

# RELEVANCE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR ECONOMIC REHABILITATION AND RELIANCE

## Abstract

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The paper discussed particular business education and the relevance on the development of the economy, which is the bedrock of Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance. The paper examined the development of business education in Nigeria, the objective of business education such as general business education and job training for business. The paper also outlines some of the problems faced by business education despite the laudable objective and relevance of business education. Finally, it also discusses some recommendations to eliminate the problems faced by business education.

## Introduction

It is known and generally recognized that the prosperity of a country is directly proportional to the education level of its people. Economically advanced countries of the world are countries which are distinguished by the excellence of their educational system. In this respect, Nolen, Haylen and Malsbary (1967:2) declared thus:

When we consider the economic values of education to the individual himself, it can be pointed out that, generally speaking, the higher the level of education one has attained, the greater the annual income of the individual and the greater his job security indeed, many of the problems of unemployment today centre around persons who have failed to develop their resources through education. Success in the modern world of business demands education training

Business education is one of the disciplines of vocational education. Business education was known before now as education for business studies such as shorthand, typing writing, commerce, office practice and accounting. In order to be economically literate and be informed citizens, wise consumers, and competent workers, each person must have some understanding of the world of business and how it functions. It is very necessary that everyone possess at least minimum knowledge, skills and understanding with which to make the judgments needed in our free enterprise society and to make contributions to the world of work; business education plays a very important part in providing motive at all levels with the ability to function- effectively in the business world (Nanassays Malsbary and Tone, 1977).

## Objectives of the Study

The focus of this paper will specifically discuss:

1. Conceptual issues in Business Education.
2. Development of Business Education in Nigeria.
3. Objectives of Business Education.
4. The relevance of Business Education for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance
5. Problems of Business Education.
6. Conclusion.
7. Recommendations.

## Conceptual Framework in Business Education

It would be useful to explain certain fundamental concepts and attempt some operational definition of terms, which would be used in this, especially necessary because the terms and concepts used in this work tend to have meanings which vary with different contexts. These are business, business education and economic rehabilitation and reliance.

## **Business**

A business is simply an organization that is formed to produce and supply goods or services to satisfy the needs of people (or consumers as they are more specially known). Sometimes a need in content that is, it exists but can be awakened and turned into sales by using effective marketing. A business sets out to achieve the satisfaction of needs at a profit which is ultimately returned to the owners of the business.

## **Business Education**

Business education means many things to many people. Some people think that Business refers to the business subjects taught at the secondary school level-such as typewriting, shorthand book-keeping business law, and similar other subjects. To others business education is the same as any education for entrance into the business world given at any educational level. Some others consider business education as post secondary education in subject such as accounting, marketing, office administration, secretarial administration, and finance. Still, some consider business education to mean business teacher education, the preparation or in-service education of secondary and post secondary school business teachers. Today we are speaking broadly of business education as that aspect of the total educational programme that provides that knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as producer or consumer of goods and services that business offers.

According to Anyaduba (1986). Business Education with the training of the individual for business and about business the former focusing on those who need career in business and the latter is for all students in the entire school system irrespective of their career aspirations. Ulinfun (1991), business education can be categorized into basic business courses, Economics, Commerce, Accounting etc. and secretarial courses, such as shorthand, typewriting etc. and distribution courses like marketing, business management, etc. (Osagie,1990), views business education as that specialized type of education which by its versatility equips its recipient with the skills, competencies, and attitude, necessary to make him a useful and self-reliant citizen.

## **Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance**

Economic rehabilitation and reliance, according to Tadaro (1997) is the process of reconstructing and improving all human lives. He gave three important aspects of development as: raising people's living levels, i.e their income and consumption level of food, medical services, education etc. through relevant economic growth creating conditions conducive to the growth of people's self-esteem through the establishment of social, political and economic systems and institutions which promote human dignity and respect increasing people's freedom to choose by enlarging the range of their choice variables, for example increasing varieties of consumer goods and services. For Nigeria, the national objectives clearly articulated in the second economic rehabilitation and reliance plan provide the criteria against which any development efforts can be assessed an

evaluated. These objectives are all known, since business education and developments are the focus, the objective are:

1. A free democratic society;
2. A united, strong and self-reliant nation;
3. A great and dynamic economy;
4. A just and egalitarian society;
5. A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

## **Development of Business Education in Nigeria**

The development of Business Education in Nigeria is slow but progressive. Business education has not always been an important phase of education in Nigeria before the take-over of school from the missions by the government. In its early development, it grew as a private responsibility both individually and institutionally. It has its growth in the private business schools. The earliest type of business education was the apprenticeship training of book-keepers.

In the United States, the problem of the private business school was limited to instructions in book-keeping supplemented with instructions in arithmetic and penmanship until 1873 when the typewriter was first manufactured on a commercial basis. In Nigeria, before the advent of the white-men, apprenticeship system existed in all known crafts. In the case of book-keeping, an experienced book-keeper would take on an assistant and train him on the job. Gradually, more book-keepers were needed due to the increase in the number and size of businesses, besides the introduction of taxation and government regulations. This made it possible for the business schools to flourish as it provided essential training for business occupations.

In the later part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, private business schools (commercial schools as they are popularly called) had a virtual monopoly in training the skilled employees needed by all types of organizations and government offices. Indeed, many of the successful business executives of the early 1990s were graduates of private business schools. Prior to schools existed in all parts of the country for the training of youths and adults for secretarial and clerical duties. When the government took over schools in 1971, most of the business schools were merged with secondary grammar schools.

There are emergent shifts in emphasis and orientation towards a more functional approach to secondary education that better fulfils the socio-economic needs of the nation. With the introduction of the 6-3-3-4 system of education in Nigeria, greater emphasis has been placed on business education. This emphasis covers prevocational business education known as business studies in the Junior Secondary and the vocational business subjects such as shorthand, typewriting, accounting, and commerce in senior secondary schools.

### **Objectives of Business Education**

The aims of a business education programme are the major determinants of the success of the programmes, the curricula, textbooks, teachers students to be enrolled etc.) the primary objectives are preparing students to enter a business career, or to render those who have entered more efficient and enable them to advance to higher levels of employment. These objectives have two purposes.

- (a) To provide training for specific types of jobs.
- (b) To develop the ability to use their skills in the environment of business (often referred to as occupational intelligence).

The second major goal of business education is offering training in those phases of education, which concern every member of the society. Thus purpose of business education is not technical and involves educating persons to be:

- (a) Intelligent consumers of goods and services of business.
- (b) To develop a clear understanding of the nation's economy as a member of the community.

Business education for all and prevocational business education for those planning to enter business are the goals of business education in Nigerian Junior Secondary Schools. The Junior Secondary Schools business study is made up of typewriting, shorthand, book-keeping, commerce and office practice which are put together under the subject-business studies.

The objectives of the Junior Secondary School Business studies in Nigeria are:

1. To enable the student acquire the basic knowledge of business studies.
2. To develop the basic skills in office occupations.
3. To prepare students for further training in business studies
4. To provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may undergo further training.
5. To provide basic skills for personal use in future.
6. To relate the knowledge and skills to the national economy.

Business Education objective can also be look at in two approaches:

- 1) General business education.

2) Job training for business,  
The general business education can be grouped in two ways.

- (a) Basic business education for all.
  - (b) Prevocational business education for those planning to enter business.
- Job training for business can also be grouped into two:

- a) Occupational intelligence i.e a specialized phase of human relations.
  - b) Specific skills training, such as Typewriting, Recording, Selling.
- These two approaches see business as education FOR and ABOUT business.

According to Anyanduba, (1986:5) education FOR business means to develop occupational skills such as recording, retrieving, coordinating, analyzing, organizing, and reporting data used for business decisions, to develop occupational skills to market, merchandize, and management flow of goods and services (i.e Distributive Education) and improve personal use skills useful in business occupation.

Education ABOUT business means improving the understanding of business and its relationships to the total economy, develop personal consumer competence and to relate the role of the consumer to the total economy and develop personal use skills related to business occupation.

The specific objectives of secondary school business education are:

Vocational Competency. Personal use Competency. Consumer- Business Competencies, and Social-economic competency.

### **Vocational Competency**

One major objective of business programme at the secondary school level is to prepare the student for employment in graduation. Such preparation should ensure that the programme graduate are able to adapt to occupational changes. This is informed by the frequent occupational changes occasioned by inventions, economic conditions, legislation and promotion.

Invention of many new devices, dozens of old occupations have disappeared and hundreds of new ones emerged. This is much more serious in business office. The automation of office work has caused and will continue to cause considerable change in the office occupations. In these circumstances, business education graduates adapt themselves, through retaining, to the new occupation's created by inventions.

Changes in the economic condition also necessitate occupational changes. Depressions throw people out of work, while prosperity (that is, economic boom) brings competition for workers. In each case, there is need to adapt to the new employment situation in order to stay on the job-Legislation also may create or eliminate certain occupations altogether promotion from one job to another position may also mean occupational changes. Since occupational change is normal, and in many cases a desirable condition, it sounds reasonable that the school should do whatever it can to prepare business students for occupation changes. This may be achieved by doing either or all the following:

Train the students for more than one vocation. For instance, training a student for bookkeeping as well as stenographic occupations. Stress the fundamentals of each vocational subject, and

Develop business economic competency-there is need for a good background in business and economic knowledge and be able to call upon this knowledge to relate it to problems that arise in business.

### **Personal Use Competency**

The trend in recent time is that non business major elect business courses or subject for personal use competency, that is they study the courses or subject in order to use the knowledge, skills and attitudes for personal purposes. Some of the subjects commonly elected include typewriting, bookkeeping, marketing and management among others. And analysis of all business subjects will show that most of them may be used personally as well as vocationally.

### **Consumer Business Competency**

One of the cardinal objectives of business education programme is to enable the student assume his role as an effective and intelligent consumer of goods and services offered by business.

As a result of this, business educators have an increased responsibility for developing a programme which will lead to the realization of this objective. To this effect, consumer education, which may take the form of a course in consumer goods or a course in consumer economics. Consumer education can be taught at all levels of education- primary, secondary and tertiary. Notwithstanding where consumer education is taught, it should be part of the programme of all students. The business teacher, due to the nature of his training, is in a unique position to contribute to the development of an effective consumer education.

### **Social Economic Competency**

Recently, it is generally accepted that all students need to have an understanding and appreciation of the relevance that business plays in our daily lives. Business education, as a phase of general education is in position to make a major contribution to the development of social and economic competencies by helping students to develop a clear understanding of the national economy.

#### **1. The Relevance of Business Education for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance**

The relevance of business education for Economic Rehabilitation and Reliance cannot be over emphasized. It helps to plan development, that business education in a free enterprise economy as a distinct philosophy geared to effective economic citizenship, personal business competence, and continued refinement and operation of business system (Sapre, 1974).

Business recognizes the contributions that education makes to improve organization and procedure and to human relations in general with consumers; labour and government. There is an appreciation in the community in the role of business; freedom of enterprises and right to profit as legitimate aspirations. Business education fosters those values in a free enterprise.

In Nigeria, the state takes the initiative to identify national economic goals and adopt-techniques of planned development for achieving these goals.

#### **2. Business Education for Self-employment**

Business Education helps for self-employment, it concerns itself primarily with preparing men and women for employment in business, office and distributive occupations. Continuous increase in employment opportunity. The problem of education unemployment is one manifest of this phenomenon (Eni, 1985). There was also the problems of unidentified philosophy of business education as a guide for economic development. One way of remedying this imbalance between education and employment is to direct educational efforts towards developing skills and attitudes conducive to self-employment

#### **3. Business Education as a Career Orientation**

Business Education offers to every individual, who undertakes vocational capable of yielding saleable skills as self-employed, an opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understandings that will enable him handle completely his personal business affairs, develop understanding of the vocational opportunities available in the broad field of business; and to assume his citizenship responsibilities through enlightened participation in an understanding and appreciation of the Nigerian enterprise system. It also offers the student who wishes to pursue a career in business an opportunity to develop these skills, abilities and understanding that will enable him to enter or to provide him with occupational intelligence to enable him fit into and find job satisfaction in the labour force of the complex and dynamic national economy.

#### **4. Business Education as the Livewire of the Economy**

Business education is the live wire of national economy and that is an assurance that it will continue to grow tremendously because a graduate of business education stands a great chance of being employed or self employed. Though gainful employment people increase their wage earnings

power, acquire more goods and services thereby increasing their standard of living; savings and investment would also emerge, to facilitate economic rehabilitation and reliance.

#### **5. Business Education as the Objectives of Self Reliance**

Business education, is also directed helping students to understand better and to act more intelligently in dealing with the crucial problems that face their country's economy. To deal with these problems intelligently they have an understanding of business economic system. Business education assists students in making the transition from the pursuit of academic training to the reality of active participation in the work force (Erickson, 1975).

According to Ulinfin (1986), rightly pointed out: Business education is training for discipline. It is also training for self-reliance indeed. It is the training of an individual's total person for the business, in business and about business, which teaches him how and when to depend upon himself not only for his economic survival but also for performing social responsibilities.

#### **6. Business Education as the Objectives of Economic Efficiency**

Business education equips individuals with the knowledge of the business world. This ranges from investment opportunities, insurance policies, advertising practices, mode of financial transactions, means of payment, borrowing, to entrepreneurship. According to Anyaduba (1985:86) economic literacy is the right of every citizen which should encompass bodies of knowledge about how the wealth of the nation is derived, how it is distributed and the place of the individual in the scheme of the economy,

Nigeria should therefore have to pursue vigorously a viable functional educational programme to enable it achieve its national objectives. This paper is now stressing for a well-articulated business education programme in this regard. This is because business education is pivotal to all aspects of managing our national economy. Business education offers all the ingredients needed for higher productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in resource management (Egwuelu, 1992). In addition, its offering is practical, lively, dynamic, its participants and indeed all citizens come across its offering in their daily economic and social activities.

#### **Problems of Business Education**

- 1) Oranu (1987), noted that problem facing business education is lack of knowledge on the part of policy makers and administrators of business education programmes. He lamented that some of the administrators are truly ignorant while more are antagonistic and pay lip service to the crusade in business education.
- 2) Aina (1986), says that lack of business educational personnel in the Federal and State Ministries of Education to play advisory role in business education. He also referred to the closed and limited academic opportunities for business teachers in Nigerian higher institutions of learning.
- 3) E. I. Odina asserted that Sack of motivation or incentives to teacher, by the government contribute to the problems of development of business education programme. He said that pupils would have been performing better if teachers are motivated. He maintained that government should vote in money for teacher motivation.

\*) It is observed that the business education departments in the secondary schools, technical colleges, colleges of education, polytechnics and universities in this country are disinclined to dissemination of information about the many newsworthy accomplishments, plans and developments that occur. Educators are often very busy making events happen but fail to see and exploit the public relations potentials of many of their activities thereby losing the opportunities for effective public relations. It is lack of effective communication that gives rise to bad or erroneous impressions on the part of the businessmen and the general public concerning both business education and business teacher education programmes. 5) According to Izuka, he says lack of poor monetary reward, poor conditions service of business teachers also contribute to the problems of business education. In 1989, International Conference of Nigerian Association of Business Education in Lagos. Ulinfun and Nwaokolo (1989), conducted a survey on twenty (20) randomly selected business educators from Kaduna, Anambra, Rivers, Bendel, Ondo, Lagos, Oyo and Imo State on problems and challenges of business education in Nigeria.

Fourteen problems were identified and some of these problems are;

- 1) Insufficient number of business teachers
- 2) Absence of instructional gadgets, dictaphone, typewriters, etc.
- 3) External (government/ heads caused) frustration.
- 4) Absence of business education textbooks, journals, magazines for instruction.
- 5) Inadequate funding by the government.
- 6) Poor teacher quality especially in skills.
- 7) Absence of guidance and counseling before students' enrolment for business education courses.
- 8) Public regulation of business education etc. in the association of business education.
- 9) Lack of adequate planning, supervision and education of programme activities on the part of educational planners and administrators.
- 10) Curriculum defects in terms of programme affinity and objectives.
- 11) Lack of adequate, qualified and committed personnel.
- 12) Inadequate awareness of the programme offering, value and role played in economic rehabilitation and reliance on the part of students, parents, business community and administrators.

### **Conclusion**

Everybody involved in economic planning in this country must realize that business education must always be considered as an initiating source growth for economic rehabilitation and self reliance, planning units must be equipped to undertake or initiate business education early in the planning process. If business is the main engine of economic growth (Shonekan (1996), that business education is the gas that runs that engine.

### **Recommendations**

- 1) Government should allocate sufficient fund to different schools as that as to enable them carry out the programme effectively.
- 2) Seminars should be organized by different levels of government to lecture parents and students the importance of business education so that academic snobbery will be done away with.
- 3) The government should try as much as possible to provide incentives to teacher so that work performance would be promoted and teachers' morale would be higher.
- 4) The federal and state governments should, as a matter of deliberate policy, identify and find solution or work for business education graduates roaming about the streets, the government should employ them so as to reduce the unemployment to curb out the problem of insufficient business education teachers.
- 5) The government should also ensure that only business education teachers should be recruited to teach the subject so that problem of unqualified business education teachers should be solved.

- 6) The federal government should set aside a specific budgetary allocation for business education to rescue it from total collapse, such fund should be used to buy instructional gadgets like typewriters etc.
- 7) The National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should sponsor the publication of texts, journals and magazines on business education to ensure the availability of textbooks to students.
- 8) Government should allocate guidance and counselors to different schools.
- 9) The government should made available the teaching materials in order (o make the lessons more lively and interesting to students.
- 10) Government should set out time to given some training on teaching methods to business education teachers. This will enable the teachers to improve on their method of teaching. For business education to perform it noble role in Nigeria's economy, all the problems in implementation of its curriculum have to be eliminated; so as to achieve the goal of economic rehabilitation and reliance.
- 11) According to Kanu (1987), if any area is more vital for the success of the 6-3-3-4 system it is business education.
- 12) Public relations should be considered to mean improved communications between schools and citizens of the community, including parents and those who are engaged in business, and between schools and certain government agencies which have educational responsibilities.  
Business educators certainly have a duty here, because one of the perennial problems of business education is that of establishing and improving communications between the school and all those served by the school.  
Business education has vital and significant story to relate to others within the school, to the school administration, to the parents and taxpayers, and the business communities. Getting (his message across effectively rarely happens by chance it must be planned. In the process of planning, though must be given to the group to be reached, the various media to be used, the ideas lo be presented and then making sure that many notable events occur that are worthy to report.

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