BUSINESS EDUCATION: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
Business education is a programme that ought to provide skills for recipients to gain employment in the business community or in government department. To give a meaningful training in Business education, the institution giving the training must be equipped with the appliances on which it intends to give instructions. It is observed that, the current business education course structure is adequate with regard to job creation to meet the current information technology age demands. This paper highlights the problems of business education in Nigeria to include, poor funding, staffing, lack of facilities, poor remuneration for staff, lack of cooperation from parents, and poor appreciation of the programmes of study by the government. Prospects of Business education were examined to include career selection, opportunities for self employment etc. conclusion and recommendation were made.

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Business education has occupied a strategic place in the history of education in Nigeria. It is important to national development as it seeks to develop vocational knowledge, skills and attitudes needed for employment and advancement in a business career. Aina (1996) stated that business education is a subject which permeates the entire life of a nation. It touches all of us collectively and individually be it on the field of sports, in place of worship or even at home in our domestic duties. Business education holds a lot of promise for the recent spate of privatization of government parastatals and establishments which seek to inject the principles and strategies of business management to these establishments for greater efficiency on profitable results.

From the above definition, one major thing that stands out clear about business education is that it is a programme that provides skills for the recipients to gain employment in the business community while at the same time such recipients are useful to themselves. The pathway to this is not through a rote-learning process, but a practical oriented discipline. Hence, to give a meaningful training in business education, the institution giving the training must be equipped with the appliances which serve to reinforce learning.

The National Policy on Education (2004) stipulates that business education is to be offered from the Junior Secondary School (JSS) up to the tertiary institutions. At whatever level the recipient terminates the learning process, it is expected that some vocational competencies would have been inculcated into the individual to make him a useful member in his society. The acquisition of such competencies should lead to the much-desire vocational development right from the junior and senior secondary schools. It would also qualify its recipients for further studies in those areas of competencies that they have chosen. Above it all, the individual would be equipped with the right knowledge, skills and attitudes to engage in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment. For example, an NCE business graduate, apart from being a business education teacher at the JSS level, could earn a living by being a secretary/typist, stenographer, receptionist, an executive office service are offered at a profit.

The question now is, in the face of the ever-changing social needs of our nation, it the present business education curricula relevant in meeting the information technology and globalization requirements. According to Akhere (2002); “between 1986 to date, many changes have taken place in office structure, content, methods, roles and even personal requirements”.

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If the Olympia machine used in the 1980s are still in use today to train graduates of business education in the world of the computer age, and some schools have not even being equipped with such manual machines, then it becomes a pathetic situation. We can therefore assert that we certainly need to reposition business education if it is to fulfill the noble objective of preparing its recipients for jobs and to advance in such jobs.

Problems of Business Education in Nigeria

Lack of Adequate and Experienced Manpower

There is inadequacy of skilled and experienced manpower, which retard teaching and learning in most African countries, including Nigeria. The educational planning of these countries have come to be linked in varying degrees with economic planning and manpower needs of the economy. Sound, planning for a rapidly expanding industry like education requires the production of the right amount and kind of manpower needed teaching and non-teaching staff. (Bassey, 2006).

Teacher and Government/Parental Factors

Puyate (2003), further identified teacher’s factors and government/parental factors as constraints to business education. On teachers factors specifically there are lack of professional and experienced teachers, non-provision of adequate allowances for teachers, lack of teacher’s motivation and non-cordial relationship between teachers and students. Olu and Beecorf (1982), observed that, high salaries paid by the wide spreading companies (firms) have attracted many business education teachers to abscond from the profession. Lack of co-operation from parents, poor government appreciation of business education, inability of parents to buy necessary books for the course and lack of government support for business education are the factors hindering business education.

Poor Funding

On poor funding Puyate (2003) maintained that such is responsible for non-availability of instructional materials which affects the running of business education programmes. Instructional materials according to Abraham and Abraham (2003), makes teaching and learning of business education. Research has shown that poor funding, staffing, lack of equipment workshops and prejudice against business education are responsible for unpopularity among students (Mbamalu, 1980).

Inadequate of Infrastructure

McAliney (2007), stated that business education infrastructure, teaching methodologies and tools, delivery mechanisms, facility and qualifications are very essential aids to effective instruction. Bamisyaye, Ejeh,
Adelabu, and Aleje (1998), emphasized the importance of physical facilities in teaching and learning. They are of the view that students learn better when they explore an environment that is rich in materials. It is sad to note that such environment eludes the business education programme in this nation. Most institutions of learning do not have lecture halls; where there are such halls they are not sufficient for the students.

**Non-Functional Libraries**

Our educational institutions lack befitting libraries. According to Ozigi (1977), every school requires a wide range of educational materials like textbooks, stationeries and other learning materials housed in the library to ensure instructional effectiveness. It is sad to note that here in Nigeria virtually none of the business education departments in our institutions can boast of a standard and well-equipped library.

**Epileptic Power Supply**

Lack of constant electricity supply is another problem confronting business education in the country. Electricity is required to energize and power the machines in business education. Such machines are electric typewriters, fax machines, computers, photocopied machines and internet facilities. Many of the institutions that run business education courses are located in rural areas with no access to the national grid and not provided with power generating sets. It will be pertinent to mention that areas where there is electricity supply by the Power Holding Company of Nigeria (PHCN), the power is unsteady and highly erratic. As a result of the epileptic nature of electricity to institutions of learning, business education course are only in theory without practical. This therefore, negates the objectives of business education, which amongst them is skill acquisition.

Business education quite like any other educational innovation requires exert efforts. Most students of today are such that do not want to exert much energy in the development of manipulative skills demanded in business education. In the same vein, some business educators just collect salaries while working with little or no professional zeal and dedication. On the other hand, there are many in high and low places that view business education with indifference. It should be noted that indifference is closely associated with laziness.

**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.

**Prospects of Business Education in Nigeria**

Apart from job opportunities, business education offers individuals vocational and professional preparation for business careers and teaching of business subjects. It also offers various individuals the opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understanding that enable them to handle competently their professional affairs and assume their citizenship responsibilities. It provides individuals with the occupational intelligence to enable them fit into and fine job satisfaction in a labour force of complex and dynamic economy. According to Okorie (2001), business education helps in solving the problem of unemployment by turning out job creators instead of job seekers.

Boonet (1976), in Okorie (2001) stated some specific reason for studying business education as follows:
\[ \text{i. It assists in career selection} \]
\[ \text{ii. It gives opportunities for self employment} \]
\[ \text{iii. It tackles societal problems} \]
\[ \text{iv. It leads to better consumer decisions} \]
\[ \text{v. It is one of the most relevant studies in contemporary society.} \]

Commenting further, Osuala (2004), posited business education in the secondary schools should contribute to the general education of all individuals by providing basic business education and to the vocational education of individuals preparing for business careers by providing practical training in office and distributive occupations.

Stressing the importance of business education Johnson (2006), stated that there is a strong argument that in the future every one will needs to have a business education. “Whatever you do in your professional life, the chances are that it will involve some business. Scientist, engineers, even artists, will inevitably have to understand at least the basic of business and probably a lot more”.

According to Johnson (2006), the importance of business education hinges on the tolls that will enable an individual make an immediate contribution to global business. Such tools are the ability to use the contingency approach in solving business problems, combining the best parts of several solutions into a unique and better solution:
\[ \text{1. Having a global perspective} \]
\[ \text{2. Working with and learning from others} \]
Business education helps in the development for many nations. It has played a vital role in the development of many European nations (Osuala, 2004). Business education reflects prawns education and experience; career needs, learning goals, and personal aspirations of student. It provides career guidance to adult students in increase their awareness of varied job opportunities and changing requirement for career entry and achievement. Role of business education include provision of training, which reflects changes in business brought about by technological advances. It prepares individuals for work in local business and other organizations as well as provides for wide ranging interest, abilities and goals of adult learners (Ehiametalor, 1990 and Osuala, 1996).

Business education according to Osuala (1996), represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery system, elementary, secondary, colleges and universities. Business education can begin at any level and can continue throughout the life span of an individual.

Osuala (2004), identified additional roles of business education as:
1. It is educates individuals for and about business.
2. It provides continuous programme of planned learning experiences designed to equip individuals to fulfilled effectively three roles, which are:
   a. To produce and distribute goods and service ad involves
   b. To use results of production as consumers; and
   c. To make judicious socio-economic decision as citizens.
3. It provides career information that helps students relate their interest, needs and abilities to occupational opportunity to business.
4. It provides educational opportunities for students preparing for careers in filed other than business to acquire business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in those careers.

Conclusion
The relevance of business education in the society is enormous and should not be compromised with. Among others, it leads to better consumer decision and tackles societal problems. Unfortunately, business education is saddled with numerous problems which make it ineffective. Such include poor curriculum content, poor funding, and lack of adequate and experienced manpower. However, there is need to remedy the ugly state of this for education in Nigeria by take appropriate measures which include provision of ICT facilities which quicken information gathering and knowledge dissemination world over.
Recommendations

Having noted that business education programmes in our Institutions of learning are in deplorable state. It will be pertinent enough to advocate measure that could be geared toward ameliorating the situation. Such measure is:

1. Adequate information should be provided business education

2. Proper, up to date and relevant equipment for teaching and Learning should be put in place in institution that offers business education.

3. Instructional material for teaching education should be provided.

4. Every business education department should have a functional equipped with books.

5. Adequate enlightenment campaign should be carried out in the society about the importance of business education.

6. Teacher should be well remunerated. Allowance should be paid to business education.

7. Professional and experienced teachers should be employed to teach business education subjects.

8. Regular training and re-training programmes in form of seminars, Conference, in-service training programmes, short course and workshops should be organized at regular intervals to stimulate teacher’s interest in the programmes.

9. The federal government should without further delay through the federal ministry of education re-introduce the Federal Technical Teacher’s Training Programme (FTTTP) to enable business education teachers further their studies.

10. ICT facilities should be make available in all business education departments in our institutions. As the world is now a global village following the presence of Internet services, students and teachers of business education will from times to times enrich and update their knowledge in the course.

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