

Repositioning Business Education for Digital and Entrepreneurial Transformation in Africa: The Role of Green Business, Social Entrepreneurship, and Ethical Leadership

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Abstract

This paper examines how Business Education can be repositioned to promote digital and entrepreneurial transformation in Africa through the integration of green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership. The study responds to the growing demand for graduates with digital competencies, entrepreneurial mindsets, sustainability awareness, and ethical leadership capabilities needed to address Africa's socio-economic, environmental, and technological challenges. Despite increasing emphasis on entrepreneurship education, Business Education curricula in many African higher education institutions remain insufficiently aligned with the demands of the digital economy, green innovation, and socially responsible enterprise development. Adopting a conceptual research design, the paper draws on a review and synthesis of contemporary literature, policy documents, and relevant global practices to examine strategies for integrating digital technologies, sustainability, social innovation, and ethical leadership into Business Education curricula and instructional practices. The analysis indicates that integrating these dimensions can enhance graduates' digital literacy, innovative capacity, entrepreneurial intentions, environmental responsibility, ethical decision-making, and ability to establish sustainable enterprises that generate economic and social value. The paper highlights curriculum reform, technology-enabled teaching and learning, industry-academia collaboration, experiential learning, and supportive government policies as critical strategies for strengthening Business Education in Africa. It concludes that repositioning Business Education around digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership is essential for developing responsible entrepreneurs and future-ready business professionals capable of promoting inclusive economic growth and sustainable development. The paper recommends strengthening curriculum innovation, digital infrastructure, institutional partnerships, and continuous professional development for educators to accelerate digital and entrepreneurial transformation across Africa.

Keywords: Business Education, Digital Transformation, Green Business, Social Entrepreneurship, Ethical Leadership, Sustainable Development, Africa.

1.0 Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed rapid technological advancement, changing business models, environmental challenges, and socio-economic inequalities that have fundamentally transformed the global business environment. Emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, cloud computing, big data analytics, the Internet of Things (IoT), and financial technology (FinTech) are reshaping business operations, employment patterns, and entrepreneurial activities. At the same time, climate change, resource depletion, and social inequalities have increased the demand for sustainable and responsible business practices (Schwab, 2016; OECD, 2023; United Nations, 2023). These developments have placed increasing pressure on higher education institutions, particularly Business Education programmes, to produce graduates with digital competencies, entrepreneurial skills, sustainability consciousness, and ethical leadership capabilities.

Business Education plays a strategic role in developing the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and competencies required for employability, self-reliance, entrepreneurship, and effective participation in economic development (Osuala, 2009; Amoor, 2010). However, the changing nature of work requires graduates to possess competencies that extend beyond conventional business knowledge. Employers increasingly demand digital literacy, creativity, innovation, critical thinking, adaptability, problem-solving, collaboration, and ethical decision-making, particularly within the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (World Economic Forum, 2025). Consequently, there is a growing need for curriculum reform and innovative pedagogical approaches that connect Business Education with digital transformation, entrepreneurship, sustainability, and responsible leadership.

The need for such transformation is particularly important in Africa, where education systems are expected to contribute to employment creation, entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable economic development. The African Union Agenda 2063, the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020–2030), and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) recognize digital innovation, entrepreneurship, skills development, and economic integration as important pathways to inclusive growth and sustainable development (African Union, 2020; African Union Commission, 2020). Nevertheless, Business Education programmes in many African higher education institutions continue to face challenges relating to curriculum relevance, digital infrastructure, industry linkages, practical entrepreneurship training, and the integration of sustainability and ethical leadership. These challenges may contribute to skills gaps, graduate unemployment, and inadequate preparation for emerging

opportunities in the digital economy (UNESCO, 2021; International Labour Organization [ILO], 2022; World Bank, 2022).

Previous studies have provided evidence of the growing importance of digital competencies in Business Education. For example, Osiesi et al. (2024) examined entrepreneurial digital skills, knowledge, and utilization among Business Education undergraduates at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria, and found that although students demonstrated relatively high levels of digital knowledge and utilization, their entrepreneurial digital skills were only moderate. The study recommended stronger institutional support and the integration of compulsory digital education into the curriculum. Similarly, Ekoh-Nweke and Ikpeama reported that digitalization significantly influenced the acquisition of entrepreneurial and managerial skills among Business Education students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. The findings underscore the importance of developing relevant digital competencies to enhance students' preparedness for the contemporary world of work. These studies demonstrate the value of digital transformation in Business Education; however, they largely focus on digital and entrepreneurial competencies without sufficiently integrating environmental sustainability, social value creation, and ethical leadership.

Green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership provide complementary approaches for addressing these emerging needs. Green business promotes environmentally responsible production, resource efficiency, sustainable innovation, and climate-conscious enterprise development. Social entrepreneurship applies entrepreneurial principles to addressing social problems while creating sustainable economic and social value (Saebi et al., 2019). Ethical leadership, on the other hand, emphasizes integrity, accountability, fairness, transparency, and responsible decision-making (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Northouse, 2022). When these dimensions are integrated with digital transformation, Business Education can equip graduates not only with the ability to use technology and establish businesses but also with the capacity to create enterprises that are environmentally sustainable, socially responsive, and ethically responsible.

Although existing literature has examined digital transformation, entrepreneurship education, sustainability, and ethical leadership, these dimensions are frequently addressed independently. There is therefore a need for an integrated perspective that positions Business Education as a platform for developing digitally competent, environmentally responsible, socially innovative, and ethically grounded entrepreneurs in Africa. Such an approach is particularly relevant given the continent's youth

population, employment challenges, digital expansion, environmental pressures, and need for inclusive economic development.

This paper therefore examines how Business Education can be repositioned for digital and entrepreneurial transformation in Africa through the integration of green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership. It explores strategies for curriculum innovation, technology-enabled teaching and learning, experiential learning, industry-academia collaboration, professional development, and supportive policy frameworks. The paper argues that repositioning Business Education around these interconnected dimensions can strengthen graduates' employability and entrepreneurial capacity while preparing them to create sustainable businesses, address societal challenges, promote ethical practices, and contribute meaningfully to Africa's inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

Conceptual Clarification

Business Education

Business education is an educational programme that equips learners with the knowledge, skills, competencies, values, and attitudes required for employment, entrepreneurship, and lifelong learning in a dynamic business environment (Osuala, 2009). Traditionally, the discipline focused on preparing learners for careers in accounting, marketing, office technology, commerce, and business management. However, the emergence of digital technologies, globalization, and the knowledge economy has expanded its scope to include entrepreneurship, digital literacy, innovation, sustainability, and ethical leadership (Okoye & Ugwoke, 2021). In Nigeria, business education contributes significantly to human capital development, self-reliance, wealth creation, and national economic growth (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). To remain relevant in the digital era, business education must adopt competency-based curricula that integrate technology, experiential learning, sustainability, and entrepreneurial thinking to prepare graduates for the evolving labour market (World Economic Forum, 2025).

Digital Transformation

Digital transformation refers to the strategic integration of digital technologies into organizational and educational processes to improve innovation, efficiency, competitiveness, and value creation (Vial, 2019). Within business education, it involves redesigning curricula, teaching methods, assessment practices, and institutional systems to develop graduates with competencies in artificial intelligence,

data analytics, financial technology (FinTech), cloud computing, e-commerce, and digital entrepreneurship (OECD, 2023). Although Africa's digital economy presents significant opportunities for entrepreneurship and regional integration, inadequate infrastructure and limited digital skills continue to hinder effective implementation. Consequently, business education institutions must equip learners with practical digital competencies required to compete successfully in the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Schwab, 2016).

Green Business

Green business refers to environmentally sustainable business practices that seek to achieve economic growth while minimizing environmental degradation through efficient resource utilization, renewable energy adoption, waste reduction, recycling, and sustainable production systems (United Nations Environment Programme [UNEP], 2023). Integrating green business into business education enables students to develop competencies in sustainable business models, green innovation, environmental accounting, and climate-conscious entrepreneurship. Such competencies are essential for addressing Africa's environmental challenges while creating employment opportunities and supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (United Nations, 2023).

Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurship is the process of developing innovative and sustainable business solutions that address societal challenges while generating economic value (Saebi et al., 2019). Unlike conventional entrepreneurship, which primarily emphasizes profit generation, social entrepreneurship combines financial sustainability with measurable social impact. Within business education, it promotes creativity, innovation, leadership, empathy, and problem-solving, enabling graduates to address issues such as unemployment, poverty, inequality, and financial exclusion through enterprise development. This approach is particularly relevant to Africa's quest for inclusive and sustainable economic development.

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership involves demonstrating integrity, accountability, fairness, transparency, and responsible decision-making in organizational and entrepreneurial activities (Brown & Treviño, 2006). As businesses increasingly adopt digital technologies, ethical leadership has become essential for addressing issues such as data privacy, cyber security, corporate governance, environmental

responsibility, and responsible innovation (Northouse, 2022). Integrating ethical leadership into business education prepares graduates to balance profitability with social responsibility and sustainable development, thereby strengthening public trust and organizational performance.

Conceptual Synthesis

Business education serves as the foundation for developing graduates capable of responding to the opportunities and challenges of the digital economy. The integration of digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership into business education provides a comprehensive framework for producing graduates who are digitally competent, entrepreneurially innovative, environmentally responsible, socially conscious, and ethically grounded. Collectively, these competencies enhance graduate employability, stimulate sustainable enterprise development, support environmental stewardship, promote social inclusion, and contribute to Africa's digital and entrepreneurial transformation.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is anchored on Human Capital Theory, Transformative Learning Theory, and Stakeholder Theory. These theories provide a suitable framework for explaining how business education can be transformed to develop graduates with digital competencies, entrepreneurial skills, environmental consciousness, and ethical leadership needed for Africa's sustainable development.

Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory developed by Schultz (1961) and Becker (1964), views education as an investment that enhances individuals' knowledge, skills, productivity, and economic contribution. The theory suggests that business education should equip learners with relevant competencies such as digital literacy, entrepreneurship, innovation, sustainability, and ethical decision-making to meet the demands of the modern labour market (OECD, 2023). It therefore provides a strong justification for curriculum reform and investment in quality business education.

Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative Learning Theory, proposed by Mezirow (1978, 1991), explains that effective learning occurs when learners critically reflect on their assumptions and adopt new perspectives. The theory supports learner-centered approaches such as experiential learning, project work, business simulations,

and entrepreneurship training, which foster creativity, innovation, problem-solving, and responsible entrepreneurial behaviour. It is relevant because it encourages graduates to view business as a means of creating economic, social, and environmental value.

Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder Theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), emphasizes that organizations should create value for all stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities, governments, and the environment. In business education, the theory highlights the importance of collaboration among educational institutions, industry, government, and society in developing curricula that promote sustainability, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership.

Relevance of the Theories to the Study

Collectively, these theories provide the foundation for this paper. Human Capital Theory emphasizes investment in relevant skills, Transformative Learning Theory supports innovative teaching and learning, while Stakeholder Theory promotes sustainability and collaborative partnerships. Together, they support the integration of digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership into business education to produce graduates capable of driving Africa's digital and entrepreneurial transformation.

Review of Related Literature

Business Education and Digital Transformation

The digital economy has transformed the competencies required of business graduates, making digital literacy, innovation, entrepreneurship, and technology-driven problem-solving essential for employability and enterprise development (Vial, 2019). Consequently, business education is shifting from traditional vocational preparation to competency-based education that integrates artificial intelligence, financial technology (FinTech), data analytics, e-commerce, and digital marketing into teaching and learning (Schwab, 2016; OECD, 2023). Recent studies indicate that universities are redesigning curricula, strengthening digital infrastructure, and adopting learner-centered pedagogies such as project-based learning, business simulations, and online collaboration to prepare graduates for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Petrolo et al., 2023; Farias-Gaytan et al., 2023). However, in many African countries, including Nigeria, inadequate infrastructure, limited digital competence among lecturers, and insufficient funding continue to hinder effective digital transformation. Consequently,

many business education programmes remain largely theoretical, limiting graduates' readiness for the digital economy (Amoor, 2010; Okoye & Ugwoke, 2021).

Green Business, Social Entrepreneurship, and Ethical Leadership

Green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership have become central to sustainable business education. Green business promotes environmentally responsible production, efficient resource utilization, and sustainable innovation (UNEP, 2023). Social entrepreneurship emphasizes creating innovative solutions to societal challenges while maintaining financial sustainability (Saebi et al., 2019). Ethical leadership promotes integrity, accountability, transparency, and responsible decision-making in business organizations (Brown & Treviño, 2006; Northouse, 2022). Studies have shown that integrating these concepts into business education enhances students' sustainability awareness, entrepreneurial competence, innovation, and responsible leadership (Lozano et al., 2021; Bacq & Lumpkin, 2021). Nevertheless, these concepts are often taught separately rather than as complementary components of entrepreneurship education, particularly in African higher education institutions.

Empirical Review and Knowledge Gap

Empirical studies have increasingly examined the competencies and institutional conditions required to reposition Business Education for the contemporary digital and entrepreneurial economy. The evidence suggests that digitalisation, entrepreneurship education, curriculum innovation, experiential learning, and industry engagement can significantly strengthen the capacity of Business Education students to participate effectively in emerging economic opportunities.

Osiesi, Adegboyega, Fadiya, and Blignaut (2024) investigated entrepreneurial digital skills, knowledge, and utilisation among 250 Business Education undergraduates at the Federal University Oye-Ekiti, Nigeria. The study found that the students possessed a moderate level of entrepreneurial digital skills, although their entrepreneurial digital knowledge was high and their utilisation of such knowledge was reported to be very good. The researchers recommended the creation of an enabling environment for digital skill development and the integration of compulsory digital education into university curricula. The finding demonstrates that possessing digital knowledge does not necessarily guarantee adequate entrepreneurial digital competence, thereby highlighting the need for Business Education curricula to provide more practical opportunities for students to apply digital skills.

Similarly, Ekoh-Nweke and Ikpeama examined the influence of digitalisation on skills acquisition among Business Education students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. Using data from 230 students, the study reported that digitalisation highly influenced the acquisition of entrepreneurial and managerial skills. The researchers concluded that digital skills are essential for enabling Business Education students to function effectively in the contemporary digital environment. This finding is particularly relevant to the African context because it establishes an empirical relationship between digitalisation and the competencies required for entrepreneurial and managerial activities.

David, Rasheed, and Amoda investigated the relationship between digitalization of skills acquisition and the employability of Business Education graduates in tertiary institutions in Lagos State. Their study involved 240 graduates selected from four tertiary institutions and reported on the relevance of digitalized skills acquisition to graduate employability. The study reinforces the argument that Business Education must respond to changing employment requirements by strengthening digital skills alongside conventional business competencies.

Further evidence is provided by Falobi, who assessed the skills acquired by Business Education students for exploiting digital entrepreneurship opportunities in universities in Lagos State. The study focused on final-year students from the University of Lagos and Lagos State University and examined the extent to which students were prepared to take advantage of opportunities emerging from the digital entrepreneurship economy. The study supports the argument that Business Education should prepare students not merely to seek employment but also to identify and exploit technology-enabled entrepreneurial opportunities.

Beyond digitalization, curriculum content has also been identified as an important determinant of entrepreneurial competence. Ore and Hassan examined the effectiveness of Business Education curriculum content in developing entrepreneurial skills among students in public universities in Lagos State. Their study specifically assessed the extent to which curriculum content contributed to students' entrepreneurial skills development and employability. The study provides support for curriculum restructuring as an important pathway for strengthening entrepreneurial outcomes in Business Education.

Etuk (2024) examined the entrepreneurial skills of Business Education students and their capacity for enterprise development in federal universities in South-South Nigeria. The study involved 416 Business Education students and concluded that relevant entrepreneurial skills provide students with the

knowledge, attitudes, and capabilities required to establish and manage small enterprises effectively. The researcher recommended, among other measures, that Business Education lecturers should possess appropriate entrepreneurial competencies that can be transferred to students. This finding highlights the importance of both curriculum content and lecturer competence in developing entrepreneurial capacity.

The importance of digital resources for entrepreneurship education has also been demonstrated by Nwafor, who investigated the availability and utilization of digital resources for entrepreneurship skills acquisition among final-year Business Education students in Colleges of Education in Anambra State. The study focused on the extent to which digital resources were available and utilized in supporting entrepreneurship skills acquisition. This evidence suggests that effective digital transformation requires not only curriculum reform but also access to appropriate digital resources and learning environments.

The reviewed studies collectively demonstrate that digitalization, entrepreneurial skills, curriculum relevance, and access to digital resources are important for strengthening Business Education. However, the empirical evidence remains largely concentrated on digital competencies, entrepreneurship, employability, and curriculum issues. Comparatively less attention has been given to how these dimensions can be integrated with green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership.

Research on ethical leadership provides further evidence of the importance of responsible leadership for sustainable business practice. Dey et al. (2022), for example, empirically examined the relationship between ethical leadership and sustainable business performance using data from 327 mid-level managerial employees. Their findings showed that ethical leadership significantly influenced employees' voluntary environmental behaviour, which subsequently contributed to sustainable organizational performance. The study also identified ethical climate as an important mechanism linking ethical leadership with sustainable behaviour. This finding is significant for Business Education because it demonstrates that ethical leadership can connect individual values and responsible behaviour with broader sustainability outcomes.

Similarly, AlHares (2025) examined the relationship between ethical leadership, corporate sustainability, and financial performance, with particular attention to organisations' alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals. The study provides recent empirical evidence of the relevance of ethical leadership to sustainability and organisational performance. These findings reinforce the need to prepare Business Education graduates who can combine entrepreneurial and technological capabilities with ethical and sustainability-oriented decision-making.

Knowledge Gap

The empirical evidence reviewed above demonstrates that considerable attention has been given to individual dimensions of the proposed transformation of Business Education. Osiesi et al. (2024), Ekoh-Nweke and Ikpeama, David et al., and Falobi, for example, provide evidence concerning digital skills, digitalisation, digital entrepreneurship, and employability among Business Education students. Ore and Hassan and Etuk (2024) emphasise curriculum content and entrepreneurial skills development, while Dey et al. (2022) and AlHares (2025) demonstrate the relevance of ethical leadership to sustainable organisational outcomes.

However, these studies largely examine the variables independently or in limited combinations. There is insufficient empirical and conceptual evidence on how digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership can be deliberately integrated within Business Education as a unified framework for Africa's transformation. In particular, existing Business Education studies have paid considerably more attention to digital and entrepreneurial competencies than to environmental sustainability, social value creation, and ethical leadership. The gap is therefore not simply a lack of studies on each variable, but the absence of an integrated framework explaining how the four dimensions can interact within Business Education.

This gap is particularly important in Africa, where Business Education is expected to contribute simultaneously to graduate employability, entrepreneurship, digital inclusion, environmental sustainability, social development, and responsible leadership. The present paper addresses this knowledge gap by proposing an integrated conceptual framework that positions digital transformation as the technological foundation, green business as the sustainability dimension, social entrepreneurship as the social-value dimension, and ethical leadership as the responsible-governance dimension of Business Education transformation. The framework therefore provides a broader basis for repositioning Business Education as a catalyst for digital innovation, sustainable enterprise development, social problem-solving, ethical business practice, and inclusive economic growth in Africa.

Discussion

The findings from the reviewed empirical studies, when examined through Human Capital Theory, Entrepreneurial Competence Theory, Triple Bottom Line Theory, and Ethical Leadership Theory, demonstrate the need for a fundamental repositioning of Business Education in Africa. The four theoretical perspectives collectively suggest that Business Education should develop not only

employable graduates but also individuals with the knowledge, skills, values, and capabilities required to create economic, social, and environmental value. The discussion therefore focuses on how digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership can be integrated to achieve this broader purpose.

Business Education and the Development of Future-Ready Human Capital

Human Capital Theory provides a strong foundation for understanding the need to transform Business Education. Becker (1964) argues that investment in education and skills enhances individuals' productivity and economic contribution. In the context of the contemporary African economy, the value of Business Education increasingly depends on its ability to equip graduates with competencies that are relevant to technological and labour-market changes.

This position is supported by Osiesi et al. (2024), who found that Business Education students possessed considerable digital knowledge and utilization but demonstrated only moderate entrepreneurial digital skills. Similarly, Ekoh-Nweke and Ikpeama reported that digitalization significantly influenced the acquisition of entrepreneurial and managerial skills among Business Education students in public universities in South-East Nigeria. David et al. also established the relevance of digitalised skills acquisition to the employability of Business Education graduates. These findings suggest that simply exposing students to digital technologies is insufficient. Business Education must deliberately develop the ability to apply digital technologies to solve problems, identify opportunities, innovate, and create value.

Consequently, curriculum transformation should focus on developing digital literacy alongside higher-order competencies such as creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, adaptability, data literacy, and innovation. Emerging areas such as artificial intelligence, business analytics, FinTech, e-commerce, digital marketing, and cloud-based business applications should be integrated into relevant Business Education courses. From the Human Capital Theory perspective, such transformation represents an investment in the capabilities required for graduates to remain productive and competitive in Africa's changing economy.

Entrepreneurship Education and Enterprise Development

Entrepreneurial Competence Theory provides a second foundation for interpreting the reviewed evidence. The theory emphasizes the competencies required to identify opportunities, innovate, mobilise

resources, take calculated risks, and create and manage enterprises. Business Education therefore needs to move from predominantly knowledge-oriented entrepreneurship education towards competence-based and experiential approaches.

The findings of Ore and Hassan concerning Business Education curriculum content and entrepreneurial skills development support the importance of curriculum relevance in preparing students for entrepreneurship. Etuk (2024) similarly found that entrepreneurial skills contribute to students' capacity for enterprise development and emphasized the importance of lecturers possessing relevant entrepreneurial competencies. Falobi's study also highlights the importance of preparing Business Education students to exploit opportunities created by digital entrepreneurship.

These findings indicate that entrepreneurship education should not be restricted to teaching concepts such as business planning and sources of finance. Students need opportunities to develop and test business ideas, interact with entrepreneurs, participate in incubation programmes, undertake internships, conduct market research, develop digital business models, and solve authentic business problems. Experiential learning can therefore provide the bridge between entrepreneurial knowledge and entrepreneurial competence.

For African economies facing high youth unemployment and limited formal employment opportunities, this shift is particularly important. Business Education graduates should be prepared to become both job seekers and job creators. Developing entrepreneurial competence can strengthen self-employment, enterprise creation, innovation, and local economic development.

Digital Transformation as a Driver of Entrepreneurial Innovation

The empirical evidence further establishes digital transformation as an essential component of contemporary Business Education. David et al., Falobi, Osiesi et al. (2024), and Ekoh-Nweke and Ikpeama collectively demonstrate the growing importance of digital competencies for employability, entrepreneurship, and managerial capability.

However, digital transformation should be understood more broadly than the provision of computers or the use of online teaching platforms. It involves developing the capacity of students and educators to use digital technologies to create new products, services, markets, processes, and business models. Business Education should consequently expose students to AI-assisted business decision-making, data

analytics, digital financial services, e-commerce, social media marketing, cyber security awareness, and other technologies relevant to contemporary business.

Nwafor's study on the availability and utilisation of digital resources for entrepreneurship skills acquisition further indicates that access to appropriate digital resources is an important condition for effective digital entrepreneurship education. Therefore, curriculum reform must be accompanied by adequate digital infrastructure, reliable internet connectivity, relevant software, digital learning resources, and continuous professional development for educators.

From the Human Capital and Entrepreneurial Competence perspectives, digital transformation enhances the productive and entrepreneurial capabilities of graduates. Nevertheless, technology should serve as an enabler of responsible value creation rather than becoming an end in itself.

Green Business and Sustainable Enterprise Development

The Triple Bottom Line Theory provides an important foundation for incorporating green business into Business Education. Elkington (1997) argues that sustainable organisational performance should consider economic, social, and environmental dimensions rather than financial returns alone. This perspective challenges traditional entrepreneurship education that places primary emphasis on profit and enterprise survival.

Business Education should therefore expose students to green entrepreneurial opportunities such as renewable energy, recycling, waste management, sustainable agriculture, eco-friendly products, green logistics, and resource-efficient production. Students should learn to assess not only whether a business idea is financially viable but also whether it contributes positively to environmental sustainability.

The importance of this dimension is reinforced by Dey et al. (2022), who found that ethical leadership influenced voluntary environmental behaviour and contributed to sustainable organisational performance. Their findings demonstrate that sustainability requires behavioural and leadership dimensions in addition to technical knowledge. Thus, green business education should combine environmental knowledge with entrepreneurial competence and responsible leadership.

For Africa, the integration of green business is particularly significant because the continent faces challenges relating to climate change, environmental degradation, waste management, energy access, and resource sustainability. Business Education can contribute by preparing graduates to identify these challenges as opportunities for sustainable innovation and enterprise development.

Social Entrepreneurship and Social Value Creation

Social entrepreneurship extends the purpose of Business Education beyond individual economic gain to the creation of social value. Within the Triple Bottom Line perspective, social entrepreneurship represents the "people" dimension of sustainable enterprise by encouraging entrepreneurial solutions to problems such as unemployment, poverty, inadequate services, exclusion, and community development.

Business Education programmes should therefore encourage students to identify social problems and develop sustainable enterprise models capable of addressing them. This could include enterprises focused on affordable education, digital inclusion, healthcare support, agricultural value chains, waste management, financial inclusion, and youth empowerment.

The integration of social entrepreneurship is particularly relevant to Africa because many communities continue to experience challenges that cannot be adequately addressed through conventional business models alone. By combining digital technologies with social entrepreneurship, Business Education graduates can develop scalable solutions that reach underserved populations while maintaining financial sustainability.

The significance of this approach is that it changes the definition of entrepreneurial success. Success should not be measured solely by profit or business growth but also by employment generated, communities served, environmental benefits created, and social problems addressed.

Ethical Leadership in the Digital and Entrepreneurial Environment

Ethical Leadership Theory provides the foundation for ensuring that digital transformation and entrepreneurship are pursued responsibly. Brown and Treviño (2006) emphasize ethical leadership through appropriate conduct, fairness, integrity, and the promotion of ethical behaviour. This perspective is increasingly important as businesses rely on AI, big data, digital finance, and online platforms.

Dey et al. (2022) provide empirical support for the connection between ethical leadership and sustainable organisational outcomes, while AlHares (2025) further highlights the relevance of ethical leadership to corporate sustainability and organizational performance. These findings suggest that technological and entrepreneurial competencies should be accompanied by ethical reasoning and responsible leadership.

Business Education should therefore prepare students to address ethical issues associated with data privacy, artificial intelligence, algorithmic bias, misinformation, cyber security, consumer protection, financial transparency, and responsible use of digital platforms. Ethical leadership should consequently be embedded across Business Education courses rather than treated solely as a separate management topic.

This approach can help produce graduates who understand that successful entrepreneurship involves not only identifying profitable opportunities but also considering the consequences of business decisions for employees, customers, communities, society, and the environment.

Curriculum Reform, Industry Collaboration and Educator Development

The reviewed evidence indicates that curriculum transformation cannot occur through changes in course content alone. It requires an ecosystem involving higher education institutions, industry, government, professional organisations, technology companies, and development partners. The findings of Nwafor regarding digital resources and Etuk (2024) concerning lecturer entrepreneurial competence demonstrate the importance of institutional resources and educator capacity.

Business Education institutions should therefore strengthen industry–academia partnerships through internships, mentorship programmes, business incubation, entrepreneurship competitions, consultancy projects, and collaborative curriculum development. Industry participation can ensure that students acquire competencies that correspond to actual labour-market and entrepreneurial requirements.

Similarly, Business Educators require continuous professional development in AI, digital pedagogy, entrepreneurship, green business, social innovation, data analytics, and ethical leadership. A curriculum designed for the digital economy cannot be effectively implemented by educators whose competencies are limited to conventional teaching approaches. Investment in educator development is therefore an essential component of Business Education transformation.

An Integrated Model for Repositioning Business Education

The synthesis of the theoretical and empirical evidence suggests that the four dimensions examined in this paper should not be treated as independent components. They are mutually reinforcing. Digital transformation provides the technological capability; entrepreneurial competence provides the capacity for opportunity recognition and enterprise creation; green business provides the environmental

sustainability orientation; social entrepreneurship provides the social-value orientation; and ethical leadership provides the moral and governance foundation.

This integrated approach can be represented as follows:

Digital Transformation + Entrepreneurial Competence + Green Business + Social Entrepreneurship + Ethical Leadership

This integrated model responds directly to the knowledge gap identified in the empirical review. While existing studies provide evidence on individual dimensions such as digital skills, entrepreneurship, employability, digital resources, and ethical leadership, there remains limited integration of these dimensions with green business and social entrepreneurship within Business Education in Africa.

Implications for Africa's Transformation

The implications of the discussion extend beyond individual graduates and institutions. At the graduate level, the proposed approach can strengthen employability, entrepreneurship, digital competence, ethical judgment, and sustainability awareness. At the institutional level, it can promote curriculum relevance, innovation, industry engagement, and technology-enabled teaching and learning. At the national and continental levels, it can contribute to enterprise development, employment creation, environmental sustainability, social innovation, and inclusive economic growth.

Therefore, repositioning Business Education should be viewed not simply as an educational reform but as a strategic response to Africa's changing economic, technological, environmental, and social realities. A Business Education system founded on human capital development, entrepreneurial competence, sustainability, and ethical leadership can produce graduates capable of using technology responsibly, creating sustainable enterprises, addressing social challenges, and contributing to Africa's digital and entrepreneurial transformation.

Conclusion

Business education remains one of the most strategic disciplines for developing the human capital required to drive economic growth, innovation, and sustainable development in Africa. However, the rapid pace of digital transformation, increasing environmental challenges, changing labour market dynamics, and growing demands for responsible corporate governance have exposed the limitations of traditional business education models that emphasize theoretical knowledge and conventional

vocational competencies. These emerging realities necessitate a paradigm shift in the philosophy, curriculum, pedagogy, and practice of business education across African higher education institutions. This paper examined how business education can be transformed to promote digital and entrepreneurial transformation in Africa through the integration of green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership. Drawing on Human Capital Theory, Transformative Learning Theory, and Stakeholder Theory, the paper argued that these four dimensions are complementary rather than independent components of contemporary business education. Their integration provides a comprehensive framework for preparing graduates with the knowledge, digital competencies, entrepreneurial mindset, sustainability orientation, social responsibility, and ethical values required to thrive in the twenty-first-century knowledge economy. The review of relevant literature revealed that although considerable progress has been made in entrepreneurship education and digital transformation, many business education programmes in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, remain constrained by outdated curricula, inadequate digital infrastructure, limited industry collaboration, insufficient emphasis on experiential learning, and weak integration of sustainability and ethical leadership. These challenges continue to contribute to graduate unemployment, skills mismatch, low entrepreneurial success, and reduced institutional capacity to respond effectively to the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and sustainable development. The paper further established that integrating green business education into business education programmes will equip learners with competencies for environmentally responsible entrepreneurship and sustainable resource management. Likewise, embedding social entrepreneurship will encourage graduates to develop innovative enterprises that address societal challenges while creating economic value. The incorporation of ethical leadership across business education curricula will strengthen integrity, accountability, transparency, and responsible decision-making, thereby promoting sustainable organizational performance and public trust. Collectively, these competencies will enable graduates to establish resilient enterprises capable of contributing to job creation, environmental protection, social inclusion, and national development.

Furthermore, the paper emphasized that the transformation of business education cannot be achieved solely through curriculum reform. It requires sustained investment in digital infrastructure, continuous professional development for business educators, technology-enabled teaching and learning, strong university industry partnerships, entrepreneurship incubation, research commercialization, and supportive government policies. Collaboration among governments, regulatory agencies, higher education institutions, industries, professional bodies, and development partners is therefore indispensable for repositioning business education to meet contemporary societal and economic needs.

In conclusion, transforming business education through the integration of digital transformation, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership provides a viable pathway for developing future-ready graduates who are innovative, digitally competent, environmentally conscious, socially responsible, and ethically grounded. Such graduates will not only improve their employability but will also create sustainable enterprises capable of addressing Africa's developmental challenges and enhancing the continent's global competitiveness. Consequently, repositioning business education in this manner is not merely an educational reform agenda but a strategic investment in Africa's sustainable economic transformation and long-term prosperity.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this paper, the following recommendations are made:

- Business education curricula should be reviewed regularly to integrate digital entrepreneurship, artificial intelligence (AI), financial technology (FinTech), business analytics, green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership to meet the demands of the digital economy.
- Higher education institutions should strengthen partnerships with industry, professional bodies, technology firms, and entrepreneurship development agencies to promote curriculum relevance, research collaboration, mentorship, internships, and graduate employability. Green business, social entrepreneurship, and ethical leadership should be mainstreamed across business education programmes to produce graduates who are environmentally responsible, socially innovative, and ethically grounded. Governments, regulatory agencies, and development partners should provide adequate policy support, funding, and capacity-building programmes to facilitate curriculum innovation, digital transformation, entrepreneurship education, and sustainability initiatives. Further empirical studies should also be encouraged to evaluate the impact of these reforms on graduate employability and sustainable enterprise development in Africa.

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