

BUSINESS EDUCATION: A BASIC TOOL FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**BY****Adeleke, Aminat Folakemi: Department of Business Education, Emmanuel Alayande College of Education, Oyo; E-mail: aminatabdul19@yahoo.com****Abstract**

This paper examined the role of business education in national development. Business Education programme is rightly perceived as the vehicle for effective human and national development. It equips students with the desirable skills needed to perform specified office business function and provide students with technical knowledge and expertise needed for use in business. There is no gain saying that Business education plays indispensable roles in the social and economic development of any nation because it serves as a link to any meaningful development. On the other hand, development is seen as a purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic well being and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony. Through literature, the paper established a significant relationship between Business education and development. It is in line with this that the role of business education, as a vocational discipline was discussed. Some factors that impede maximum contribution of business education to national development were highlighted.

Keywords: *Business Education and National Development*

Introduction

Business education is one of the occupational area that are richly provided by Vocational and Technical Education in Nigeria. Business education is defined as that area of education, which concerns itself with the vocational and professional preparation for a career in business (Atakpa, 2000). It is also seen as a total educational programme that provide;; knowledge, skills and understanding needed for performance in business world as a consumer or producer. In the view of Osuala (1996), business education is a programme of instruction, which consists of two parts-office education, which is a vocational programme for office career, and general business education, which is a programme that provides information and competencies needed for managing and using business. Many people view business education from a very narrow perspective. They do not know that business education represents a broad and diverse discipline required in all human endeavours. However, for clarity sake, business education is an aspect of total educational programme that provides the knowledge; skills, understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as a producer and /or consumer of goods and services that business offers. The above definitions depict that business education students must be well prepared for sustainable economy.

Akindele (2002), pointed out that a sustainable environment is the one that attempts to satisfy the human needs of the present generation without compromising the interest of future generations of mankind in the use of the same environment. Well-prepared business education programme can provide skills and knowledge needed to cater for this. With the introduction of modern equipment in the place of work, business education should prepare students on graduation to serve productively and efficiently in tome-vow's business environment. Business education is the bedrock of manpower development and poverty alleviation of every nation.

Concept of Business Education

Before delving into the role of business education in curing social media vices, it is ideal to understand the concept of business education and its objectives. Business education programme is concerned with teaching the skills, attitudes and knowledge necessary for a successful career in office and business world. Anyaeneh and Nzegwu (2015) describe business education as education that enriches basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office understanding, office environment and vocational practices. In the view of Onajite (2016), business education encompasses education

programme for business, office occupation, economic understanding, entrepreneurship and it seeks to develop in the learners basic skills for personal use in the future. It can also be defined as that aspect of an educational programme that equips individual function effectively in the world of work and society in which he lives. It is also defined as a field of learning which prepares students for entry and advancement into jobs with in business. He further stated that it prepared students handle that owned business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in business economy.

Business education is the education with training of the individual for business and about business, the formal focusing in those who need career business and the later is for students in the entire school system irrespective of their career aspirations. It is also views as that specialized type of education which by its versatility equips its recipient with skills, competencies and attitude necessary to make him a useful and reliant citizen.

Objective of Business Education

Business education is the type of education that helps an individual to become self-reliant and even a job creator. Therefore, it has the following objectives;

1. To equip student with the desirable skills needed to perform specified office business function.
2. To provide students with technical knowledge and expertise needed for use in business
3. To appreciate the world in which the individual lives by contributing meaningfully to the development of the place.
4. To be able to make informed decisions, spent judiciously and handle problem with ease.
5. An extension is to understand the social political and economic frame work of the country etc.

Concept of Development: Nigeria in Perspective

Development is a complex issue, with many different and sometimes contentious definitions. Development means a progression from a simpler or lower to a more advanced, mature, or complex form or stage (Tilak , 2012). It is also defined as the gradual advancement or growth through a series of progressive changes. A basic perspective equates development with economic growth. Development is an event constituting a new stage in changing the existing situation. Development is also seen as a purposeful change in a society that contributes to social and economic well being and advancement of its people without creating any disharmony (UNESCO, 2009). Development is a dynamic process. It empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. From purely economic perspective, development brings about improvement in human welfare, quality in life and social well being. It is about satisfying the population's needs and wants. Development is measured using a range of economic indicators such as:

1. **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** This is the total value of goods and services, produced in a country (US\$)
2. **Gross National Product (GNP):** Total value of goods and services produced in a country, including income from investment abroad (US\$)
3. **Purchasing Power Parity:** Takes into account local cost of living and is usually expressed per capita (US\$)

Apart from economic indicators, there are other social indicators which are linked to the economy that are used to measure development such as literacy rate, pollution level, number in higher education, energy consumption, mortality rate, life expectancy, environment, politics, technological advancement and rate of industrialization etc. In development rating, Nigeria is classified as a developing nation. With a GDP per capita of \$2,700 (2012 estimate), population below poverty line of 45% (2010 estimate) and unemployment rate of 24% (2011 estimate) Nigeria was ranked 151 out of 185 countries in the United Nations Development Index in 2004 (Wikipedia, 2012). According to the same report, Nigeria's human capital is underdeveloped. The latest value of Human Development Index shows that Nigeria is ranked 156 among 187 countries. The economy is highly inefficient; the services and agricultural sectors

account for 32 and 30 percent of employment respectively while manufacturing sector accounts for only 11 percent (Wikipedia, 2012).

Business Education and National Development

Development empowers people and promotes important changes in their lives. However, development cannot take place by itself. It requires an educated, skilled and competent people. Seen from this angle, business education becomes the most important factor for development as well as for empowering people (Oladunjoye 2015).. Business education has been defined in several ways, most of which highlight its vocational nature. It is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment (Idialu in Amoor, 2010). Business education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It is generally seen as education for and about business. Business education for business is that aspect of vocational education which provides instruction and preparation for office occupations such as secretary, shorthand-typist or stenographer, bookkeeper, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and accountant. On the other hand, education about business provides knowledge and understanding of the economic, financial, marketing, accounting, management system and other branches of business endeavour. In other words, education about business prepares students to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy.

Amoor (2010) notes that business education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. It has as its primary aim, the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such roles could be as employee, entrepreneur and employer or simply as self- employed.

Vocational and technical skills and competence has been identified (Rufia, 2013) as critical success factors in the actualization of Nigerian Vision 20:2020 which is about Nigeria becoming one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. Business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of vision 20:2020. A gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capita, reduces poverty and unemployment which are some of the indices of development. A well trained business educator can successfully be engaged into the following areas:

1. Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification
2. Business enterprise – as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary, word processor, sales representative, broker etc.
3. Proprietorship of private schools– primary, secondary, tertiary, computer training institute and so on. There is no gain saying the fact that business education, an aspect of vocational education, is what Nigeria needs most now to help her solve most of her social, economic and developmental problems.

Importance of Business Education in National Development

The importance of business education in national development cannot be over-emphasized. This can be achieved through various means. One of which is by recognizing the career opportunities available in Business Education programme. The international status of a country is influenced by its technological capacity, which in turn, will accelerate the national goal of self-sufficiency without attaining a feat of technological development. Business education really is a cluster of subjects and skills, which imbibe technology and commerce. Business education plays the following roles in national development:

1. Business education provides people with necessary consumer education. Business education assists the individuals to become intelligent buyers of goods and services, it helps the nation because

if the problem of unemployment is solved it will seriously help the country in developing at a very rapid rate.

2. Business education provides an individual with various skills needed in a place of work or to become self-reliant.

3. Business education enables one acquire managerial skill. The importance of business education was recognized at the wake of Nigeria Enterprises Promotion Decree of 1972 when the need for Nigerian managers to replace the aliens becomes an issue. Business education assists in producing managers which will help in developing the country.

4. Business education builds up the entrepreneurial competencies of students to become self-employed at graduation.

5. Business education enables one to recognize the value of resources and hence make judicious use of them. Business education prepares the individual/trainee for many purposes as a business teacher, as office worker and one who finds the training economically advantageous for self-use

With the view of importance of business education to national development, Nigeria have realized the effectiveness of business education as an powerful instrument to national development.

Impediments to Quality Business Education

Business education provides the knowledge, kills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer and or consumer of goods and services that business offers. It includes virtually all the knowledge which holds prospect for gainful employment. The realization of lofty aims of business education depends on how much the following challenges are tackled.

1. **Lack of Equipment:** The national policy on education slated that the curriculum for teaching business. Students should include workshop practice and industrial training/production work. This flowery policy is greatly contrasted with reality. The practical aspect of teaching business education in most schools has been relegated to the background as situation as most business organizations, to which the students are attached cannot provide them with enough exposure to the relevant modern equipment.

2. **Unqualified Teachers:** Teachers are critical stakeholders in curriculum implementation. The employment of unqualified teachers to teach business courses is a great disservice to quality of business education graduates. It is a well known fact that most of the higher institutions that offer business education programme suffer from shortage of qualified teachers (Amoor in Ugwuogo, 2017). Business education has become a dumping ground sort of for graduates from different disciplines employed in the name of business educator.

3. **Poor Funding:** Many administrators fail to understand that business education programme is capital intensive. It is a well known fact that one of the major problems bedeviling education in Nigeria today is inadequate funding and business education is no exception. It has been pointed out by Okeke and Eze (2010) that sufficient fund has not been channelled to vocational education which is a major problem plaguing the system. Poor funding causes acute shortage of computer system, typewriters, furniture and sizable laboratories for business education programme to become effective and efficient.

4. **Infrastructural Challenges:** Teaching and learning in a dynamic society needs newest physical facilities so that old and obsolete methods and provisions will always phase out. This is not currently so as most schools have ill equipped business laboratories where they are available. Most secondary schools are offering business studies without typewriters or computers for learning keyboarding and other components.

5. **Poor Curriculum Content:** It is upper most in the minds of experts in the field of business education that the curriculum should respond to labour market trends and projection of manpower requirement. Unfortunately, business education system in this country has not been adequately responsive to the changes in the labour market and the needs of various segments of the population. Training in most institutions appears to be highly concentrated in declining occupations while new and emerging occupations are not explored. Curriculum and instructional materials are not developed for new occupations and generally emphasis is on absolute and declining skills. The curriculum is also vast which most often is not completed before the end of the programme.

Conclusion

Business education is a sub-set of vocational and education. It is a programme that has the potentialities to produce qualified and adequate manpower who are capable and prepared to contribute maximally to the development of their society. Based on this submission, giving emphasis to the teaching and learning of Business Education in Nigeria will not only solve societal problems but boost immeasurably the economic development of Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations if implemented will help in increasing the capacity of business education to engender development:

1. There is need for the increment of funding for effective administration business education programme in higher institutions.
2. The recruitment procedures for the employment of teachers and lecturers should be refined and restrict to those who actually studied business education
3. Computer laboratories should be provided by the school management as to allow students to actively involve in practical aspect of thier programme.

References

- Agomuo, E.E. (2005). *Modern office technology: Issues, procedures and practice*. Nsukka: University of Nigeria Press Ltd.
- Akindele, R. A. (2002). *Development and human welfare in need of sustainability science*. SSAN -The Nigerian Social Scientist
- Aliyu, M.M. (2006). *Business education in Nigeria: Trends and Issues*. Ilorin. Gishy Multimedia.
- Amoor, S.S. (2010). The need to improve teacher quality in Business education in Nigerian Universities. *International Journal of Education Research* 11(1), 1-11.
- Atakpa, R. A. (2000). *Career opportunities in business education in Nigeria*. Delta state.
- Commission Communication (2006). *“Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through competitiveness entrepreneurship delivery strategies of E.E.*
- Hynes, B.R. & Jackson, J.P. (1997). *A history of business education in the United States of America*. Cincinnati: South-Western Publishing Company
- Oladunjoye, T.A. (2015). Optimizing business education for national development *Journal of Business Education* 2(1), 7-12
- Okeke, B. C. & Eze, C. P. (2010). Repositioning vocational and technical education for the 21st Century: Implications and challenges. *Journal of Vocational and Adult Education*, 7(1), 58-67.
- Onajite, G.O. (2016). Challenges of utilizing information and communication technology (ICT) in teaching and learning of business education in Delta State. *International Journal of Educational Foundations and Management*. 10(1)246- 258
- Osuala, E. C. (1996). *Principles and methods of business education*. Obosi: Pacific Publishers
- Rufai, R.A. (2013). *Nigeria’s attainment of vision 20:2020 depends on massive vocational and technical skills*. Federal Ministry of Education Weekly Bulletin 2(58). March 26.
- Tilak, J.B.G. (2012). Higher education, poverty and development. *International Institute for Educational Planning Newsletter xxv(i) January – March 2007*
- Ugwuogo, R.Y. (2017). Business education, technology and national development. *Business Education Journal* 3(5), 1-8.
- UNESCO. (2009). Promoting entrepreneurship education in Secondary Schools. Final Report of UNESCO Inter-Regional Seminar on Promoting Entrepreneurship Education in Secondary Schools, Held in Bangkok, Thailand on the 11th to 15th February, 2008.
- Wikipedia (2012). *Economy of Nigeria*. Retrieve April 16, 2013 from http://en.wikipedia.org/./Economy_of_Nigeria