

BUSINESS EDUCATION: THE NECESSARY TOOL FOR ENTREPRENEURS HIP SKILLS FOR NATION BUILDING

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Abstract

Business education is an acquisition of employable skills. It is a programme of education which equips the student with the marketable skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for initial employment and advancement in business occupation. Therefore, if entrepreneurship skills are rightly inculcated into individuals, especially at the tertiary institutions in Nigeria, the problem of unemployment will be greatly reduced. This paper, therefore focuses on how entrepreneurship skills can be acquired for nation's building through Business Education. It also tries to highlight some challenges and future of Business Education for nation building.

Introduction

"Entrepreneur" according to the dictionary means one who organizes and manages commercial enterprises. The entrepreneur takes the initiative in combining the resources of labour, capital and land in the production of goods or services. Therefore, entrepreneurship involves the ability to set up a business enterprise. It involves the acquisition of skills, ideas and managerial abilities necessary for personal self-reliance.

According to Anyakoha (1997) entrepreneurship occurs when an individual develops a new venture, a new approach to an old business or idea, or a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resources in a new way under conditions of risk. Additionally, vocational and technical education has a role to play in training potential entrepreneurs and so must seek for ways and means for equipping its graduates with the entrepreneurship skills as well as other relevant technical skills.

Entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship can contribute in various ways to the economic development of a nation.- Ray (1988) identified some significant contributions in this respect and these include that entrepreneurship:

1. Raises productivity through technical and other forms of innovation.
2. Is a powerful tool for job creation.
3. Facilitates the transfer of technology.
4. Entrepreneurs play a strategic role in commercializing new inventions and products.
5. The entrepreneur plays a critical role in the restructuring and transformation of economies.
6. They help reduce the ossification of established social institutions and the concentrations of economic power.
7. They make markets more competitive and thereby reduce both static and dynamic market inefficiencies.
8. They improve the social welfare of a country by harnessing dormant, previously overlooked talents.
9. They create new markets and facilitate expansion into international markets.

10. Business Education - A Necessary Tool For Nation Building

11. Business education is a relatively new discipline in the Nigerian educational system. And because it is new, there was misconception about its true nature. Business education is that part of education which makes an individual more employable in one group of occupations than another. Business education is vocational, that is education to enter into and advance in jobs. It includes the development of technical competence required for business standards.

12. Vocational Business Education is one of the courses introduced by the National Commission for Colleges of Education (FGN, 1990) for the preparation of qualified NCE Business teachers for the junior secondary school level. This is in line with the Nation Policy on

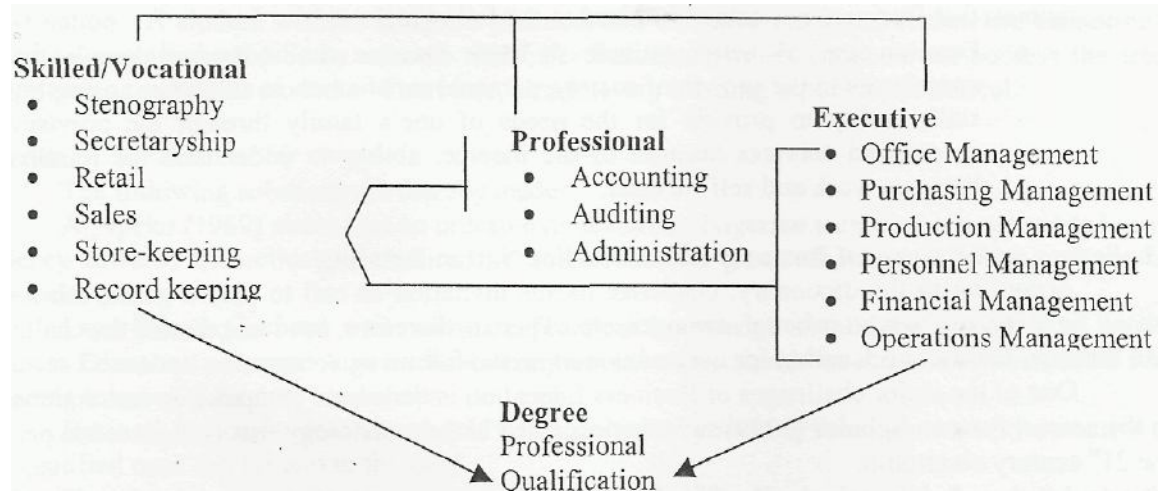
Education (FGN, 1981) which included Business Studies as a prevocational subjects for the preparation of an individual to enter or advance in a specific occupation like Accounting, Secretarial, Clerical, Data Processing and Distributive occupation.

13. Careers In Business Education

14. Business Education is of great importance to people of the society, and the economy of the nation. Opportunities to earn a livelihood with pre-service preparation for an occupation are decreasing rapidly.

15. As reflected in the junior and senior secondary curricula, business education encompasses several areas. And this gives the students opportunity to select from and such selection should take into consideration the ability of the student to succeed. The national curricula provide every learner with vocational training, the opportunity to actualized his or her potential, through continuing education.

16. Business Education



Aims of Business Education

In Nigeria, the need for professionally qualified and experienced manpower becomes essential when the economy is expanding fast. The following are the aims of Business Education as it relates to nation building.

1. Manpower/Skill Development

Business education is aimed at:

- Helping students develop vocational skills such as, accounting, typewriting, shorthand etc.
- Enhance manpower production to fill vacancies in enterprises whether public and private.
- Meet manpower targets necessary for nation building.

2. Economic Development

The calibre of available manpower will to a great extent determine the level of economic development. Therefore, business education is aimed at:

- Management of resources, that is, both human and material resources.
- Personal finance, that is, ability to spend money wisely.
- Ability to understand the products and services and making wise choice between alternatives.

3. Attitude and Work Habits

Positive development of attitudes will be enhanced when individuals are generally aware of the true nature of Business Education and its role in nation building.

With regard to the above aims of Business Education, Ehiametalor (1990) is of the

opinion that Business Education will lead to the following:

- Development of better attitude to work because the individual knows that he contributes to the growth of society, personal satisfaction in acquiring an employable skill, ability to provide for the needs of one's family through the provision of specialized services because of the income, ability to understand the relationship between work and self survival.

Challenges and Future of Business Education for Nation Building

According to the dictionary, challenge means invitation or call to play a game, run a race, have a fight etc. to see who is better, stronger, etc. There is therefore, need to examine the challenges and future of Business Education for nation building in the following areas:

One of the major challenges of Business Education is the use of computer as instructional aid in the nearest future. Agholor (1999) says that computer is the technology that is expected to pervade the 21st century classroom.

Another challenge is the need for Business Education teacher to be computer literate. Since the education industry, which is the largest industry in Nigeria is embracing the use of computer, it becomes compulsory for all the teachers to be computer literate.

One other challenge of Business Education is the use of Internet as a facility for learning/sharing information. With the reduction in the cost of installing telephone by the Federal Government, and with the falling cost of acquiring computers and the discovery of "silicon chips" which is cheap to acquire for the manufacture of the computer's microprocessor, the use of Internet in Business Education will be encouraged in the future.

Obijole (1999) is of the view that since every person is in some way dependent on the world of business, business educators are in a unique position to offer those individuals who seek it, the general and occupational knowledge and skills that will provide them with the tools for life long learning. Therefore, it is incumbent upon business educators to assert the role of business education for the future.

The policies commission for Business and Economic Education believes that Business Education will serve a general as well as a documented occupational need and will be one of the most essential programmes in future.

Problems

In spite of the advantages of Business Education as a necessary tool for entrepreneurship skills for nation building, there are some problems which work against it in Nigeria. Some of them are as follows:

Esene (1983) says that it is an established fact, that Business Education never had the blessing and recognition accorded all other disciplines of education in Nigerian secondary schools because of the problems it encountered initially.

Business Education is still facing the problem of inadequately qualified teachers. The value of any programme of study or groups of studies pursued in schools is influenced by the ability, skills and preparation of the teacher. Business Education never had the adequately trained teachers at the time other fields of education were striving hard and competing with others, to make and sustain its discipline.

Most of the existing institutions for training Business Educators are very inadequately equipped and poorly staffed; this will certainly affect entrepreneurship development, since the students will not be able to obtain the skills required to set up a private business.

Inadequate equipment has affected the entrepreneurship development in Business Education in the nation. A student without adequate practical and effective industrial experience cannot be a successful entrepreneur. Some schools that offer business courses do not even possess the least equipment to teach their students. Therefore, almost every learning aspect is theoretical.

Solutions

The following solutions are thereby made:

Aiyepetu (1989) states that an unfortunate feature of Nigerian technical education has been a tendency towards theoretical orientation, he points out that great emphasis should be placed on practical work.

Experienced teachers with adequate practical knowledge should be provided to handle Business Education courses. Also a course on entrepreneurship should be introduced to students who are going to set up their own workshops.

Business Education teachers should be encouraged by making their salaries very attractive so that qualified ones can remain in the field.

The provision of adequate and suitable equipment for Business Education will make the profession more interesting and exciting. There is virtually no Business Education subject where the use of one kind of equipment or the other is not required.

In order to minimize the impediments to entrepreneurial development in Business Education in Nigerian, all decisions related to Business Education should not be made on political and economic bases but on our knowledge of Business Education and how to move it forward.

Conclusion

It seems that entrepreneurship could provide a reasonable answer to the nation's economic problem of unemployment. Therefore, attention should be paid to entrepreneurship skill acquisition in Business Education, as it would certainly enhance self-reliance and nation building. Entrepreneurship is a valuable component of Business Education and Business Education is an important part of vocational education, which provides an essential model for entrepreneurs.

Recommendations

In order to successfully acquire entrepreneurship skills in Business Education in Nigeria, the following measure are recommended.

1. There is need for adequate funding and effective implementation of the day-to-day activities in Business Education.
2. In order to make the Business Education teacher to be current in their day-to-day activities in-service education is hereby suggested. Also, the reorientation of policy makers will help to promote renaissance in the policy making.
3. A course on entrepreneurship should be introduced in schools right from secondary school level to tertiary institutions.
4. All existing training institutions for technicians should be adequately equipped and well staffed. This will certainly affect entrepreneurship development positively.
5. The use of computer and other electronics devices should be encouraged in the teaching/learning process.
6. Government as well as all stakeholders should procure adequate equipment and machines in order to facilitate the skills acquisition in Business Education.

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