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BRIDGING THE GAP: EXAMINING THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN BUSINESS EDUCATION AND INDUSTRY NEEDS IN BANGLADESH

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ABSTRACT

While business education in Bangladesh has increased significantly, businesses still doubt whether graduates possess the competences required in today's workplaces. This study examines the alignment between business education and industry needs by comparing employer and faculty expectations with final-year business students' self-assessed competencies. Data was obtained from 150 final year students, 50 employers and 50 faculty members in Dhaka and Chittagong through a standardised questionnaire. The analysis was based on curricular relevance, inter-personal skills, digital literacy, sustainability awareness, employability, internship experience, gender and industry-academia partnership. Reliability, normality, homogeneity of variance, and multicollinearity assumptions were checked before applying descriptive statistics, one-sample t-tests, independent-samples t-tests, Pearson correlations, and multiple regression. As a robust approach, bootstrapped confidence intervals based on 5,000 resamples were used. The results demonstrate a large positive curriculum mismatch, suggesting that the required competencies were higher than the students' perceived readiness. Digital-skill mismatch and sustainability perception were not substantially related to perceived employability. Internship experience and gender made no significant influence on curriculum mismatch. However, a stronger industry-academia relationship greatly diminished curricular mismatch. The findings support the Integrated Tertiary Educational Supply Chain Management perspective by demonstrating that curriculum design, industry input, experiential learning and institutional capabilities need to be coordinated to generate work-ready graduates. The report advises structured involvement of employers, quality ensured internships, integration of digital and sustainability aspects, and continual faculty development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Broader Perspective

Business education contributes to economic development by training graduates for management, entrepreneurial, analytical and leadership roles. In Bangladesh, both public and private institutions have increased undergraduate and postgraduate business programs over the last two decades, but the expansion has sharpened concern regarding the labour-market applicability of graduate outcomes (Hasan et al., 2024; Hossain, 2025). Employers are demanding more and more from graduates in terms of applied problem-solving, communication, teamwork, digital capability, and awareness of sustainability issues, while many programs are still heavily reliant on theoretical instruction and examination-based assessment (Islam et al., 2025; Mehta & Singh, 2024). So the important policy challenge is not only whether business schools are turning out more graduates, but whether they are turning out graduates whose abilities meet the needs of industry. The issue's urgency has been further heightened by the Fourth Industrial Revolution as business operations increasingly demand data-driven decision-making, digital communication, automation awareness, innovation, and adaptability (Brown & Lee, 2023; Zhang & Li, 2024). Meanwhile, environmental, social, and governance requirements have made sustainability knowledge a mainstream employability issue rather than a fringe topic. In this context, business schools in Bangladesh need systematic evidence on where mismatches exist and which institutional measures might minimise them. This study adopts the Integrated Tertiary Educational Supply Chain Management (ITESCM) lens to explore business education as a coordinated process in which students, faculty, employers, curriculum designers, infrastructure, and institutional culture interact to produce employable graduates (Chowdhury et al., 2025; Khan et al., 2014). In this view, graduates are not considered passive products; rather, graduate competency is influenced by curriculum relevance, instructor competence, industry participation, evaluation techniques, learning resources, and feedback mechanisms. The study therefore goes beyond a generic assumption that a skills gap exists and empirically evaluates specific weaknesses in curriculum relevance, interpersonal skills, digital literacy and sustainability consciousness. It also tests whether differences in perceived mismatch can be explained by internships, gender and industry-academia partnership.

1.2 Research Problem and Significance

Despite being one of the most popular subjects of study in Bangladesh, many employers estimate that a significant number of business graduates need further training for effective job performance (Islam et al., 2025). The problem is of importance to universities, employers, students and policy officials. A chronic discrepancy impacts the credibility of the programs

and placement of graduates for colleges. For firms, it raises recruitment and training costs. It undermines confidence for pupils and slows transition into meaningful work. For policymakers, it raises problems of the quality and efficiency of higher education investment. While existing research have examined employment difficulties, educational supply chain models, and curriculum alignment, the evidence remains unequal (Hasan et al., 2024; Rahman & Akter, 2024; Sultana & Hossain, 2023). Much of the work done so far is conceptual, descriptive, or qualitative, with fewer studies comparing stakeholder expectations with student self-assessment on emerging competencies like as digital literacy and sustainability. Moreover, the roles of internship experience, gender, and structured industry collaboration are still under-investigated in the context of business education in Bangladesh. These deficiencies need to be filled as curricular change must be evidence-based rather than perception-based.

1.3 Research Objective and Contributions

The main purpose of this study is to assess the gap of business education and industry requirement in Bangladesh. In particular, the study intends to (i) assess the mismatches between employer and faculty expectations and students' perceived competencies in curriculum relevance, interpersonal skills, digital literacy and sustainability awareness; (ii) investigate whether internship experience and gender are associated with differences in curriculum mismatch; and (iii) evaluate whether industry-academia collaboration reduces curriculum mismatch and whether digital and sustainability competencies are linked with perceived employability. The contribution of the work is threefold. First, it advances skills-mismatch research by integrating digital and sustainability capabilities together with traditional curriculum and interpersonal dimensions. Second, it enhances the theoretical framework by using ITESCM and the Theory of Planned Behaviour to explain how institutional coordination and student perception affect employability preparedness. Third, it increases methodological transparency by explicating the target population, sample logic, statistical assumptions and robustness techniques.

1.4 Organization of the Study

The rest of the manuscript is organised as follows. Section 2 covers the literature on skills mismatch, educational supply chain models, digital competences, sustainability integration, experiential learning, and the theoretical foundations of the study. The research design, the target population, the sampling technique, the measurement tools, the statistical assumptions, and the data-analysis strategy are described in Section 3. Section 4 contains descriptive and inferential results with statistical tables. Section 5 explores the findings in relationship to past literature and theories. Section 6 gives suggestions on curricular improvement and stakeholder involvement. Section 7 discusses robustness tests and Section 8 closes the paper with limits and ideas for future research.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Skills Mismatch and Educational Supply Chain Models

Skills mismatch occurs when graduate competencies do not correspond with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected by employers. In business education, mismatch may appear in theoretical knowledge, applied decision-making, communication, professional ethics, technological ability, and workplace readiness. Research in Bangladesh and comparable developing contexts suggests that employers value practical exposure, communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and professionalism, while graduates often report limited opportunities to practice these competencies in classroom settings (Islam et al., 2025; Lee et al., 2023). Educational supply chain models provide a useful way to analyze this problem because they view higher education as a system that transforms inputs into graduate outcomes through curriculum, pedagogy, faculty development, infrastructure, and stakeholder feedback (Devi & Kumar, 2023; Mat Ishah et al., 2022). The ITESCM model is particularly relevant because it emphasizes coordination among universities, students, faculty, employers, and society. From this view, mismatch is not caused by students alone; it reflects weak feedback between industry needs and academic processes. Therefore, curriculum review, employer input, faculty training, and learning resources must operate together if business schools are to reduce graduate capability gaps.

2.2 Digital Competencies and the Fourth Industrial Revolution

“Digital literacy is now a basic employability skill for business careers. Graduates should be skilled in the usage of spreadsheet modelling, data visualisation, enterprise systems, online communication platforms, digital marketing tools, analytics software, and basic artificial intelligence applications. Industry 4.0 has altered the nature of work in businesses, making decision-making more data-intensive and technology-mediated (Brown & Lee, 2023; Zhang & Li, 2024). However, the incorporation of digital information in many corporate programs is inconsistent. Some courses involve computer applications but digital skills are generally taught as standalone technical topics rather than embedded through the curriculum in accounting, finance, marketing, operations, human resource management and entrepreneurship. This poses a risk that graduates are knowledgeable about business theories but unable to apply them with digital tools. A curriculum that fulfils the demands of industry should therefore include a mix of conceptual understanding and repetitive practice of data management, digital communication and technology-supported problem resolution.

2.3 Sustainability and ESG Integration in Business Curricula

Sustainability and environmental, social and governance (ESG) issues are becoming more significant in business decision-making. Organisations are expected to address social responsibility, ethical supplier chains, environmental risk, sustainability reporting and inclusive growth (Taecharungroj, 2023). Awareness of sustainability can strengthen ethical judgement and prepare business graduates for emerging jobs in compliance, reporting, operations, finance and strategic management. But sustainability is typically considered as a separate subject, rather than as an overarching business skill. However, empirical evidence about the amount of sustainability integration in business curriculum in Bangladesh is scarce. Employability research indicates that quality education and institutional resources affect graduate preparation (Hasan et al., 2024). Better curriculum would link sustainability to accounting disclosure, green finance, responsible marketing, human resource diversity, supply chain resilience and entrepreneurship. In the present study, sustainability awareness is added as an individual skill domain because the demands of employers are increasingly extending beyond traditional business knowledge.

2.4 Industry-Academia Collaboration and Experiential Learning

Industry-academia partnership is often considered a means to reduce skills mismatch. Collaboration may take the form of internships, guest lectures, curriculum advisory boards, employer-led case competitions, mentorship, collaborative projects, professional certifications, and faculty-industry interchange (Othman et al., 2016; Rajibussalim et al., 2016). Experiential learning helps students link classroom concepts to real-world challenges, and employers gain a direct channel to communicate their expectations of skills to universities. However, internships are not automatically successful. Their worth is a function of time, supervision, assigned tasks, feedback and integration with academic assessment. A brief or poorly supervised internship might not have much of an influence on students' sense of preparedness. The analysis consequently differentiates between the internship experience as an individual exposure and the larger industry-academia collaboration as an institutional practice. This distinction helps to explain why an internship alone may not eliminate mismatch unless it is embedded inside a consistent collaborative framework.

2.5 Theoretical Foundation

The investigation is guided by two theoretical approaches. The first is the explanation of alignment as the result of a coordinated educational supply chain (Chowdhury et al., 2025; Habib, 2010; Khan et al., 2014). Curriculum, instructor capability, institutional culture, facilities, student participation and employer feedback are inter-dependent elements. If any component is weak, the outcomes for graduates may not meet the expectations of the employment market. This view supports the idea that there should be less mismatch in the curriculum with a greater level of industry-academia collaboration since employer feedback improves the relevance of the curriculum and practical experience. Secondly, Theory of

Planned Behaviour (TPB) is applied to explain students' perceived employability. According to TPB, attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control influence intentions and behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). In the present study, students' judgements of digital aptitude, sustainability consciousness, internship experience, and curricular relevance may influence their confidence in getting a job. For example, students may report a better view of employability if they perceive that they have relevant competences and influence over job preparation. This study integrates ITESCM and TPB to link institutional alignment with individual employability perception.

2.6 Research Gaps

The literature shows a number of gaps. First, although many studies document a wide skills gap, they do not quantify mismatches across key business competency categories (Islam et al., 2025; Mehta & Singh, 2024). Secondly, the Bangladeshi business education studies have paid little attention to digital literacy and sustainability consciousness. Thirdly, earlier research generally mention internship and collaboration together, although individual internship experience may be quite different from systematic industry-academia partnership. Fourth, there is often a lack of methodological transparency about target population, sampling boundaries, assumptions for parametric tests, and robustness checks. The present work fills these gaps by using multi-stakeholder survey data, generating measurable mismatch scores, stating statistical assumptions, and presenting inferential conclusions in tables.

2.7 Hypotheses

Based on the above literature and theoretical foundation, the study tests five hypotheses. H1: The mean curriculum-relevance mismatch between expected competencies and student perceptions is positive and significant. H2: Digital-skill mismatch is negatively associated with students' perceived employability. H3: Students with internship experience report smaller curriculum mismatch than students without internship experience. H4: Curriculum mismatch differs significantly by gender. H5: Students' perception of sustainability integration is positively associated with perceived employability.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design, Target Population, and Sampling

The study's design was a quantitative cross-sectional survey. The target market included final year undergraduate and master's level business students in Bangladeshi public and private universities, employers who hire business graduates, and faculty members involved in business education. Final-year students were selected because they are nearest to the labour-market entry and able to assess their program experience. Employers were included as they reflect industry

expectations and faculty members were included as they are knowledgeable about curriculum design and academic delivery. Because a complete national sampling frame was not available and because the study was exploratory, purposive sampling was adopted. The final sample includes 150 students, 50 employers and 50 faculty members from Dhaka and Chittagong. Employers came from the financial, manufacturing, retail, service and associated business areas. This sample technique promotes stakeholder diversity but does not allow complete statistical generalisation to all Bangladeshi business schools. Thus, the results should be seen as evidence from a meaningful multi-stakeholder sample rather than a nationally representative estimate.

3.2 Measurement Instruments

Data were collected using a standardised questionnaire, which was developed from previous research on skills mismatch and employability (Hasan et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2025). Questionnaire was sectioned into four parts. The first section collected demographic information such as gender, age, type of university, and internship experience. The second component appraised perceived competencies. Students judged their own preparedness in curricular relevancy, interpersonal skills, digital literacy, and sustainability consciousness on a five-point Likert scale (1 = very poor, 5 = very high). Employers and faculty members evaluated the expected level of graduate proficiency using the same scale. The third element examined industry academia collaboration through student exposure to internships, industry projects, guest lectures, mentorship and employer interaction. These were aggregated into a collaboration index. The fourth part examined perceived employability by asking students to rate their confidence of getting a relevant job after graduation. A pilot test was conducted with 20 students to refine phrasing and clarity. Cronbach's alpha for the multi-item scales ranged from 0.72 to 0.86, which above the generally recognised 0.70 level.

3.3 Variable Construction

The expected competency scores were calculated by averaging the employer and instructor ratings for each competency domain. Student perceived scores were based on student self-reports. Mismatch scores were then calculated as expected competency minus perceived competency. Positive numbers imply that stakeholder expectations are higher than how prepared students think they are. numbers closer to zero indicate more alignment. For assessments of curriculum relevance, internship experience, gender and industry engagement, the primary dependent variable was curriculum match. A correlation analysis was performed between the digital-skill mismatch and sustainability perception with the perceived employability. Control variables in regression analysis were gender, internship experience and type of university as appropriate.

3.4 Statistical Assumptions and Data Analysis

Data were analysed by descriptive statistics, one sample t-tests, independent-samples t-tests, Pearson correlations and multiple regression. The primary variables were composite scale scores, the sample size consisted of 150 students, and preliminary diagnostics did not reveal serious breaches leading to the selection of parametric tests. Skewness, kurtosis, histograms and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to test normality. Some variables had small violations of normality, while skewness and kurtosis were within acceptable ranges for composite data in survey research and the sample size was sufficient to justify the use of t-tests based on the central limit theorem . Independent-samples t-tests homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test . Where equality of variances could not be established, Welch-adjusted findings were evaluated. Linear relationships were examined using Pearson correlations and scatterplots were examined to ensure that the relationships were not strongly non-linear. To study the influence of industry-academia collaboration on curriculum mismatch controlling for demographic variables, multiple regression analysis was performed. Multicollinearity was determined via variance inflation factors. The significance level was set at $p < 0.05$. Bootstrapped confidence intervals were produced for important coefficients to improve robustness, based on 5,000 resamples. Bootstrapping was employed because technique does not need precise normality of the sampling distribution, and is suited for generating more stable confidence intervals in moderate sized survey samples.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Sample Profile and Descriptive Statistics

The sample was 150 final year business students, 50 employers and 50 faculty members. The student responders were males and females from public and private universities. Some students had already completed an internship, others had not yet gained experience in a formal workplace training. The descriptive data indicate that predicted competency ratings were consistently higher than students' perceived competencies across all four domains. The highest mean mismatch was in sustainability awareness followed by digital literacy, curriculum relevance and interpersonal skills. This tendency suggests that employers and academics seek more robust applied, technology and sustainability-related preparation than students believe they possess today.

Table 1. Mean Expected Competencies, Perceived Competencies, and Mismatch Scores

Competency domain	Expected mean	Perceived mean	Mismatch mean
Curriculum relevance	3.90	3.20	0.70

Competency domain	Expected mean	Perceived mean	Mismatch mean
Interpersonal skills	4.00	3.40	0.60
Digital literacy	3.80	3.00	0.80
Sustainability awareness	3.70	2.80	0.90

4.2 Hypothesis Testing

The inferential findings offer equivocal support for the hypotheses. The one-sample t-test indicated that the curriculum-relevance mismatch was considerably bigger than zero, therefore confirming H1. This suggests that businesses and professors had greater expectations of curriculum-related competencies than students believed. However, digital-skill mismatch was not substantially connected to perceived employability and H2 was not substantiated. Likewise, curriculum mismatch did not significantly differ by internship experience and gender. Therefore, H3 and H4 were not supported. In addition, the association between perception of sustainability and employability was not significant, therefore H5 was not supported. The results indicate that students may not yet completely associate digital and sustainability competencies with employability even if employers and faculty perceive these competencies as crucial.

Table 2. One-Sample t-Test for Curriculum-Relevance Mismatch

Variable	Mean mismatch	Test value	t	p	Decision
Curriculum relevance	0.70	0	15.41	< .001	H1 supported

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Table 3. Pearson Correlations with Perceived Employability

Relationship	r	p	Interpretation	Decision
Digital-skill mismatch and employability	-0.045	.580	Not significant	H2 not supported
Sustainability perception and employability	-0.047	.570	Not significant	H5 not supported

Table 4. Independent-Samples t-Tests for Curriculum Mismatch

Grouping variable	t	p	Interpretation	Decision
Internship experience	0.12	.900	No significant difference	H3 not supported
Gender	0.05	.960	No significant difference	H4 not supported

4.3 Regression Analysis

Multiple regression was used to test whether industry-academia collaboration predicted curriculum mismatch, controlling for demographic characteristics. The collaboration measure was negatively and significantly related to curriculum mismatch ($\beta = -0.26$, $p = .020$). This finding implies that students who indicated more exposure to industry projects, guest lecturers, mentorship, and company interaction were more likely to claim reduced curriculum mismatch. In contrast, no significant impacts were found for internship experience and gender. The result is noteworthy as it indicates that isolated internships are probably not enough, but continuous and systematic cooperation between institutions and industry is more likely to improve alignment.

Table 5. Regression Summary for Curriculum Mismatch

Predictor	Standardized beta	p	Interpretation
Industry-academia collaboration	-0.26	.020	Significant negative effect
Internship experience	Not significant	> .05	No independent effect
Gender	Not significant	> .05	No independent effect
University type	Controlled	--	Included as a control variable

4.4 Interpretation of Skill Gaps

The data demonstrates that the mismatch is not limited to one competency area. The highest description gaps were seen in the areas of sustainability awareness and digital literacy, which means that the rising competences are still not fully adopted in business education. There was also a statistically significant gap in curriculum relevance, which suggests students perceive a mismatch between what they learn in the classroom and what they need to know to work in the business. The description gap was smallest for interpersonal abilities, but the mismatch was nonetheless relevant, given that communication and teamwork are central to business employability. The lack of strong connections with employability should not be construed as evidence that digital and sustainability competencies are not relevant. Rather, they may reflect that students are underestimating the labor-market worth of such competencies, or that employers have not effectively conveyed their expectations through recruitment and curricular feedback systems.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings have established that there is a significant gap between what is taught in the business education sector and the requirements of the industry in Bangladesh. The substantial gap in the curriculum confirms prior claims that business programs tend to concentrate more emphasis on theoretical knowledge than on applied workplace ability (Hossain, 2025; Islam et al., 2025). From the ITESCM point of view, this mismatch demonstrates the lack of coordination across curriculum design, teaching techniques, input from employers and practical learning tools. Curriculum relevance is not increased by just adding new course titles, but demands constant stakeholder feedback, applied evaluation, faculty development and resource assistance. Thus, the negative effect of industry-academia collaboration on curriculum mismatch is theoretically consistent. Students who engage with companies via projects, mentoring, guest lectures, and other collaborative activities are more likely to comprehend workplace expectations and assess their readiness more accurately.

The absence of substantial difference between students with and without internship experience must be interpreted with caution. This does not necessarily mean that internships are pointless. Instead, it proposes that the internships experienced by students may differ in quality, duration, supervision and relevance. If internships are comprised of mundane administrative activities without planned learning outcomes, they may not reduce curriculum mismatch. The research refines prior assertions on experiential learning by showing that the quality and integration of internships matter more than participation alone (Othman et al., 2016; Rajibussalim et al., 2016). Universities should therefore view internships as academic learning experiences with clear objectives, supervision, reflective reports and employer evaluation.

The non-significant gender effect implies that male and female students reported equivalent degrees of curriculum mismatch. This shows that the alignment problem is systemic and not isolated to one gender group. But equal mismatch does not mean equal opportunity in all ways. Future study should explore if access to high-quality internships, mentoring, digital tools, and professional networks varies by gender or socioeconomic categories.

Digital-skill mismatch and sustainability perception did not have a significant relationship with perceived employability. This conclusion is surprising as contemporary labour markets increasingly value digital and ESG-related competencies (Brown & Lee, 2023; Taecharungroj, 2023; Zhang & Li, 2024). One possible explanation is that students still associate employability mainly with general business knowledge, communication skills, and degree completion. Alternatively, it could be that businesses do not consistently indicate digital and sustainability needs in entry-level recruitment. Thus, the conclusion has both theoretical and practical implications. According to TPB, students' confidence in their employability is dependent on perceived behavioural control and salient beliefs (Ajzen, 1991). If students don't see digital and sustainability skills as vital to employment, these abilities may not impact employability perception even if they are objectively important. At the ground level, colleges and businesses need to communicate these expectations through curriculum, assessment, career services, and recruitment communication.

Overall, the study contributes to the literature by demonstrating that curriculum mismatch remains important, that emerging competencies reveal huge descriptive gaps, and that structured industry-academia collaboration is more influential than internship participation alone. The findings suggest a multi-stakeholder approach to curriculum reform in which business schools act as adaptable educational supply chains and use employer feedback to continuously improve learning outcomes (Chowdhury et al., 2025; Devi & Kumar, 2023).

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

First, business schools should institutionalise frequent curriculum revision with employer involvement. Advisory boards should include of employers, alumni, academics, students and professional groups. Their job should be to review learning outcomes, course material, assessment methodologies and developing skill demands at least once per academic year. Second, digital competencies should be infused throughout the curriculum rather than limited to a single computer subject. Students are expected to routinely utilise data analytics, spreadsheet modelling, digital communication tools, presentation software, business simulation, and basic AI-enabled apps in discipline-specific courses. Third, accounting, finance, marketing, management, entrepreneurship, and supply chain courses should include sustainability and ESG subjects. This integration should focus on actual situations, reporting requirements, ethical decision-making, and local business relevance.

Fourth, we should rethink internships as quality assured experiential learning. Each internship will have specified learning outcomes, a workplace supervisor, a faculty supervisor, minimum time requirements, reflective assessment, and employer feedback. Fifth, colleges need to broaden industry-academia partnership through actual projects, guest lectures, mentorship, case competitions, faculty advice, and joint research beyond internships. 6. Prioritise faculty development. Teachers should have regular exposure to industry practice, digital technologies, case-based teaching and sustainable innovations. Finally, colleges should manage access and equity so that all students, regardless of gender, kind of institution, or socioeconomic background, can participate in meaningful industry-related learning.

7. ROBUSTNESS CHECKS

Confidence in the findings was enhanced by using different approaches. Reliability, measured by Cronbach's alpha, varied from 0.72 to 0.86 for multi-item scales, demonstrating acceptable internal consistency. Histograms, skewness and kurtosis normality diagnostics did not demonstrate serious deviation for the key composite variables. For independent-samples t-tests, homogeneity of variance was tested using Levene's test, and interpretation was corrected based on the case where variance equality is uncertain, where the Welch adjustment is used. Multicollinearity was modest (variance inflation factors <2.0). Sensitivity studies with other mismatch calculations yielded substantively comparable results. The important estimates were derived using bootstrapped confidence intervals with 5,000 resamples. Bootstrapping yields more robust interval estimates when sample size is moderate and normality cannot be assumed perfectly. These checks confirmed the large positive curriculum mismatch and the negative link between industry-academia collaboration and curriculum mismatch.

8. CONCLUSION

This study investigates the congruence between business education and industry needs in Bangladesh through survey results from students, employers and faculty members. The research title was kept, but the analysis was altered to clarify the theoretical underpinning, methods, assumptions, and statistical interpretation. The findings indicate that stakeholder expectations exceed students' perceived competencies, especially in sustainability awareness, digital literacy, and curriculum relevance. Curriculum mismatch was statistically significant, indicating a need for business schools to align better with industry requirements. Perceived employability was not significantly related to digital-skill mismatch and sustainability perspective, and curricular mismatch was not significantly influenced by internship experience and gender. However, industry-academia partnership had a major impact on reducing curriculum mismatch, pointing to planned and persistent employer engagement as being key to increasing graduation preparation.
This research contributes to the business education literature by integrating the ITESCM with the TPB, quantifying the significance of particular competency gaps, and differentiating

between internship engagement and wider industry involvement. Its limitations must be recognised. The sample was purposeful and restricted to chosen stakeholders in Dhaka and Chittagong. Therefore, the results should be generalised to all Bangladeshi universities with care. The cross-sectional design also does not allow causal inference. Future research should engage with larger nationally representative samples, longitudinal designs, employer performance data, and qualitative interviews to explore how curricular modifications effect actual job outcomes over time.

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