

ENHANCING BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND TRANSFORMATION

BY

**Komolafe, Isaac Adeyemi: Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, P.M.B. 231, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria
E-mail Address: komson4real@yahoo.com**

&

**Aliu, Zainul Abideen: Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, P.M.B. 231, Ede, Osun State, Nigeria
E-mail Address: bideen872002@gmail.com**

Abstract

The paper brought to limelight the concept of Business Education and its objectives. It highlighted the challenges as well as strategies for repositioning Business Education to promote security and economic transformation. It discusses the concept of national security, causes of national insecurity, and also the concept of national transformation. So also ways by which Business Education can promote national security and transform the economy of a country were not left out. The paper concluded that it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every child has access to functional education because it is the source of empowerment that every person needs to do away with social vices and as well contribute meaningfully to the national and economic growth of the country. Business Education as a skill based programme can help to alleviate social vices as well as assist to develop the country's economy if reasonably planned and implemented. Hence, government at all levels should give needed attention to critical issues raised in the paper, it suggested among others that government should take the issue of Business Education as priority because of its importance to national security and economic development of the country. Therefore, matters affecting Business Education should be given needed attention. To this extent, government efforts should be geared towards changing the bias of the public towards Business Education.

Keywords: Business education, National security and Transformation

Introduction

Business Education is an aspect of Vocational and Technical Education that acquaints its recipients with the skills, value and competencies required in the business world. Ezeani and Ogundola (2016) see Business Education as an aspect of Vocational Education programmes which prepares learners for knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes needed for entry into and advancement in jobs within business. According to Aliyu (2006), Business Education is the education for the acquisition and development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of economic system. American Vocational Association in Osuala (2009) asserts that Business Education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts: (a) office education; a programme for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupation and (b) general business education; a programme that provides students with information and competencies needed by all in managing personal and business affairs and in using the services of the business world.

From the foregoing, it is pertinent to assert that Business Education acquaints its recipients with business skills such as accounting, entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) human relation, marketing and Office Technology and Management and teaching to mention just a few which apart from preparing its recipients for exposure to business activities, also equip them to be self-reliant.

The last decade in Nigeria has experienced an increase in violent-crisis and criminality which undermine the economic development and security of the country. The violence and criminality that undermine the national security come in forms of armed human trafficking, robbery, kidnapping, killing, arms smuggling and militancy. Also, internal security has been undercut by violent activities of civilian-in-arms against the country which include radicalized religious and regional youth groups, among which are the Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Boko Haram, Egbesu boys, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Herdsmen, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra, Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Oodua People's Congress (OPC). The rise of these groups has influence on the crises threatening the security of men and properties and the stability of the country. For example while the herdsmen menace is going on in many parts of the country, the Boko Haram assisted by the Islamic States West Africa (ISWA) province is terrorising people in the North-West. The killer herdsmen have been accused of kidnapping, killing, raping and destroying people's belonging at will throughout the country.

The transformation agenda of the Federal Government of Nigeria draws its inspiration from the Nigerian Vision 20-2020 and the 1st National Implementation Plan (NIP), it aims to deepen the effects and provide a sense of direction for the Government. It is based on a set of priority policies and programmes which upon implementation will transform the country's economy to meet the future needs of the citizens. Meanwhile, the system that needs transformation is the one that was previously constructed and needs change after a long period of time. Before a government could talk of change, a system of doing things must have been in place, so also before we talk of next level, there must have been in an existence a system or level.

It is pertinent to bring to lime-light that the objectives of early missionary schools in Nigeria was not primarily to help us realize our potential and contribute meaningfully, to the development of the country. In other words, Nigerians were not educated for self-fulfillment and self-dependence. The educational foundation given to the country by the colonial masters was based on the liberal and cultural educational system, the consequence of which is perpetual independence of the country on other countries for basic goods and services. It is against this background that this paper explores enhancing Business Education for national security and transformation.

Meaning of Business Education

Business Education has been defined in several ways by scholars, in that a generally acceptable definition has been difficult to arrive at, Aliyu (2006) asserts that Business Education is the education for the acquisition and development of skills, competencies, attitudes and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of economic system. Thus, Business Education helps individuals to acquire saleable skills that will enable them fit into various business organisations or be self employed in the absence of paid employment. According to Ufot (2012) Business Education is designed to develop the individuals cognitive, psychomotor and affective domains in the accounting skills, entrepreneurial skills, marketing skills, human relations skills, communication skills, secretarial/office skills, teaching skills and general business education knowledge. This means that business education is a combination of courses concerned with the acquisition, development and inculcation of the proper work values for survival of the individual and be relevant in the society.

Business Education is a programme which will lead a country to future greatness through adequate provision of manpower resources that will develop and harness the nation's economic resources to its fullest (Okoye, 2017). Ojo and Ogunmola (2010) say that business education is a broad comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme encompasses the acquisition of appropriate skills and competencies needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and contribute to the society. This is in line with the National Policy on Education (2013) as to: inculcation of the right type of values and attitudes for survival of the individual and Nigerian society; acquisition of appropriate

skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

From the above assertions, Business Education can be said to be an aspect of general education which equips its recipients with the skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies which will enable them to create wealth, get paid employment and/or to be self employed and self-reliant leading to sustainable economic growth and social vices alleviation in the society. This is because graduates of Business Education instead of looking for white collar jobs which are no more available these days, can go into business in order to earn a living instead of indulging in social vices for survival. “An idle hand is the workshop of a devil” so says an axiom. There is no way a person who has nothing to do, would not involve himself in one form of social vice or the other so as to survive.

Challenges and Strategies for Repositioning Business Education to Promote Security and Economic Transformation

There is a lot of challenges militating against the effective implementation of Business Education programme. Buttressing this assertion, Nwabufo and Mamman (2016) give the difficulties which implementers of Business Education faced in their efforts to achieve its objectives to include lack of facilities for good quality research and presence of work load among teachers, lack of government investment, corruption in educational sector, frequent educational reforms, lack of highly qualified professional teachers, lack of linkages between industry and academia and poor administration of Business Education programme. Okwunaso and Nwazor (2000), enumerate the challenges facing the growth of Business Education in the society thus: insufficient fund, low status rating, antagonism by competitors, insufficient supply of books, lack of consistent drive among business educators to have a functioning union for business teachers, inflexible curriculum, irregular and poor remuneration for teaching and employers’ ignorance of the benefits from studying Business Education.

Other challenges facing Business Education as identified by the writers are: inadequate exposure of students to practical, inadequate instructional materials, inadequate power supply, inadequate quality coordination; evaluation; monitoring and supervision, lack of adequate laboratories, low interest of students in Business Education, irresponsible teaching, non-utilization of some supplied equipment, poor curriculum contents, poor ethical standard, poor societal perception, teachers’ misconduct, lack of vocational guidance and counselling, societal poverty, lack of technicians and technical support in terms of spare parts and high cost of new technology. The above mentioned challenges of Business Education if not addressed with undermine the benefits that can be derived by individuals pursuing the programme.

Based on the above issues and challenges, some strategies that can be pursued to have functional Business Education that can achieve the above highlighted objectives which are ingredients to effective promotion of security and economic transformation include:

- Education administrators and curriculum planners should constantly review Business Education curriculum to meet the current trends of development in technologies for effective production of graduates needed to work in the modern innovative business world.
- Government at all levels, philanthropic organisations and individuals as well as non-governmental agencies should be encouraged to fund Business Education programme in schools.
- Government and private financial service providers should create an enabling environment for small scale industries and also give adequate loans with free interest to unemployed youths who are interested in setting up their own businesses.
- Instructional facilities, equipment and materials should be adequately provided to Business Education departments to enhance effective teaching and learning of skills offered by the course.
- Government at both levels should embark on massive computer literacy for teachers and students at all levels and e-libraries put in place and free for the use of both learners and teachers.

- Classrooms and lecture halls should be connected to internet, so also computer and multimedia projectors should be provided in adequate numbers to enhance e-learning.
- Lecturers teaching entrepreneurship courses should make sure that elements of entrepreneurial skills are well taught so that learners can graduate with the required skills which will enable them to set up and manage their own enterprises effectively.
- Business Education departments should establish partnership with business sector so that they can provide the business sector with well trained personnel and in return request for investment and funds for the Business Education departments. This apart, will form strong linkages between business sector and academia.
- Teachers should be well remunerated and motivated so that they can develop favourable attitude towards new technologies integration and be productive.
- There should be provision for uninterrupted power supply in our schools and computer laboratories should be provided with alternative power supply such as solar panels which are not noisy and have better output of power supply to support effective utilization of ICT facilities to impart knowledge and skills.

National Security

There is no single universally accepted definition of national security. The varieties of definitions provide an overview of the many usages of this concept. The concept as at now remains ambiguous because it originated from definitions which initially emphasized the freedom from military threats and political coercion to later increase in sophistication and include other forms of non-military security as suited the circumstances of the time.

Igbuzor (2011), opines that security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and the absence threats to acquire values. From the foregoing, national security could be said to be the activities involved in to avoid, prevent, reduce or resolve violent conflict – whether the threats come from other states or non-state actors. It is therefore can be said that security is essential to national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. Macmillan Dictionary (online version) defines National Security as the protection or the safety of a country's secrets and its citizens. According to Paleri (2008), national security may be defined as measurable state of the capability of a nation to overcome the multi-dimensional threats to the apparent well-being of its people and its survival as a nation-state at any time.

National security entails the prevention of petty crimes such as burglary, stealing, cattle rustling, and serious crimes such as armed robbery, human trafficking, kidnapping, e-crimes, fraud, societal-ills such as cultism, which are believed to be on the increase due to poverty and unemployment. Corroborating this, Oladeji and Folorunso (2007), assert that national security is a desideratum, sine qua non for economic growth and development of a country. Oche (2001), says that security has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the wellbeing of its people. Thus, internal security is freedom from or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesions for the promotion of its core values and social-political and economic objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. Internal security also implies freedom from danger to life and property (Oche, 2001). Internal security therefore, could be said to be freedom from menace that divides, factionalises and manipulates people within a society/state who hoped to benefit by exploiting divisions and fault lines, thereby walking the country and bringing the situation down to a level that poses a threat to lives and means of livelihood.

The prevailing activities of the cultists, armed robbers, kidnappers, drug and human traffickers, banditry, insurgent/militant, groups, cattle rustling, Boko haram and herdsmen have reached alarming proportions that Nigerians are having sleepless nights over the internal security and how to curb them. Looking at the people that have been arrested for these violent activities, one can say that the greatest threats to Nigeria security, is youth unemployment which is as a result of lack of relevant knowledge, attitudes and skills by

the youths. Corroborating this, Onuoha (2012), opines that internal security has been greatly undercut by violent activities of civilian-in-arms which include radicalized religious and regional youth groups, among which are the Arewa People's Congress (APC), Bakassi Boys, Boko Haram, Egbesu boys, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Herdsmen, the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and Oodua People's Congress (OPC).

National Transformation

Transformation is an act or instance of transforming or being transformed. Transformation is a complete change from one situation to another, a total departure from old order to a new one. National transformation can therefore be said to be a process of completely changing the current state of situation of a nation. For example, from economic recession to a buoyant one or from a negative state of affairs to a positive one. Corroborating the above assertions, Umaru (2013), asserts that national transformation connotes unity, qualitative and quantitative improvement in the standard of living of the people in a country as well as a remarkable progression on the human development index.

Over the time, government at all levels in Nigeria have tried different political systems, implemented numerous economic measures and evolved a variety of social transformation efforts to facilitate the process of nation buildings, but the country has remained a nation seized by the drawbacks of development in form of poverty, crisis, corruption, poor governance, materialism and weak institutions to mention just a few. Corroborating this view, Ojeaga and Okolocha (2017), affirm that the quest to reduce unemployment and improve the lives of Nigerians has made various governments to establish various poverty alleviation programmes since independence, which include: the Better Life Programme for Rural People, The Green Revolution, Family Support Programme (FSP), Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP), Operation Feed the Nation (OFN), Youth Empowerment Scheme (YES), National Empowerment (N-Power), National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategies (NEEDS) just to mention a few. Despite all these efforts to subsist with massive graduates' unemployment and poverty, the growth and development levels of the country have continuously failed to correlate with the quantum of resources allegedly expended over time.

Odiaka (2012), opines that the Federal Government designed the economic transformation agenda for the purpose of creating a minimum of 3.5million new jobs in the economy, develop the nation to the position of being at least the 20th economy in the world by the year 2020. Odiaka (2012), adds that the Transformation Agenda which is based and draws its inspiration from the Vision 20:2020 and the first National Implementation Plan (NIP) aims to deepen the effects and provide a sense of direction for the government and that the agenda is based on a set of priorities, policies and programmes which when implemented will transform the country's economy to meet the future needs of the Nigeria people. Buttressing this assertion, Ononamatus (2003), asserts that Nigeria as a country needs total transformation and reconstruction because all aspects of the national foundations are in a state of dilapidation following several years of neglect and exploitation.

Optimizing Business Education for National Security and Economic Transformation

There are many numerous ways by which Business Education can promote national security and transform the economy of a country, among which are: Business Education is a vehicle for promoting Business Entrepreneurship: Nigerian businesses are characterized by small scale, buying and selling of goods. In the early Nigeria, there was no formal skill training except serving under a master's strict tutelage. Now business had increased tremendously in number and more sophisticated in practice, both nationally and internationally. To cope with the ever increasing areas of business, technologies involved, good numbers of entrepreneurs endowed with related skills are needed to keep the nation in line with development. Business Education via entrepreneurship courses offers entrepreneurship education to the recipients to set

up and manage businesses. Olupayimo (2017), affirms that the problem of unemployment and underemployment combined with abject poverty could be eradicated if the strategy of entrepreneurship education is employed.

Emphasizing the importance of entrepreneurship education, citing Global Education Initiative (2009), Olupayimo (2017), asserts that entrepreneurship education is critical for developing entrepreneurship skills, attitude and behaviours that are the basis for economic growth and that it is important for developing the human capital necessary for the society of the future. Olupayimo (2016), affirms that shift from general education to entrepreneurship education is necessary as a result of the need to develop and empower the youths in the society and that entrepreneurship is important in alleviating some socio-economic problems such as poverty, unemployment and all sort of social vices in the society. Sampson and Ubulom (2017) assert that the inclusion of entrepreneurial development in tertiary institution will bring new life and change the mindset of the graduate beneficiaries of the entrepreneurial course. This they say will make the learners to become self-sufficient, self-reliant and be economically engaged upon graduation.

Business Education for ICT as a mean of Youth Empowerment: Ejeka, Chinwe and Onyechinyere (2017), affirm that youth unemployment is one of the greatest and most uncomfortable problems facing the Nigerian economy in the recent times. This is because young people looking for meaningful and income-generating work make up a sizeable proportion of the population in developing countries and that youth make up of more than two-third of the population of some developing countries which Nigeria is one of them. Buttressing this assertion, Ejeka, Chinwe and Onyechinyere (2017), opines that about 85% of the world's youth reside in developing countries and that unemployment rate is growing geometrically and disturbing because, apart from youths engaging in various vices such as armed robbers, drug trafficking, and the like, there is loss of orderliness, social peace and security and other vices associated with poverty. According to Ejeka, Chinwe and Onyechinyere (2017), ICT can assist to empower and prepare the youths for the future by creating income generation and productive and remunerative employment which will lead to poverty reduction and empowerment of the youths.

Emphasizing the opportunities in the areas of ICT, Ezeahurukwe and Ameh (2017), bring to the lime light; the establishment of business centres, establishment of computer training centres, establishment of cyber cafes, IT consultancy, Desktop Publishing and Data Processing. Ukot (2009) opines that business centres have become a pertinent part of our economy as they generated employment for many Nigerians which include youths and unemployed persons and are found in institutions and busy streets occupying rented shops, housed by caravan or found in makeshift apartments.

Business Education comes with innovation and efficient work practices which have positive impact on the environment and the immediate rural communities. If the herdsmen have Business Education which is a funded education, they will know their methods of driving cattle from the North to the South in search of green pasture are archaic, obsolete and unproductive. Business Education graduates have the ability to add value to rural products and services. In this way, they can contribute to the development of the communities to reduce migration to urban centres. Most of the young people who leave rural areas to urban centres to search for jobs which are no more there again, in order to survive and earn a living, embarked on social vices.

Business Education promotes skills development: Business Education has a definite role in preparing and equipping the recipients with skills that increase their chances of finding jobs after schooling. It also equips them with knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to create jobs and be self-reliant; it is on this precept that the National Policy on Education (2013) with its 6-3-3-4 system of education was predicted upon life education in which educational activities would be centered on the students for maximum self-development and fulfillment. In order to ensure true transformation, the type of education to be given to the youths should be the one that would solidly prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead of them.

Business Education apart from enabling the recipients to hold productive employment, increases their productivity and earning capacity. The development of vocational skills enables recipients to earn more remuneration or income or be self-employed

Conclusion

It is the responsibility of the government to ensure that every child has access to a functional education because it is the source of empowerment that every person needs to do away with social vices and as well, contribute meaningfully to the national and economic growth of the country. Business Education as a skills-based programme can help to alleviate social vices as well as assist to develop the country's economy if reasonably planned and implemented. Hence, government at all levels should give needed attention to it. No development and transformation or next level agenda could take place in the insecure environment, hence the government should do everything to make the country safe so that people can fraud and move around without fear of being kidnapped or killed by herdsmen and other criminal gangs.

Recommendations

Considering the critical issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations were made:

- All stakeholders in the educational sector must ensure that there are square pegs in the square holes in the employment and appointment of people who handle the affairs that are related to Business Education as well as the election of lawmakers who decide how much goes to specific schools or educational programmes.
- Government should take the issue of Business Education as priority because of its importance to national security and economic development of the country. Therefore, matters affecting Business Education should be given needed attention. To this extent, government efforts should be geared towards changing the bias of the public towards Business Education.
- Business Education teachers/lecturers should be acquainted with the various methods of imparting entrepreneurship education which will assist the course in making Business Education students innovative, creative and competent in their areas of specializations after graduation.
- Business Education students should take their studies more serious in order to acquire the required skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for self-employment instead of adding to the increased number of unemployment graduates in the country.
- To fight corruption and internal insecurity, there is need for collective resolution to address the monsters and also foster broad-based prosperity is required to create country that is not only for a few privileged, but for all Nigerians

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