



Intensification of Business Education Programme towards Enhancing Nigerian Business Education Graduates Productivity in Labour Market

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Author SSS muted and discussed the idea with author ROO who searched the necessary materials used. Author SSS prepared the first draft of the manuscript while author ROO proofread and edited before sending it. All stages of editing as directed by the peer reviewers were carried out by author ROO who prepared the final draft of this paper. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to identify how business education programme would be intensified towards enhancing Nigerian business Education graduates productivity in labour market. To achieve this, the paper among other things examined globalization, business education and its roles in curriculum development cum implementation, materials resources, challenges facing business education programme, encouraging employers' participation in career guidance programme for business education students still in school and a host of others. Conclusively, the paper suggested that government and relevant agencies for Business Education Programme should make concerted effort to intensify Business Education programme in order to make the students relevant in the labour market. Also, Qualified Business Educators should be employed and provided with the

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current business related reading materials. The paper therefore recommended among others that Business Education curriculum should be diversified as to accommodate the current need of the society, Government should endeavour to provide both human and material resources for proper intensification of Business Education programme and Information and communication technologies (ICTs) with stable electricity should be provided for the department of Business Education.

Keywords: Intensification; business education; productivity; labour market.

1. INTRODUCTION

Education remains the surest path to individual opportunity and societal growth. Education which is the process of emancipation, civilization and development as asserted by Jibrin et al. [1]. It is also equated to a key that unlocks the developments of personal (self-reliant) and national potentials (national development), which is the reason why the government of Nigeria regarded education as an instrument per excellence for effective national development [2].

Gayi [3] indicated that education serves many purposes which include preparing individuals for citizenship, cultivating skilled workforce, teaching cultural literacy as well as helping students become critical thinkers. Preparing students for the acquisition of skills required in the work place is the most important responsibility of the educational institutions. It is the responsibility of educators to prepare students for the future. But, to achieve this, it requires functional education (like business education programme) to be adaptable to the future and function with the skills and competencies needed by individuals to maintain high level of productivity in performing their jobs. Productivity according to Business Dictionary [4] is a measure of the efficiency of a person, machine, factory system in converting inputs into useful outputs. More so, the level of individual efficiency on the work determines his professional sustainability. Business education is one of the educational programmes charged with the responsibility of skills and competencies development. Therefore, more emphases are needed to incorporate new ideas, methodology and technology into business education programme in Nigeria in order to cater for the competencies expected of its recipients in the labour market most especially in today's ever changing business environment.

2. BUSINESS EDUCATION

Business education programme is a type of education designed to provide training through

courses and curriculums that can be adapted quickly to apparent needs in employment picture. According to Nwosu [5] business education is education for and about business. The emphasis in Business Education is on exposure to and acquisition of knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes relevant and adequate for employment in specific business operations.

Ihekwa [6] describes business education as the type of education that assists individuals to acquire the skills which they can apply in solving problems in business occupations such as accounting education, marketing, management, word processing etc. It is one of those tools which can be used to achieve national goals of economic, political and social development.

Business education enhances students to have work orientation and make the transition from school to the world of work. In addition, Osuala [7] expressed Business Education as a programme to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the businesses. However, the business education programme should be adapted to the changes and challenges that today's business offices require for the programme to attain its roles and objectives for which it was being established.

2.1 Roles of Business Education

Business Education has historically played an important role in the economic and manpower development of Nigerian nation. It provides career guidance to adult students to increase their awareness of varied job opportunities and changing requirement for career entry and achievement; provides training, which reflects changes in business brought about by technological advances; it provides individuals for work in local business and other organizations as well as provides for wide ranging interest, ability and goals of adult learners. Business education performs the

following additional roles as stated by Osuala [7]:

- (a) It educates individuals for and about business.
- (b) It provides career information that helps students
- (c) It provides educational opportunities for students preparing for careers in field other than business to acquire business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in those areas.

In addition, Business education has the capacity to develop programmes that respond to current societal issues such as education for improving basic computational skills; equipping people with skills to live as individual and contribute meaningfully to the society. The National Policy on Education [8] states that for education to be functional it has to be relevant, practical and acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of competencies as equipment for the individual to live and contribute meaningfully to the society. This is an indication that Business Education programme should be constantly reviewed in terms of the curriculum that reveals and responds to the current global issues in the work place and evaluation of both human and material resources needed for intensification of Business Education programme towards remarkable productivity among graduates in the labour market.

3. CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Curriculum is defined as a group of courses or planned experience, in proper sequence of topics designed to prepare an individual for efficient service in a specific vocation. Curriculum is seen as the instrument through which education institutions seek to translate the hopes of the society into a concrete [9]. Curriculum development is basically concerned with content development with other areas related to it. It is a process by which course content is identified, sequenced and experiences knowledge selected are organised. Developing a curriculum is a very complex task involving many decision makers such as government, curriculum planners and curriculum implementers. It is a pre-requisite to lesson planning that is designed to accept the content of a programme and translate that content into methodology and process for instruction.

In Business Education, curriculum thrives on relevance and usefulness. The extent to which a curriculum assists students to enter and succeed in the business world of work is what matter most. Consequently, an outstanding characteristic of a curriculum is that it should be flexible. A worthwhile Business Education curriculum should be dynamic and relevant, possessing the following characteristics as outlined by Isyaku [10].

3.1 Focus

Business education courses should provide for students development of knowledge, manipulating competencies and skill, attitudes and value which should be applied in real work-setting. This implies to succeed in the work-place, Business education graduate need to acquire skills and experiences that demonstrate to employers that they are capable of applying those skills to practical business tasks.

3.2 Responsiveness

A business education curriculum must be responsive to technological changes in the society. New developments in the society should be incorporated into the curriculum so that graduates can be better equipped to compete for job globally; ICT is having serious effect on business education curriculum as it is a vessel through which knowledge of current world business development is conveyed. All aspects of Business Education syllabus should be reviewed without delay. Therefore, ICT practical must be thoroughly emphasized most especially in the area of the internet usage, networking, wireless network, multimedia system, the e-management/planning, use of spread sheet, excel, power point, the e-banking etc.

3.3 Justification

Business Education programme should be based on societal needs, hence curriculum justification should go beyond the school environment into the society. Therefore, Business Education curriculum should focus training on the requirements of specific and available jobs based on the commitment of employers. Training to employment programs can be organized and managed by workforce intermediaries like employers, private organizations and by government themselves [11].

3.4 Orientation

The ultimate success of a Business Education curriculum is not only measured in students' academic performance but through the results of that academic performance. The results take the form of performance in the work-place.

In addition, Finch and Crunkilton [12] stated that curriculum development must be dynamic and realistic.

3.5 Dynamic

Business Education is dynamic, thus, its curricula must likewise be dynamic and responsible to the world of work. As changes occur in either the learning outcomes or the learning environment, curriculum should be revised and updated. Ahukannah in [9] describes curriculum revision as a dynamic process that is designed by the school to accelerate or promote desired changes and the control of the direction of the change. Therefore, the change in any curriculum, business education inclusive is aimed at equipping students with value, skills, competencies and prevalent technological innovations.

3.6 Realistic

Curriculum must be relevant in order to adequately prepare students for the world of work. Content development should be based on what students should know and be able to do. The curriculum content must be based on the actual worker's role with relevant tasks, knowledge, skills, attitudes and value given as a foundation for what is to be taught. This forms the basis that the business education curriculum must reflect the skills and competencies needed in the real world of work. Also, Business Education in Nigeria should work cooperatively with the business community to prepare all individuals to live and work as productive citizens in a changing global society by providing essential business experiences, education and training.

4. CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION

No matter how good curriculum is, it requires appropriate educational resources for implementation. Education resources are regarded as the pivot upon the wheel of curriculum rotate. It includes both human and

material resources. In business education, human resources are regarded as business educators who are charged with the major responsibility of implementing business education curriculum. Okike [9] maintained that no matter how good, well trained and qualified an educator is, the effectiveness of his teaching can be jeopardized by the wrong application of material resources. Therefore, for business education programme to achieve its objectives and roles as stated there is need for competent and a well trained business educators who is endowed with the skills and technique involved in business education programme.

5. MATERIALS RESOURCES

The instructional resources are tangible resources used by the teacher and students to bring about desirable behavioural changes in students. Those instructional resources are audio, visual materials such as pictures, tapes, films, learning kits, workbooks. Nwosu [5] maintained that materials resources concretize learning, make learning permanent, create a high degree of interest in students, stimulate self activity in students, develop a continuity of thought in students, contribute to growth and meaning of vocabulary and contribute to efficiency, depth and variety in learning.

However, Business Education Programme is a specific area of education that emphasizes on skill acquisition that updates every individual with the ever-changing business environment. Therefore, the writers conclude that business education laboratories should be installed with the ICT resources as to make its recipients more technological in the globalized work.

5.1 Challenges Facing Business Education Programme

There are numerous challenges facing business education programme which has negative implications on the business education students to be self-reliant and be able to compete with their colleagues globally. Among the numerous challenges as indicated by [Nwosu 5; p.49] are:

1. Lack of skilled business educators
2. Acute shortage of the (ICT) training facilities and equipment.
3. Under-utilization of available training facility.
4. Unconducive laboratories

5. Lack of follow-up and continuity in government policies.
6. Poor funding of business education.
7. Poor remuneration of Business Education teachers.
8. Poor emphasis on the practical aspect of utilization of ICT in business education programme.

Also, Ochuba and Okoli [13] indicated poor infrastructural facilities as one of the major challenges to business education programme. Higher level of degradation of infrastructural facilities (like electricity) in the economy facilitates incompetence among business education graduates. The core areas of business education are Accounting, Secretarial and marketing education. These days, no one can claim competences in these areas without knowing computer package/applications relevant to them. It is undisputable fact that Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has played a predominant role in the development of human societies. It is seen as a catalyst, an enabler in all sectors of economy and an indispensable tool for enhancing innovation, competitiveness and modernization. However, the computer cannot work without electricity. In Nigeria, most educational institutions hardly have regular supply of electricity, and even when they generate their own electricity, the supplies are limited to the administrative offices because of cost, whereas the supplies are highly needed in the computer laboratories, typing pools, classrooms and libraries. Therefore, Business Education graduates are not finding the challenges imposed by poor infrastructure easy because it is a serious bottleneck to their struggle to obtain job elsewhere in the world and self-employment. Moreover, after discussing curriculum development and material resources in Business Education Programme. The following strategies could also be adopted as stated by Jeffrey [11]:

5.2 Encouraging Employers' Participation in Career Guidance Programme for Business Education Students Still in School

One of the simplest and most direct way to Business Education programme intensification is to encourage employer's participation in the school program in order to increase students exposure to the world of work. Without waiting for the implementation of more ambitious curriculum

reform agenda, employers can use their influence for school to adopt courses that could help Business Education students negotiate the job-search process and build key soft skills relevant to the work-place.

5.3 Support Information Projects to Provide Career and Labour Market Information for Business Education Graduate

Information communication and technology facilities such as internet, mobile devices and social networking technology provide young people with more transparent access to labour market information while it maximizes the recruitment reach of employers. Employers have an opportunity to reach beyond the job-board model while working proactively with emerging job information services and platforms population with youth, such as mobile phones/texting and Smartphone based applications, in order to connect with young people more efficiently. Employers can also cooperate with special programs and initiatives that are designed to give youths a deeper understanding of overall career trends and opportunities [11].

Therefore, incorporation of employers' participation into Business Education Programme could help students gain an understanding of the jobs available in both local and global economies, the avenues for pursuing those jobs, and the skills and experience necessary for obtaining them.

5.4 Promote a More Positive Image for Business Education Programme

Business Education is seen as one of the vocational education programme meant for equipping students with necessary skills and competencies for self-reliance still, Business Education can be promoted globally through inculcation of vocational career paths that include entrepreneurship and small business formation based on trades expertise as well as the possibilities for academic.

5.5 Investments to Improve Business Education Graduates Access to Work-Relevant Skills Training

Traditionally, the provision of skill has been the responsibility of educational and vocational training institutions and is too often detached

from practical applications in the work place. While employers have a role to play as curriculum advisers and advocates for better work preparation in schools, one of the most immediate ways to align skill training initiatives with real work opportunities is through the creation of demand-driven “training-to-employment programme [14]. Therefore, in order to enhance Business Education graduates job opportunities in the global market, there is need for inculcation of demand-driven training-to-employment programme in the Business Education Programme.

5.6 Partner with Demand-Driven Training-to-Employment Programme

Training-to-employment programs focuses training intensively on the requirements of specific, available jobs, and include a post-training placement component based on prior hiring commitments from employers. This programme can help employers rapidly address skills shortages and they can efficiently expand access to work opportunities for individuals who may not have been able to obtain these jobs on their own. However, this process will reinforce training in business education programme to be tailored directly to the skills shortage identified as these will open more job opportunities for the business education students upon their graduation anywhere in the world.

6. CONCLUSION

With the dynamism of the society, delivery system in business education need s to be restructured in order to enhance the performance of business education graduates in the Nigerian working environment. More emphasis should be placed on how the problems facing business education programme could be solved. Government and relevant agencies for business education Programme such as National Business and Technical Examinations Board (NABTEB), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should make concerted effort to intensify business education programme in order to make the students relevant in the labour market. Qualified business educators should be employed and provided with the current business related reading materials. The major limitation of this paper is that it focuses on the situation obtainable in Nigeria with respect to business education programme. Despite this limitation, in

the view of the authors, the gains of this paper far overshadow the limitation.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

To buttress and strengthen the issues raised in this paper, the following recommendations are hereby made:

1. Business education curriculum should be diversified as to accommodate the current need of the society. This could be achieved by incorporating curriculum experts in business education as it will help to produce well seasoned business education graduates that could compete in term of skills and competencies.
2. Government should endeavour to provide both human and material resources for proper intensification of business education programme. The provision of these resources will help to prepare the students to develop relevant skills required in the labour market and to increase their productivity in the working environments.
3. Information and communication technologies (ICTs) with stable electricity should be provided for the department of business education. This will enable lecturers to source for current materials from the internet on a wide range of topics and concept.
4. Invitation of employers and business leaders should be encouraged in business education departments. This will consolidate the efforts of business educators in providing the skills needed in the work-place and also inspire them to set more ambitious goals for the students.
5. Seminars, in-service training, workshops and international conferences should be organized for business education lecturers to further update them with recent developments and innovation demanded in the working environments.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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