

**SOFT SKILLS: A SINE QUA NON FOR EMPLOYABILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AMONG BUSINESS EDUCATION GRADUATES IN LAGOS STATE, NIGERIA**

¹Dr. ODUMOSU, Adefunke Adetutu (Correspondent author)

²BRAIMOH, Hammed Olawale

³OGONGO, Sunday Gbenga

⁴OJEYOMI, Adeshina Oluremi

¹Mobile: +234 803 201 5701

E-Mail: odumosuaa@lasued.edu.ng

²Mobile: +234 802 882 6825

E-Mail: braimohho@lasued.edu.ng

³Mobile: +234 802 906 4980

E-Mail: ogongosg@lasued.edu.ng

⁴Mobile: +234 802 303 9088

E-Mail: ojeyomio@lasued.edu.ng

^{1, 2, 3, 4}Department of Business and Entrepreneurship Education,
Lagos State University of Education, Oto-Ijanikin/Epe,
Lagos State, Nigeria.

Correspondent author Email: odumosuaa@lasued.edu.ng

Abstract

The study assessed the effectiveness of soft skills in business education graduates gaining and sustaining jobs and how soft skills could be used in private entrepreneurial practice. The population comprised 360 students made up of 300 level and 200 level students of the Business Education Department in Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education and Lagos State University of Education, respectively and a sample of 186 students, using random sampling and the table for determining sample size for a finite population in determining the sample of the population. The instrument for data collection was 4- a point rating scale of Very Highly (4 points), Highly (3 points), Moderately (2 points) and Lowly (1 point) questionnaire on Soft Skills: A sine qua non for Employability and Entrepreneurship among Business Education Graduates in Lagos State (SKEEBEGLS). Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data generated from the answer to the research questions and the decision rule for the research questions was based on a cut-off point of 2.5 and above for Highly and below 2.5 points for Lowly. The study's findings showed that the respondents agreed that soft skills were highly required to enhance the employability of business education graduates and for entrepreneurial sake. The study concluded that soft skills will improve the employability of graduates of business education and also enhance their technical skills. The study could serve both as operational guidelines for business education undergraduate training, as well as intending entrepreneurs. It was also recommended amongst others that business education graduates must be exposed to various entrepreneurial soft skills and also equip them with all the soft skills for them to create and maintain their customers' needs.

Keywords: Business Education, Entrepreneurship, Employability, Soft Skills, Technical Skills

Introduction

Soft skills, also known as life skills, twenty-first-century skills, transversal skills, or generic skills, encompass a wide range of knowledge, abilities, attitudes, values, beliefs, and habits that are crucial for maximizing employability (López-Alcarria, Olivares-Vicente and de Poza-Vilches, 2019). The essence of soft skills in the competitiveness of business education graduates looking to pursue a career in entrepreneurship and increase their employability cannot be over-emphasized. The value of these skills, which complement technical knowledge and other classroom knowledge learnt in the classroom in the course of coursework at the undergraduate and even postgraduate, provide a critical ground for success in the business world and can set graduates a world apart from their peers, as it creates a fine margin above and between what is known and how it is presented in the world of competition for others to accept. Soft skills encompass a wide range of abilities which differentiate peers and give a more competitive advantage in ever-competing work and business environments.

In giving the background of what skill is general and the entrepreneurial skill especially, Atah, (2018) was specific in describing skill as a set of competencies and attributes that increase a school-leaver's chances of obtaining initial worthwhile employment, maintaining and progressing in the employment, obtaining new employment if required, and being satisfied on the job. He further identified these skills to include but not limited to analytical and problem-solving skills, numeracy, confidence, time management, teamwork, communication skills, information technology, and monitoring skills, however, Okpan (2006) further emphasize that entrepreneurial competencies are requisite for entrepreneurial development and it include ability to capture and retain the attention of customers: ability to promote and sell the organization product; ability to analyze demand and supply situations, ability to acquire effective sales habit, ability to be self-reliant and tact, ability to acquire good sales techniques, ability to carry out effective marketing and information research, and ability to be polite, cheerful and glooming. The above opinions of López-Alcarria, Olivares-Vicente and de Poza-Vilches (2019), Atah (2018) and Okpan (2006) captured the importance of soft skills in complimenting other needed skills that are required for success in entrepreneurial abilities of business education graduates.

Entrepreneurship requires competing multiple critical decisions and significant levels of responsibilities that are vital in navigating the challenges of starting and running a business profitably, hence, the place of soft skills cannot be over-emphasized in analyzing and making these decisions. To enhance soft skills in entrepreneurship, business education programs play a pivotal role in incorporating practical experiences in allowing students to develop and practice these skills in real-world scenarios and this relevance of business education cannot be wished away. Focusing on soft skill development in business education programs will prepare graduates for success in the competitive and dynamic field of entrepreneurship and further lay an ultimately strong foundation in soft skills which can significantly enhance a business education graduate's employability on one hand and entrepreneurial ability on the other to prosper in the job market.

Dewan and Sarker (2017) recognise the importance of soft skills and the role played by the curriculum impacting soft skills training to enhance students' employability both as an employer and employee. Ehsan (2021) clarifies that educators must acknowledge that students need soft skills to succeed in the job market, and equipping them with industry-relevant soft skills knowledge can significantly improve their prospects. According to Chowdhury (2020), including

soft skills assessments in coursework, beyond traditional book knowledge evaluations, can help students acquire a more well-rounded skill set. In summary, this study sheds light on the importance of soft skills for employability and self-empowerment as entrepreneurs, specifically focusing on business Education graduates in Nigeria. In recognizing the significance of soft skills in the 21st-century workforce, this research seeks to bridge the gap between education and workforce performance by exploring the awareness and practices of soft skills among Business Education graduates and further creating an understanding of the status of soft skills education in the process of producing a competitive graduate.

Statement of the Problem

The fact that graduates celebrate their graduation from tertiary institutions with the optimism of work opportunities is an open fact, but the skill required in the implementation of the classroom theories are usually as important as the theories learnt in the classroom as it is not uncommon to see graduate with excellent qualification struggling in on-the-job performance. This then implies the fact that, graduates were not short of classroom experience, however, a complimentary platform to practice these experiences is lacking and required, as performance is not related to qualification, but on the job and field feedback. The absence of such abilities as communication skills, and the inability to integrate classroom experience with workplace expectations, among other challenges different from technical ability are the focus of this study. Therefore, as a compliment to technical or hard skills, soft skills such as those identified by Okpan (2006) include the ability to promote and sell the organization's product; the ability to analyze demand and supply situations, the ability to acquire effective sales habit, ability to be self-reliant and tact, ability to acquire good sales techniques, ability to carry out effective marketing and information research, and ability to be polite, cheerful and glooming that are deficient in graduates needs to be developed to enhance student graduates marketability in the labour market both for self-employment and employees, likewise, to deemphasize theoretical experience to on-field with practical experience developed for the soft skill needed by the students.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to:

- i. Examine the level of relationship between soft skills and success in entrepreneurship.
- ii. Determine the influence of soft skills on the performance of graduates in business education.

Research Questions

In other to fill the research gap identified in the literature review, the researchers will find answers to the following research questions:

- i. Do soft skills impact success in entrepreneurship?
- ii. Do entrepreneurs require soft skills in business performance?

Hypotheses

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between soft skills and entrepreneurial success.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between soft skills and business education graduate business performance

Review of Literature

Soft Skills

Although there is no consensus on exactly what constitutes soft skills, various experts like Youth Business International (2019) have interpersonal skills such as team building, time management, delegation, conflict resolution and stress management. The definition of Youth Business International (2019) is further expanded to include being resilient, curious, taking risks, being adaptable and creative or innovative. The foregoing then shows that soft skills refer to a broad set of skills and competencies, behaviours and attitudes, and distinct personal qualities that enable people to effectively navigate their environment either formal or informal; work well with others, perform well, and achieve their goals. These skills are broadly applicable and complementary to other skills such as technical, vocational, and academic skills. They further described soft skill as any skill that (a) can be cultivated among youth, (b) can be expressed in the form of behaviours, skills, or attitudes that are observable and measurable, and (c) can be understood by employers, youth, program implementer and researchers alike. The team further used “soft” to refer to those skills which are complementary to “hard” academic and technical skills, and which are applicable across wide positions and fields.

Soft skills can further be referred to as a set of functional aspects of an individual’s personal attitudes, behaviours and social attitudes that enable enhanced effective interaction with others in a workplace or social cycle. These skills are essential for building enduring and healthy relationships, effective communication and collaborating with others. Soft skills are a reflection of life experiences, continuous interaction and engagement with others and self-reflection of abilities and personae which can be honed through various methods such as attending workshops, reading books, or seeking feedback from others. Soft skills play a crucial role in employability, as they contribute to work effectiveness and add value to companies in today's competitive corporate environment (Muindi & Thinguri 2022). These skills encompass personality, professional attitudes, social styles, friendliness, and optimism, significantly impacting human connections and improving life management and character (Majid et al, 2019). Soft skills such as positive thinking, drive, and meaningful communication are particularly important (Tsirkas, Chytiri and Bouranta, 2020).

According to Gajendra (2015), soft skills are those skills that enable you to fit in at a workplace and be able to perform as a member of a team. They include your personality, emotional intelligence, attitude, flexibility, motivation, and manners. Soft skills are so important that they are often the reason employers decide whether to keep or promote an employee. To succeed at work, you must get along well with all the people with whom you interact; team spirit, including managers, co-workers, clients, vendors, customers, and anyone else you communicate with while on the job. Gajendra (2015) further emphasizes that soft skills are different from hard skills (also known as technical skills) that are directly relevant to the job to which you are applying or intend to establish as an entrepreneur, which are often more quantifiable, and easier to learn than soft skills. They include the expertise necessary for an individual to successfully do the job, are job-specific and are typically listed in job postings and job descriptions. Hard skills are acquired through formal education and training programs, including college, apprenticeships, short-term training classes, online courses, and certification programs, as well as on-the-job training.

Gajendra (2015) identified 10 fundamental soft skills required to succeed in the world of business and they include: stress and time management, decision-making and negotiation, leadership and team building, capacity building, ethical values, creativity at the workplace, group discussion, job interviews, professional presentation, employment communication: resume and job application. Vasanthakumari (2019) identified two soft skills: Interpersonal personal attributes and Personal attributes. Interpersonal attributes include: Empathy, Leadership, Communication, Teamwork, Good manners, Ability to teach, Working well with diversity and Self-confidence. Personal attributes consist of Optimism, Responsibility, Sense of humour, Integrity, Time management, Motivation, and Common Sense.

Entrepreneurial Skills for Employability

Entrepreneurship is a process of bringing together creative and innovative ideas, combining them with management and organization skills to meet an identified need and thereby create wealth (Mamman, 2021). Therefore, Entrepreneurship is the creation of skills to add value to the living of self and members of society. Entrepreneurship cannot be fully discussed in isolation of who an entrepreneur is. Globally, governments are increasingly recognizing the positive impact that the creation of new businesses and value can have on employment, as well as the competitive advantages that small firms can bring to the marketplace (Scase, 2000). Moreover, as entrepreneurship provides benefits in terms of social and economic growth, there are also benefits in terms of individual fulfillment, without the barriers of class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and race.

Kutzhanova (2009) examined an Entrepreneurial Development System located in the Appalachian region of the USA and identified four main dimensions of skill needed to be competitive:

- **Technical Skills** - which are those skills necessary to produce the business's product or service;
- **Managerial Skills**- which are essential to the day-to-day management and administration of the company;
- **Entrepreneurial Skills** - which involve recognizing economic opportunities and acting effectively on them;
- **Personal Maturity Skills** - which include self-awareness, accountability, emotional skills, and creative skills.

Baba (2021) described skill as manual dexterity acquired through the repetitive performance of an operation. Skill is further seen as the ability to perform or carry out complex activities using one's muscular dexterity and cognitive skills with ease of operation in order to achieve a set goal. Collins (2014) defines skill as expertness, aptitude and competence appropriate for a particular job. Boyatiz (2015) sees skill as the ability to demonstrate a system and sequence of behaviour that is functionally related to attaining a goal.

Employability skills according to Ajuluchukwu and Osakwe (2019) are a range of abilities or competencies that one may develop during one's life through education, training, work experiences interest and extra-curricular activities. Akeke et al (2022) identified marketing skills as fundamental skills expected of entrepreneurs for success, and marketing as skills applied to traditional marketing functions like advertising, sales, promotion, public relations, marketing research and brand management. They further opined that these skills are highly valued by entrepreneurs in almost all sectors of the economy and job market and that an entrepreneur is

expected to use these skills in persuading the public of the quality of his/her brand, thereby ensuring the product sells. James (2015) also stated that business education students are to be skilled in both human relations competence and marketing competence to run businesses competitively.

Theoretical Review

Various theories have been developed by various scholars on the concept of soft skills and graduate employability and these theories have had fundamental effects on the study of soft skills. Among these theories are:

- i. Human Capital theory
- ii. Control theory
- iii. Goal setting theory
- iv. Attribution theory.

This study shall focus on the Human Capital theory as a result of its emphasis on the relationship between education, competency and building business for economic advancement. The human capital theory termed education as an essential key in building an economy and treated it as an essential aspect of being competent in global economic advancements (Becker, 2009; Rothwell & Arnold, 2007; Van Loo & Rocco, 2004). Human capabilities or development emphasize a majority of principles involving professional preparation, knowledge generation, public sphere enlightenment, and cultural knowledge (McLean, Abbas and Ashwin., 2012).

The human capital theory highlights education as the key enabler of the economy and global economic participation (Bridgstock, 2009). Employers are considering qualified labour as production and success factors. The human capital term is utilised to reflect the quality of labour, hence the knowledge and skills (Mohr & Seymore, 2018)

Implication of the Soft skill Human Capital theory

It indicates the importance of education and the curriculum in building graduates who are capable of communicating and representing the information within industry standards. This includes enhancing creativity and problem-solving skills, which are very important in uncertain situations. Along with these points, students must have interaction skills, which means being more sociable; this could help in forming teamwork or leadership. Hence, the addition of these skills in the university syllabus is essential to produce graduates with soft skills capabilities. This shows the requirements and necessity of soft skills in employability. Along with this, it also indicates the alignment between industrial requirements and the ways through which students can learn the required knowledge.

Fundamental Soft Skills Entrepreneurship and Employability of Business Education Graduates

Business Education graduates as major players across sectors globally, as their training affords them to be fit both for classroom and office administration and is not restricted to corporate and private sectors, banking, government, NGOs, and even international organizations, as they can serve in various capacity within an organisation. Business education graduates are wide in a range of soft skills, not limited to communication, interpersonal skills, self-management, people management, teamwork, emotional intelligence, time management, problem-solving, decision-making, critical thinking, leadership, and creativity (Bartel, 2018).

The range of soft skills further includes active listening, speaking, reading, writing, observation, comprehension, non-verbal communication, open-mindedness, self-confidence, empathy, presentation, story-telling and media selection, which are all essential communication skills for career success (Hardjati & Febrianita, 2019). Strong self-management skills are also crucial for career advancement and overall personal success in business (King, 2004). People management and leadership soft skills that focus on developing, motivating, and leading employees to increase productivity and facilitate career advancement are also essential in entrepreneurial ability. Effective people management involves managing workflow staff performance and fostering positive manager-employee relations (Hoffman & Tadelis, 2021).

The entrepreneur cannot be deficient in soft skills such as understanding individuals' attitudes and body language within the work setting, utilizing and controlling emotions to reduce stress, communicating effectively, empathising, problem-solving ability and diffusing conflicts, which are part of soft skills related to emotional intelligence must be within the fingertips of the entrepreneur. Emotional intelligence is not only beneficial for fostering positive relationships but also for academic achievement, work performance, and personal goals which will enhance both individual and organisation productivity. It also enhances creativity, social impact, analysis, reasoning, advanced problem-solving, and design thinking (Mayer, Roberts & Barsade, 2008). Time management skill is another crucial soft skill for effectively utilizing time and organizing work in a goal-oriented manner without experiencing excessive stress. (Sainz, Ferrero & Ugidos, 2019).

Multi-tasking and prioritization are essential to effective time management, ensuring that schedules, meetings, and projects are managed efficiently. Additionally, problem-solving skills enable individuals to identify, create, and apply solutions, which employers highly value as it encourages self-reliance and independent thinking (Mourtos, Okamoto & Rhee, 2004). Hess and Bacigalupo, (2011) stressed the point that decision-making skills as a soft skill involve understanding needs within the group and team, assessing options available, and making informed choices by weighing the pros and cons and forecasting potential outcomes that will improve the productivity of all resources both human and machine within the enterprise. Effective decision-making skills enhance productivity, efficiency, and organizational success. He further stressed that critical thinking involves evaluating information options, establishing conceptual logical conclusions and making informed judgments that will reduce collateral damages. It requires careful research, data collection, and solution analysis.

Leadership as a soft skill is an undeniable factor in motivating others towards success as an entrepreneur. Effective management and team leadership result in strong, productive, and stable workplaces. Creating a healthy and consistent work environment requires strong leadership skills that incorporate various inputs and weigh input without prejudice (Adair, 2007). Likewise, creativity involves thinking differently, adapting approaches from different fields, and accepting new ideas and solutions. Creative thinking boosts adaptability and enhances resilience, problem-solving abilities, empathy, happiness, and learning (Nakano & Wechsler, 2018).

The need therefore for more understanding and application of soft skills among graduates of Business Education for success in entrepreneurial efforts cannot be over-emphasized. Therefore,

this study aims to fill this knowledge and practice gap by investigating the specific context of soft skills among business Education graduates, shedding light on their awareness and actual application of these essential skills. By addressing this research gap, the study seeks to contribute to the literature and research on soft skills in Business Education graduates and provide valuable insights to inform future strategies for enhancing soft skills education and training programs in Nigeria.

Methodology

The survey research design is considered suitable for seeking opinions, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour of the respondents on soft skilling in entrepreneurship for business education graduates' employability. The population for the study comprised all students from the Department of Business Education, made up of 210 students in 300level who are Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) undergraduates of Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education and 150 students 200level undergraduates of Lagos State University of Education, in the 2022/2023 academic session, making a population of 360 students, using random sampling and the Table for Determining Sample Size for a Finite Population in determining the sample of the population, 186 sample of the total population was used. The instrument for data collection is a 4- point rating scale of Very Highly (4 points), Highly (3 points), Moderately (2 points) and Lowly (1 point) questionnaire on Soft Skills: A sine qua non for Employability and Entrepreneurship among Business Education Graduates in Lagos State (SKEEBEGLS). Mean and standard deviation were used to analyse the data generated from the answers to the research questions and the hypotheses. The decision rule for the research questions was based on a cut-off point of 2.5 and above for Highly: hence, accepted and below 2.5 points for Lowly: unaccepted.

Result

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between soft skills and entrepreneurial success.

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on soft skills as a requisite for entrepreneurial success. (N=186).

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Remark
1.	To what extent do you believe that possessing soft skills influences entrepreneurial success?	3.56	0.82	Highly
2.	In your opinion, how important are soft skills in the context of entrepreneurship?	3.69	0.55	
3.	How would you rate the significance of interpersonal communication skills in entrepreneurial endeavors?	3.45	0.58	
4.	Do you think that empathy and emotional intelligence play a role in determining entrepreneurial success?	2.58	0.87	
5.	How likely do you think it is for entrepreneurs with strong soft skills to outperform those lacking in these skills?	3.77	0.56	
6.	How do you rate soft skills proficiency and entrepreneurial achievements?	3.89	0.65	
7.	From your perspective, how do soft skills contribute to the overall success of entrepreneurs and their ventures?	2.98	0.53	
8.	What factors, apart from soft skills, do you believe are			

crucial for entrepreneurial success?	3.41	0.63
9. How likely do you think it is for entrepreneurs with strong soft skills to outperform those lacking in these skills?	3.93	0.73
10. From your perspective, how do soft skills contribute to the overall success of entrepreneurs and their ventures?	2.79	0.58

Grand Mean **3.4**

From the data presented in Table 1 above, it was revealed that the respondents agreed that soft skills are required as a requisite for entrepreneurial success. The mean ranges from 2.58 to 3.93 and the standard deviation of 53% to 87% indicates agreement on all items.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between soft skills and business education graduate entrepreneurial performance

Table 1: Mean ratings of respondents on soft skills and technical skills in graduate employability. (N=186).

S/N	Item Statement	X	SD	Remark
1.	How important do you believe soft skills are compared to technical skills in determining graduate employability?	3.71	0.56	Highly
2.	In your opinion, what role do soft skills play in complementing or enhancing technical skills for graduates entering the workforce?	3.58	0.89	
3.	How do you perceive the balance between soft skills and technical skills in the current job market for graduates?	3.45	0.76	
4.	How would you measure the impact of soft skills and technical skills on graduate employability, if there is no significant relationship between the two?	3.76	0.69	
5.	How important do you believe soft skills are compared to technical skills in determining graduate employability?	3.25	0.51	
6.	In your opinion, what role do soft skills play in Complementing or enhancing technical skills for graduates entering the workforce?	3.81	0.83	
7.	How do you perceive the balance between soft skills and Technical skills in the current job market for graduates?	3.25	0.53	
8.	Do you think the integration of soft skills and technical skills contributes to the overall employability of graduates?	3.88	0.73	
9.	Can you opine that technical skills alone are sufficient For graduates to secure employment?	3.85	0.81	
10.	Is the curriculum at the tertiary institution sufficient to prepare graduates with a balanced set of soft and technical skills for the job market?	3.45	0.61	
Grand Mean		3.6		

From the data presented in Table 2 above, it was revealed that the respondents agreed that there is a relationship between soft skills and technical skills in graduates' employability. The mean ranges from 3.25 to 3.88 and the standard deviation of 51% to 89% indicates agreement on all items.

Discussion of Findings

Table 1 above revealed that there is a significant relationship between soft skills and entrepreneurial success, as all the respondents are affirmative in their responses. That is an above average of 2.5 is recorded in all the mean responses. This position is supported by Gajendra (2015) who identified 10 fundamental soft skills needed by business education graduates to be competitive and likewise, Hardjati and Febrianita (2019), King (2004) and Sainz (2019) who in various studies, supported the importance of soft skills in entrepreneurial success. This then shows that the place of soft skills in entrepreneurial success cannot be over-emphasized and the need to further emphasize the teaching of these soft skills in the curriculum of business education in line with the provision of the Core Curriculum and Minimum Academic Standards (CCMAS) (2022).

The result shown in Table 2 revealed that all soft skills are highly needed notwithstanding the procession of technical skills to be employable. This position was supported by Kutzhanova et al (2009) when they identified four technical skills about soft skills, likewise, Akeke et al (2022) and James (2015) identified the importance of marketing skills in entrepreneurial success; these are technical skills and James (2015) further pressed the value of human relation; a soft skill, along with soft skills.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it could be concluded that entrepreneurship and employability of business education graduates require soft skills. The lack or absence of these soft skills to complement technical skills affects graduates in embarking on any business venture. The entrepreneurial soft skills would enable business education graduates to handle all types of customers' needs and thereby meet their customers' satisfaction successfully. The skills could serve both as operational guidelines for those in the business as well as a training package for new entrants. The study has provided information on the importance of entrepreneurship soft skills that are required in business education graduates. Therefore, business education graduates need to combine soft skills identified with technical skills acquired in the classroom for effective business management.

Recommendations

- i. There should be clearer instruction on the assessment of soft skills and a more student-centred assessment approach during the Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) so that graduates' soft skill competencies are part of the core experience expected and assessed.
- ii. The curriculum must intentionally incorporate soft skills courses to enhance students' employability and this skill must not only be learnt theoretically but must be in practical sessions as done in moot court.
- iii. Educators must acknowledge that students need soft skills to succeed in the job market, hence, lecturers in business education must not be restricted to academic qualifications, but extended to members of faculty with both academic and industry experience.
- iv. Including soft skills assessments in coursework, beyond traditional book knowledge evaluations, can help students acquire a more well-rounded skill set.
- v. It is essential for universities and institutes to review the current curricula and update them with the latest changes that align with present requirements and the necessity of soft skills in employability

References

- Adair, J. E. (2007). *Develop Your Leadership Skills*. Kogan Page Publishers, Vol.37.
- Ajuluchukwu, E. N, Osakwe, R. I. (2019). Information and communication technology and employability potentials among undergraduate business education students: Towards preparing students for global competitiveness. *Nigerian Journal of Business Education* 6(1),256-264.
- Akeke M. N. G., Oche P. E, Akuegwu B. A & Ushie P. U. (2022) Entrepreneurial skills for business education graduates' employability in Cross River State, Nigeria. *Educational Research and Reviews*, 17(4), 138-144.
- Atah, C. A. (2018). Exploring alternative ways of financing vocational and technical Education in Nigeria in the season of economic recession. *African Journal of vocational Education (AJOVED)* 7(1), 217-226.
- Baba, E. (2021). Entrepreneurial skill acquisition required by business education graduates for employment generation in Imo state. *Journal of Business Education*, 8(2),245-262.
- Bartel, J. (2018). Teaching soft skills for employability. *TESL Canada Journal*, 35(1), 78-92. <https://doi.org/10.18806/tesl.v35i1.1285>.
- Becker, G. S. (2009). Human capital: A theoretical and empirical analysis, with special reference to education. University of Chicago Press. <https://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/H/bo3684031.html>
- Boyatzis, D. (2015). Beyond the frame of management competencies: Towards a contextually embedded framework of managerial competence in organizations. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, 5(1), 26-33.
- Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 28(1), 31–44. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360802444347>
- Chowdhury, F. (2020). Skills gap of business graduates in the banking sector of Bangladesh: Employers' expectation versus reality. *International Education Studies*, 13(12), 48-57. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ies.v13n12p48>.
- Collins, H. (2014). *Collins English Dictionary* (12th edition). Collins-Harper Publishers.
- Dewan, S., & Sarkar, U. (2017). *From education to employability: A case study of Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/rosa/reports/educationemployability-case-study-bangladesh>.

- Ehsan, S. M. A. (2021). Revisiting tertiary education system in Bangladesh: In quest for unraveling existing issues and challenges. *Journal of Contemporary Governance and Public Policy*, 2(1), 45-66. <https://doi.org/10.46507/jcgpp.v2i1.33>.
- Gajendra, S. C. (2015) *Soft Skills: An Integrated approach to maximise personality*. India: Wiley.
- Hardjati, S. & Febrianita, R. (2019). The power of interpersonal communication skills in enhancing service provision. *Journal of Social Science Research*, 14, 3192-3199. <https://doi.org/10.24297/jssr.v14i0.8150>.
- Hess, J. D., & Bacigalupo, A. C. (2011). Enhancing decisions and decision-making processes through the application of emotional intelligence skills. *Management Decision*, 49(5), 710-721. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00251741111130805>.
- Hoffman, M., & Tadelis, S. (2021). People management skills, employee attrition, and manager rewards: An empirical analysis. *Journal of Political Economy*, 129(1), 243-285. <https://doi.org/10.1086/711409>
- James, D. (2015). Marketing competence and human relations competence and how they influence entrepreneurial productivity in the Northern Senatorial District of Ondo State. *International Business Research*, 2(4),78-91.
- King, Z. (2004). Career self-management: Its nature, causes and consequences. *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, 65(1), 112-133. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791\(03\)00052-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0001-8791(03)00052-6).
- Kutzhanova, N., Lyons, T. S. & Lichtenstein, G. A. (2009). Skill-Based development of entrepreneurs and the role of personal and peer group coaching in enterprise development. *Economic Development Quarterly*, 20 (10).
- López-Alcarria, A., Olivares-Vicente, A., de Poza-Vilches, M.F. (2019). School Actions Plans for Sustainable Development. In: Leal Filho, W. (eds) *Encyclopedia of Sustainability in Higher Education*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-11352-0_58
- Majid, S., Eapen, C. M., Aung, E. M., & Oo, K. T. (2019). The importance of soft skills for employability and career development: Students and employers' perspectives. *IUP Journal of Soft Skills*, 13(4), 7-39.
- Mamman, B. (2021). Entrepreneurial skill training needs of business education graduates of colleges of education for self-employment in Nassarawa State. *Integrity Journal of Education and Training*, 5(1). 1-10.
- Mayer, J. D., Roberts, R. D., & Barsade, S. G. (2008). Human abilities: Emotional intelligence. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 507-536. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093646>

- McLean, M., Abbas, A., & Ashwin, P. (2012). Pedagogic quality and inequality in undergraduate degrees. International Research Seminar: Higher Education and Human Development. Bloemfontein, South Africa.
- Mohr, P., & Seymore, R. (2018). Understanding microeconomics. Van Schaik Publishers.
- Mourtos, N. J., Okamoto, N. D., & Rhee, J. (2004). Defining, teaching, and assessing problem-solving skills. In *7th UICEE Annual Conference on Engineering Education* (pp. 1-5).
- Muindi, M. N., & Thinguri, R. (2022). The efficacy of communication skills curricular and instruction on acquisition of soft skills for students in Kenyan universities: A critical analysis. *European Journal of Education Studies*, 9(1), 196-203. <https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v9i1.4109>.
- Nakano, T. C., & Wechsler, S. M. (2018). Creativity and innovation: Skills for the 21 Century. *Estudos de Psicologia (Campinas)*, 35(3), 237-246. <https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-02752018000300002>
- Okpan, M. O. (2006). Business education competencies required for entrepreneurial development. *Business Education Journal*, 5(2), 24-31.
- Rothwell, A., & Arnold, J. (2007). Self-perceived employability: Development and validation of a scale. *Personnel Review*, 36(1), 23–41. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00483480710716704>
- Sainz, M. A., Ferrero, A. M., & Ugidos, A. (2019). Time management: Skills to learn and put into practice. *Education + Training*, 61(5), 635-648. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-01-2018-0027>.
- Scase, R. (2000) - *Entrepreneurship and Proprietorship in Transition: Policy Implications for the Small- and Medium-size Enterprise Sector* - Helsinki: United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research.
- Tsirkas, K., Chytiri, A. P., & Bouranta, N. (2020). The gap in soft skills perceptions: A dyadic analysis. *Education + Training*, 62(4), 357-377. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-03-2019-0060>.
- Van Loo, J. B., & Rocco, T. S. (2004). Continuing professional education and human capital theory. Academy of Human Resource Development International Conference (AHRD) (pp. 98–105). Austin, TX: Academy of Human Resource Development. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED492127>
- Vasanthakumari, S (2019). Soft skills and its application in the workplace. *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, 3(2), 66-72.
- Youth Business International (2019) *Entrepreneurial Soft Skills for the Future: A Scoping Study*. United Kingdom, YBI.