

REPOSITIONING BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

Business education provides the student with knowledge and understanding of the economy, management system and other branches of business endeavors. In other words, this aspect of education is about business and trains or prepares students to function intelligently both as consumers and active participants in the production sector as well as the in the economy. The contents of the Business Education programme refer to the curriculum of the programme (Udo, 2006). The curriculum of Business Education is skill oriented. It is intended to provide skills, knowledge and attitudes to students in the areas of accounting, keyboard mastery, office education, marketing education, management and business law. Contents of the programme are intended to enable the students to fit into the world of work and at the same time, become successful entrepreneurs. It is a means of encouraging youths to do great things for themselves and also to make great impact in their society. Youth empowerment can curb the rate of poverty to a large level. One of the keys to empowering the youth is with skill development. When a youth is equipped with essential skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others, and even invest for future use, aiding the nation economically. This will in-turn contributes to the increase in employability and add to the GDP of the nation. It was concluded that: The current contents of Business Education need to be improved to take Nigerian youth to the next level. Based on the conclusion it was recommended as follows: i. Nigeria University education systems should be geared towards creating and enhancing the supply of entrepreneurship initiatives and activities. ii. The Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) programme should be a minimum of one calendar year of the students' academic pursuit.

Keywords: Youth empowerment, Business education, sustainable national development

Introduction

The formal or public sector of the Nigerian economy appears to have failed in the sense that while production is at its lowest ebb, un-employment and inflation are at an all-time high. The result is an army of unemployed graduates and youths who roam the streets in search for non-existing jobs. This is clearly a serious threat to the national development goals. The only way out of the woods, is to solidify and reposition business Education with view to train this teeming army of unemployed youths and to engage them in sustainable empowerment programs. Occasional bail-out funds (which usually ends in the pockets of a privileged few) and handouts like the trader's Moni (a Federal Government Program) cannot and will give the much-needed turn around required to put the national economy on the solid tracks of National development. As often said, refrain from giving a man fish to eat (because the regularity of the gift is not guaranteed rather; train him how to fish, provide the next and the hooks and he will be good to go.

This paper is therefore, more concerned and interested in viewing Business Education as an education for production and how (if given and improved) content couple with

sustainable youth empowerment programs; it can help in promotion Nigeria's economy recovery and consequently, national development.

The concept of Business Education

In contrast to the conventional system, is concerned with the training of the student with a view to becoming productive and self-employed. It combines the conventional teaching methods with practical training all of which are targeted at marking the learner to fit into the labour market relative ease.

As an aspect of vocational education, Business Education focuses on providing instruction and preparing the student for office occupation such as secretary, shorthand typist or stenographer, bookkeeper, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and account. Further, Business Education provides the student with knowledge and understanding of the economy, management system and other branches of business endeavors. In other words, this aspect of education is about business and trains or prepares student to function intelligently both as consumers and active participants in the production sector as well as the in the economy. It is generally seen as education for and about business, Business Education therefore is a form of education that is direct as 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 live hood. Amoor (2010) notes that business education plays a significant role in the economy development by providing knowledge and skill to learners thereby, enabling them to adequately impart the knowledge into others, handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primary to produce competent, skilful and dynamic business teachers, office administrations and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work.

It has as its primary aim which is – the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such as being an employee, an contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of sustainable National development goal. The co-relation between Business Education and attainment of sustainable Nation development goals lies in the fact that a gainfully employed individual contributes to the 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:

- (i) Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on his qualification.
- (ii) Business enterprise – as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary, word processor, sales representative, broker etc
- (iii) Proprietorship of private schools – primary, secondary, tertiary, computer training in statute and so on

There is no gain saying the fact that Business education as an aspect of vocational education, is what Nigeria need now to help her solve most of her social, economic and development problem. From an entrepreneurial perspective, the aim of business opportunities, evaluate these opportunities in terms of feasibility, and visualize a business model that can be commercialized.

Akpan (2013) defined Business Education as the education that transfers knowledge, skill and attitudes to enable one perform better in a specified business.

Nolan, Hayden, & Malsbary in Ekpenyong (2015) defined Business Education as those business programmes and courses taught ordinarily at the secondary school level. According to Osuala (2004), in Nwosu (2016) Business Education is a programme of instruction that consist of two parts: office education, a vocational programme office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education and General Business Education, a

programme to provide students with information and competences that are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business. From this definition, business education generally classified into two parts: the office education, to prepare personnel for the office work, and those that could be interested in providing career in working under an organization, to be employed into a firm. Etc. From that point of view business education is intended to equip students with the right type of skills, knowledge and attitude for fully function in an organization. In other words, Business Education is the program of instruction that prepares, equips and educate students for business through entrepreneurship. Also, business education could be seen as skills, knowledge and attitudes to establish, own and run a business enterprise successfully.

Furthermore, Njoku (2000) in Nwosu (2016) defined Business Education as an educational program that equip an individual with functional an suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and values that would enable him/her operate in the environment he/she fine him/herself. Akinbowale (2017) sees Business Education as the education program aimed at training, equipping, inculcating in students the necessary and important skills, knowledge, attitudes and values needed for becoming successful entrepreneur and passing such knowledge, experience and value to people available for it. Business Education in this perspective is an avenue for the transfer of valuable skills, knowledge, attitudes and values for managing a business.

It goes beyond the transfer of knowledge to the actual transfer of skills, and values to operate successfully in a business environment. The goal of business education is to impart marketable skills, knowledge, attitudes and values to enable individuals to be producers of good and services (Charity &Abasienie, 2016).

The pre-colonial contents of Business Education Programme

Nigerian education system during the colonial period was geared towards serving the interest of the colonial masters in terms of supply of manpower for their effective administration of Nigeria colony and protectorates (Aladekomo, 2004). The policy at that period was aimed at producing Nigerians who could read and write to enable them hold subordinate positions, such as clerks and interpreters. These Nigerian has no professional skills to enable them stand on their own or even establish and manage their own ventures. The Nigeria industrial policy that came after independence placed emphasis on and paid attention to the establishment of big industries, neglecting the small-scale sectors (Aladekomo 2004). This neglect affected entrepreneurship at the beginning and negatively influenced its importance for economic growth and development. Again, the majority of Nigerian University graduates and other products of other institutions are looking for white collar job. This is an upshot of colonial education polices when the government saw the importance of small-scale and medium scale industries in the country. (Charity &Abasiensie, 2016).

Nigeria university education is as a cross road, as far as it producing graduates who will work and bring creativity into their work place is concerned. The results of a survey jointly sponsored by the NUC and Education Trust Fund (ETF) on need skills like literacy, oral communication, information technology, entrepreneurship, analytical problem-solving and decision making rated Nigerian graduates as poor. This view if Nigerian graduates further explains why the is an increase in the unemployment rate of Nigeria graduates (Oviawe, 2010).

Mission Statements of Business Education

As reported by Oni (1978), the goal of Business Education, as stipulated by the Policy Commission for Business education, 1975 include:

1. To educate the individual for and about business.
2. To produce a continuous programme of planned learning experience designed to equip individuals to fulfil effectively the following three roles: -
 - i. To produce and distribute goods and services as workers.
 - ii. To use the result of production as consumers.
 - iii. To provide career information that helps students relate their interests, needs and abilities to occupational opportunities in business.
 - iv. To provide education opportunities for students preparing for careers in fields other than business and to help them acquire business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in those careers.

From the foregoing, business education becomes a broad-based programme of education with multiple focuses. Consequent upon the above assertion, Anao (1986), outlined the goal of business education to include:

- Production of manpower who possess the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them into co-operative relationship, yielding the goods and services demanded by society for the satisfaction of their wants.
- Providing the young's with skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for production of goods and service, which will undoubtedly fight employment, poverty, loitering, drug abuse, and usage, urban migration, and ignorance of economic affairs.

Aina (2002) was more specific when he listed the goals of business education to include:

- Applying the various business concepts acquired in class to real life situations.
- Acquiring skills and competencies required for the performance of basic business job.
- Keeping simple records of financial and other transactions in the office and operate and care for office machines and equipment,
- Identifying and discriminating among alternatives available in the market, given scarce resources.
- Recognizing and demonstrating their responsibilities as consumers; playing productive role in a free enterprise economy.

Consequent upon the stipulations of the Policy Commission for Business, and the provisions of the National Policy of Education, several authors (Anao, 1986) articulate the goals of Business Education to include:

- A. Preparing effective Management, Secretarial, Marketing, Accounting and Banking executives.
- B. Producing lecturers and teachers who will handle business and related courses in our secondary schools, colleges and universities.
- C. Propagating the development of the business thought and philosophy in our daily existence.
- D. Preparing and equipping those who pass through the programme to be able to establish and run their own private business ventures as self-employed citizens of the society.

Repositioning and contents of the modern-day Business Education programme

Business education entails teaching students the rudiments, assumption and methods of business. Education in this discipline takes place at various stages starting from, the secondary education to higher institution of education (Colleges of education, polytechnics and universities). In the higher institution level, students have to enrol for a particular degree in Business Education, and the optional courses available differ from school to school, but characteristically include essential and fundamental selections like accounting, marketing, management, secretarial and distribution education.

The contents of the business education programme refer to the curriculum of the programme (Udo, 2006). The curriculum of Business Education is skill oriented. It is

intended to provide skills, knowledge and attitudes to student in the areas of accounting, keyboard mastery, office education, marketing education, management and business law.

Content of Business Education are practical in nature given that students in year three at universities, year two at Colleges of Education are expected to undergo a six-month Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) where they will be exposed to the rudiments of industrial practices relating to the field, and build themselves with practical experiences. A more significant aspect of Business Education content is the Business Mathematic, Economics and Statistic. This is because as a business person, much of the work will be mathematically based. As the student progresses educationally, the students would be exposed to the rudiments of entrepreneurship, which is the fundamental aspect of the Business Education programme.

Contents of the programme are intended to enable the students to fit into the world of work and at the same time, become successful entrepreneurs.

According to Bassey (2015), the business education programme has contents that tend to make the students self-reliant upon graduation. Bitru (2010) opined that the content of business education is more career-oriented and as such, from the students first year of study, he/she is expected to choose a career from the available Business Education programme. Available career ranges from Accounting, Marketing, Office Management, Secretariat and Stenography among others. From this option, the student would be exposes to real life industrial experiences of the related occupations. In the Accounting career option, students are exposed to principles of Accounting, Economics, Business Mathematics, Financial Accounting, finance, macro and micro-economics during the first year. At the later stage of the year two, the students will be exposed to cost and management accounting. Year three deals with intermediate financial accounting, taxation, elements of principles of management and business law. At the final year, an accounting student is expected to be exposed to advanced financial accounting, company law financial management auditing and investigation among the several core business education courses like introduction to business education and office practice.

At year two, the students will be exposes to principles of business operations, business machines and keyboarding. Some institutions offer keyboarding at the year 1 level. The office management or secretarial administration offers courses in office practice, typewriting and shorthand at the year one level. As the student progress, the student is exposed to the rudiments of communications, and office operation. The student furthermore exposes to office dictation, word processing, personnel management. Record management and management information system (MIS). At some other point, the content usually exposes students to manpower development. In addition to these, students are normally expected to undertake courses in vocational and technical education, ranging from the introduction to vocational and technical education, comparative vocation education, issues and evaluation of vocational and technical education, and administration of vocational education and teaching. The marketing and distributive option has contents from sales and marketing management, retail and wholesale management, principles of marketing transportation models, among others, to distinguish it from other options of the business education programme. (Charity, 2016).

Concept of Youth Empowerment

Youth empowerment can be defined as a process where people gain the ability and authority to make informed decisions and implement change in their own lives and the lives of other people. It is a means of encouraging youths to do great things for themselves land also to make impact in their society. Youth empowerment can curb the rate of poverty to a large level. One of the keys to empowering the youth is with skill development. When a

youth is equipped with essential skills, he or she can utilize them to feed, assist others and even invest for future use, aiding the nation economically. This will in-turn contributes to the increase in employability and add to the GDP of the nation (Gabriel, 2014).

Empowerment can help youth to understand the importance of education that leads to social improvement of the country. Empowering the youths academically accelerates the spirit of patriotism in the education sector. The empowered youths know the importance of education, as it exposes people to know what they did not know before. When the youths are empowered, they empower the masses, thereby paving path for a better future. To build a better tomorrow, we need to nurture the youths of today. Empowerment ensures that youths have the necessary skills to sustain a livelihood, relieving them from the shackles of unemployment that many nations are battling with in the current time. A skilful youth is a job creator (Gabriel, 2014).

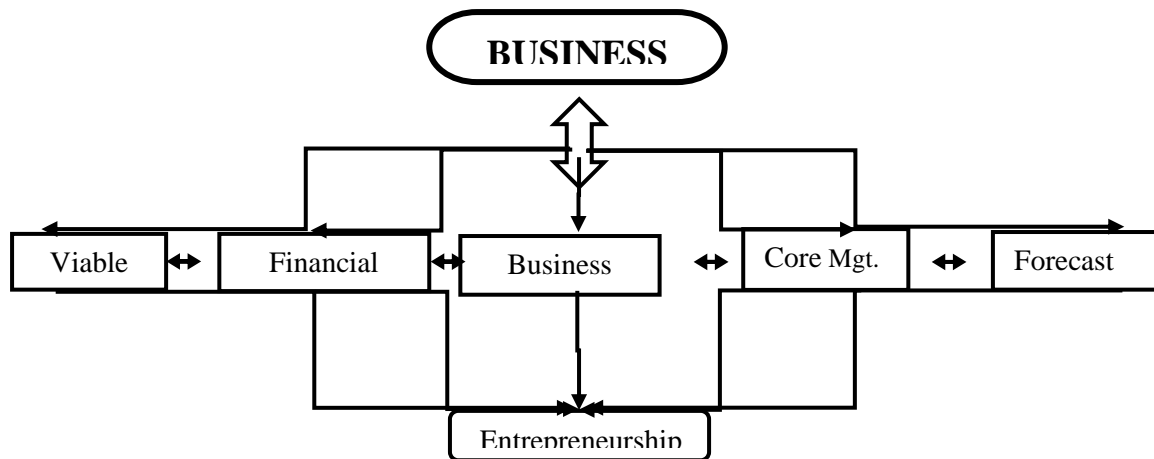
Given the growing numbers of graduates coming out from the various universities into labour market and the increasing unemployment rate, government is worried about the situation and need to take measures to rectify the situation. Policy makers and government are pondering what the right education Nigeria should be and what kind of education will be suitable in propelling economic development in the country.

In order to reduce the persistent socio-economic problems, especially unemployment among graduates and high incidence of poverty in the country, the need for entrepreneurship education arose. Calls for reorientation among students and their teachers who believe in being employed rather than seeking self-employment after graduation have been made. Government is expected to play a greater role in providing the necessary atmosphere and policy frame work for success in this direction, while students that are in the university should acquire the necessary skills and training to identify and exploitable opportunity for economic development (Geoge 2017).

Developing entrepreneurship is a means of providing employment and a powerful weapon of fighting poverty in the country. In order for Nigeria to be transformed economically, it should create appropriate human resource space through education. This human resource space is to have ideal educational environment for producing individuals with the mindset of self-reliance, creativity and high productivity in order to cope with the 21st century world of work (Njoku, 2012).

Roles of Business Education Contents in Sustainable Youth Empowerment and National Development

When business education contents are improved to accommodate core industrial entrepreneurship, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Business Decision Analysis, and Quantitative and Qualitative production, management among several other innovations are included in the curriculum content and imparted into the students, all these will go a long way in recovering Nigeria economy through domestic consumption. The following diagram and explanations are some of the ways through which improved business education contents could help in Nigeria's economy



Identification of Viable Business Opportunities

According to Gidado & Akaeze (2014), Business Education equips the recipients with skills that would enable them to identify viable investment opportunities in their societies. Through this, they would be able to see opportunities where others see chaos. It would also equip them with skills that would make it possible for them to use the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis to function well as entrepreneurs. With this background in mind, it would be observed that business education could promote entrepreneurship consumption of economic recovery

Inculcation of financial management skills

For the production to be sustained, it is pertinent that the entrepreneur imbibes and utilizes the financial management skills that are taught by Business Education. It is important that the producer manages his/her finances appropriately to ensure that he/she breaks even and remain in production. Business Education helps to build the producer b inculcation the financial manage skills to the students to enable them manage their enterprises successfully.

Business management skills

According to Gidado & Akaeze (2014), one of the aims of business education programme is the attaining proficiency skills in economic management on the part of the business education students. This is in accordance with the fact that the planning, directing, decision making, organizing and controlling of the business are a huge process that makes or mar the business process. The business education content [provides an avenue for the student to learn the basics and applications of the management skills to boost the economy.

Inculcation of Core Management Skills

Improved business education content will ensure that the students acquire concrete and core marketing skills to ensure that they are able to reach out to the consumers after production has taken place. It is pertinent to note that production cannot be complete without getting to the consumers at the right price, place, form, quality and quantity. As it is, only valuable core marking skills would enable the producer to get to the hears of the consumers.

Inculcation of Forecasting Skills

Improved Business Education content will ensure that the students acquires forecasting skills that would be proper to reduce the rate of business failure. Core producers who are will grounded in fore casting skills can go along way in planning for the business success and this will reduce business failure (Charithy & Abasienie, 2016). So, it is necessary

to reposition university education systems with a view to creating and enhancing the supply of entrepreneurship initiatives and activities. By this, it is expected that our universities will become centres for inculcating the spirit of entrepreneurship rather than the spirit of passing examination to get white collar jobs.

Conclusion

Since the education given to a generation is aimed at solving the problems of that generation, it is worth to emphasize that the current contents of Business Education need to be improved to take Nigerian youth to next level. The paper had highlighted the fact that for the economy to expand, create employment and output, the domestic consumption must be improved. But domestic consumption depends on production of goods and services which can be achieved through enhanced entrepreneurship through Business Education content.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations were made:

1. Nigeria university education systems should be geared towards and enhancing the supply of entrepreneurship initiatives and activities.
2. The student Industrial work Experience Scheme (SIWES) programme should be a minimum of one calendar year of the students' academic pursuit.
3. The National Board for Technical Education [NBTE] and National Universities Commission [NUC] should ensure that the contents of Business Education are more practical in nature, taking the industrial need of the students into consideration.

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