitly addressed opportunity identification and financial management as venture creation skills for business education students.

Financial literacy and accounting competence are central to these activities. Graduates who intend to establish businesses need to understand costs, pricing, cash flow, budgeting and financial records. Research addressing accounting education and entrepreneurial development provides a basis for connecting accounting knowledge with business activity (Abdulmutallib, Samson, & Gambo, 2017). The curriculum-related work of Barkindo et al. (2024b) also makes accounting competency relevant to the discussion of self-reliance. However, the possession of financial knowledge should be distinguished from the demonstrated ability to manage a functioning enterprise.

Creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making are complementary competencies. Creativity supports the generation of business ideas, while critical thinking helps learners evaluate assumptions, evidence and risks. Problem-solving enables them to respond to operational challenges, and decision-making



supports the selection of appropriate actions under resource constraints. Samson (2025) examined creativity and critical-thinking skill needs among business education students in colleges of education in North-East Nigeria. These competencies can be developed through instructional activities that require students to address realistic problems rather than rely exclusively on memorisation.

The choice of instructional approach is therefore relevant. Case-based teaching exposes students to practical scenarios, requiring them to analyse problems and consider alternative responses (Abdulmutallib et al., 2013, 2015). Activity-based learning emphasises participation and application (Samson, 2014; Ikechukwu & Samson, 2026). Blended learning may provide additional opportunities for flexible access to instructional materials and activities, while inquiry-based learning and peer tutoring offer alternative approaches to engagement with subject content (Abdulmutallib, Samson, & Umar, 2024; Gondim et al., 2024; Abdulmutallib, Samson, Enemali, & Mohammed, 2024). Evidence concerning academic performance can inform instructional design, but entrepreneurial competency requires assessment of applied skills as well as subject achievement.

Entrepreneurial self-efficacy may influence whether learners are willing to apply their competencies. The relationship between curriculum content and self-efficacy examined by Abdulmutallib, Samson, Chadi, Umar, and Jirgi (2025) is particularly relevant to this issue. Attitudes may also shape the relationship between educational experiences and skill acquisition, as addressed by Barkindo et al. (2024a). Nevertheless, confidence and positive attitudes should not be used as substitutes for practical assessment. Students need opportunities to demonstrate that they can prepare business plans, evaluate opportunities, manage finances and make decisions in realistic settings.

Digital learning and emerging technologies may expand the range of opportunities for competency development. Research on online learning, educational technology adoption and artificial intelligence

provides relevant contextual evidence (Chukwudolue et al., 2025; Samson, 2026a; Abdulmutallib, Samson, Umar, & Ladi, 2024). However, the contribution of these tools depends on their alignment with curriculum objectives and the quality of learning activities. Technology-supported instruction should therefore complement practical business tasks rather than displace them.

Graduate Self-Reliance and Enterprise Outcomes

The relationship between entrepreneurial competency development and graduate self-reliance involves several stages. Students may first acquire knowledge and skills, develop confidence in their capacity to perform entrepreneurial tasks, form intentions to establish businesses and subsequently attempt to implement those intentions. Actual enterprise outcomes depend on additional factors, including access to finance, market opportunities, business networks, mentoring and the wider economic environment. Research on self-reliance in business education provides a foundation for examining this relationship (Samson & Abdulmutallib, 2016; Samson, Abdulmutallib, Chadi, & Gambo, 2021).

Abdulmutallib, Umar, Samson, and Victoria (2023) also addressed curriculum content and undergraduate competencies towards self-reliance. These research areas support the view that business education should be evaluated in relation to the practical capacities it develops. Nevertheless, evidence of curriculum relevance or perceived competency does not independently demonstrate that graduates have established sustainable businesses.

Enterprise performance research provides a complementary perspective. Mohammed et al. (2019) examined customer orientation and marketing innovation among small and medium-sized enterprises in Yobe State. Samson (2026c) addressed customer orientation, marketing innovation and business performance in Northern Nigeria. Samson and Abdulmutallib (2024a) examined digital technology transformation in relation to entrepreneurial



performance at Zuba International Fruits Market, Abuja, while Samson and Abdulmutallib (2024c) addressed digital transformation and sustainable entrepreneurial performance in Bauchi Metropolis. Samson and Abdulmutallib (2026) examined agripreneurship practice in relation to food security and economic transformation among small and medium-sized farmers in Bauchi Metropolis.

Enterprise survival is another relevant outcome. Samson and Isah (2025a) examined information and communication technology platforms in relation to firm survival among medium-scale enterprises in Bauchi Metropolis. Samson (2026d) addressed interactive and online learning platforms in relation to entrepreneurial competencies among small and medium-sized enterprise operators. These studies extend the discussion from educational preparation to the operational conditions under which entrepreneurial activities may be sustained. However, findings about established enterprises should not automatically be generalised to newly graduated entrepreneurs because their resources, experience and support networks may differ.

Access to learning and enterprise opportunities is also relevant. Chukwudolue et al. (2025) examined online learning as an avenue for self-development among small and medium-sized enterprise operators. Research on digital transformation and firm survival provides additional context for the potential value of digital capabilities (Samson & Abdulmutallib, 2024a, 2024c; Samson & Isah, 2025a). In addition, Samson, Abdulmutallib, and Umar (2024) examined ergonomic risk factors and workers' discomfort among confidential secretaries in universities. Although this study does not directly address entrepreneurship, it illustrates the broader importance of working conditions in considering occupational outcomes.

Enterprise creation and sustainability also require attention to institutional and economic conditions. Abdulmutallib et al. (2018) addressed funding for technical and vocational education and training, while Samson and Abdulmutallib (2016) considered sustainable business education in

relation to poverty alleviation. These topics support the need to examine resource availability and institutional support alongside educational preparation. The evidence base should also be interpreted within the broader context of digital change and emerging enterprise practices, including the opportunities and behavioural challenges associated with artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency adoption among Nigerian small and medium-sized enterprises (Bala et al., 2025).

Related studies on technology-supported education and assessment provide further context but require careful interpretation. Adamu et al. (2026) examined artificial intelligence integration in lecturers' pedagogical and research practices, while Saidu et al. (2026) addressed an offline mobile digital learning model for early-grade reading and literacy. Saidu (2025) considered ChatGPT use, plagiarism and academic integrity, and Jibrin et al. (2026) proposed a framework for smart classroom management. These studies concern educational technology, learning design or academic practice rather than direct evidence of graduate enterprise outcomes. They may inform discussions of digital learning conditions, but they cannot establish that artificial intelligence or digital learning directly produces entrepreneurial self-reliance.

Finally, the literature includes conceptual work on governance and tax-related behaviour that is not directly focused on business education graduates. Dahiru et al. (2023a, 2023b) addressed corporate governance and firm performance, while Saidu and Ladan (2023) and Saidu et al. (2024) examined conceptual relationships concerning tax compliance intention and technology optimism. These sources may inform adjacent discussions of responsible business practice and the institutional environment, but they should not be treated as direct evidence of the relationship between curriculum and graduate self-reliance. Distinguishing such contextual literature from direct educational evidence is essential for a balanced synthesis.

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Synthesis and Discussion of the Literature

The literature provides several complementary perspectives on business education and graduate self-reliance. The first concerns curriculum relevance: programme content and objectives need to correspond to the competencies required for employment and entrepreneurship. Studies addressing curriculum content, accounting education and programme objectives provide a foundation for this argument (Samson, Aliyu, & Abdulmutallib, 2021; Samson, Yaduma, & Aliyu, 2021; Barkindo et al., 2024b). The second concerns instructional practice. Case-based, activity-based, blended and other interactive approaches offer ways of connecting conceptual knowledge with applied learning (Abdulmutallib et al., 2013, 2015, 2024; Samson, 2014; Ikechukwu & Samson, 2026).

A third theme concerns the competencies required for entrepreneurial action. Opportunity identification, financial management, creativity and critical thinking are relevant to venture development and business management (Okeke et al., 2025; Samson, 2025). Entrepreneurial self-efficacy and attitude may help explain how educational experiences relate to learners' willingness to apply their skills (Abdulmutallib et al., 2025; Barkindo et al., 2024a). However, the relationships among curriculum content, competence, self-efficacy and actual entrepreneurial outcomes require careful empirical assessment.

A fourth theme concerns institutional capacity. Staff development, teaching resources, infrastructure and funding influence the conditions under which curriculum objectives can be achieved (Samson & Yaduma, 2021; Liadi & Samson, 2025; Abdulmutallib et al., 2018). Digital technologies create further opportunities but also require appropriate infrastructure, staff competence and ethical guidance (Abdulmutallib, Samson, & Gambo, 2016; Samson, 2026a; Samson & Abdulmutallib, 2024b). These factors should be considered as contextual conditions rather than assumed to have uniform effects across institutions. A fifth theme concerns the transition from education to enterprise outcomes. Studies of marketing innovation, digital

transformation, firm survival and entrepreneurial performance demonstrate the relevance of capabilities within actual business settings (Mohammed et al., 2019; Samson, 2026c; Samson & Abdulmutallib, 2024a, 2024c; Samson & Isah, 2025a). Yet, research on established enterprises does not necessarily show how university curricula affect graduates' decisions or performance. Longitudinal studies following students from their educational experiences into employment or entrepreneurship would provide stronger evidence of these connections.

Several gaps follow from this synthesis. First, the evidence needs to distinguish curriculum exposure from demonstrated competency. Second, self-efficacy and entrepreneurial intention should be distinguished from business start-up and survival. Third, the role of contextual factors, such as finance, mentoring, institutional support and market access, requires further investigation. Fourth, studies using different populations and outcomes should not be combined as though they measure the same construct. Finally, a systematic review should assess the methodological quality of the included publications and identify where findings converge, differ or remain inconclusive. The present synthesis therefore supports an integrated framework while recognising that its proposed relationships require further empirical testing.

Proposed Conceptual Framework

The proposed framework in Figure 1 links business education curriculum and instructional practices with entrepreneurial competency development and graduate self-reliance. It draws on the reviewed research concerning curriculum content, teaching strategies, entrepreneurial self-efficacy, institutional resources and enterprise outcomes (Abdulmutallib et al., 2025; Barkindo et al., 2024a, 2024b; Okeke et al., 2025; Samson, 2025). The first component comprises curriculum and instructional inputs. These include curriculum relevance, accounting and management content, entrepreneurship education, experiential teaching, digital learning and industry-related activities. The quality of these inputs may depend

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on lecturers' professional development, institutional facilities and access to appropriate learning resources. Research on programme implementation, staff development and educational technology supports including these contextual conditions (Samson & Yaduma, 2021; Liadi & Samson, 2025; Abdulmutallib, Samson, & Umar, 2023).

The second component is entrepreneurial competency development. It includes opportunity identification, financial management, business planning, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving. Competencies represent the practical capacities that curriculum and instructional activities are intended to develop. Entrepreneurial self-efficacy is proposed as a potential explanatory mechanism because learners' confidence in their ability to perform entrepreneurial tasks may influence whether they apply their acquired skills. However, self-efficacy should not be treated as a substitute for demonstrated competence.

The third component comprises graduate self-reliance outcomes, including self-employment, enterprise creation, income generation and business sustainability. The relationship between competencies and these outcomes may depend on contextual conditions, particularly access to finance, mentoring, business networks, market opportunities and institutional support. Enterprise studies addressing customer orientation, innovation and business survival provide relevant contextual perspectives (Mohammed et al., 2019; Samson, 2026c; Samson & Isah, 2025a). The framework proposes that relevant curricula and effective instructional practices can support entrepreneurial competency development, which may contribute to self-reliance when enabling conditions are present. It does not assume that curriculum relevance automatically produces enterprise creation. Rather, it identifies a sequence of relationships that can be examined through future empirical research.



Figure 1. Proposed framework linking business education curriculum to graduate self-reliance
Source: Developed by the Researchers

The framework offers a basis for developing testable research questions. Future studies could examine whether curriculum relevance predicts demonstrated entrepreneurial competence, whether self-efficacy explains part of this relationship, and whether access to enterprise

resources influences the translation of competence into business outcomes. Longitudinal research would be particularly useful for examining whether competencies acquired during business education are associated with



graduates' subsequent employment and entrepreneurial experiences.

IMPLICATION OF THE REVIEW

The proposed framework imply that Nigerian universities should redesign business education programmes around competency-based and practice-oriented learning. Curriculum planners should integrate realistic business tasks, case studies, activity-based learning, blended learning, internships and entrepreneurship projects, while ensuring that lecturers receive professional development and that students have access to suitable facilities, learning resources and digital infrastructure. The review also implies that universities, government agencies, employers and entrepreneurship support organisations should collaborate to provide mentoring, incubation, access to finance, business networks and market opportunities. Such support is necessary because graduates may possess relevant competencies but still face constraints that prevent them from establishing or sustaining enterprises. Future research should use longitudinal designs to examine how curriculum experiences, competencies and self-efficacy translate into employment, self-employment, income generation and business sustainability.

CONCLUSION

This review shows that business education can contribute to graduate self-reliance when curriculum content, instructional practices and institutional conditions work together to develop practical entrepreneurial competencies. Relevant curricula, experiential learning, digital competence and adequate institutional resources may help students acquire skills in opportunity identification, financial management, business planning, creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving. However, curriculum relevance alone does not automatically produce enterprise creation or sustainable self-employment. The review also emphasises that entrepreneurial self-efficacy, perceived competence and entrepreneurial intention are not the same as demonstrated competence, business start-up or

enterprise survival; therefore, claims about graduate self-reliance require evidence of practical application and real economic outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Universities should regularly review business education curricula to ensure that accounting, management, marketing, office technology and entrepreneurship content reflect current workplace expectations and enterprise-creation requirements
2. Business education departments should adopt case-based, activity-based, blended and project-based teaching methods so that students can apply business knowledge to realistic entrepreneurial problems.
3. Universities should provide qualified lecturers, adequate physical facilities, instructional resources and continuous staff development to support effective implementation of competency-based business education programmes.
4. Universities and funding agencies should invest in reliable internet connectivity, functioning computer laboratories and technical support so that digital tools, online learning platforms and artificial intelligence applications remain usable for teaching.
5. Universities should establish entrepreneurship centres, industry partnerships, mentorship schemes, incubation support and links to finance providers to help graduates translate acquired competencies into viable businesses.
6. Researchers should conduct longitudinal studies that follow business education graduates to determine whether curriculum exposure, competencies and self-efficacy lead to employment, enterprise creation, income generation and business sustainability.

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