

Business Education for Self Reliance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the need for Business Education for Self reliance and Sustainable Development in Nigeria. It looked at the concept of Business Education and would go a long way in achieving self reliance and sustainable development. The researchers were of the opinion that would go far in harnessing a better economy where government and its constituted organs would stick up their major objectives. Therefore, Business Education becomes imperative in Nigeria following current trend of unemployment among youths who would always rely on government for sustenance. Recommendations were made on how to bring about a workable business that could bring about self reliance and sustainable development in the country.

Keywords: *Self Reliance, Sustainable Development, Business skill, etc.*

1. Introduction

Business Education being a dynamic field of study has transformed the educational system into the educational system to one which aims at grooming manpower to fill the over growing vacuum created by unemployment. It is alarming to know that graduate unemployment cuts across all disciplines in the country. It is however, impossible to identify an academic field that is not adequately represented in the ever growing community of unemployed graduates that are unemployable.

Our graduate unemployment problem has generated several other socio-economic problems in the country. For instance, the issue of Islamists militancy (Boko Haram) in the Northern part of the country, the issue of the Niger Delta militancy, political thuggery among youths, increased rate of armed robbery and kidnapping can all be traced to graduate unemployment in the country. Mass unemployment in the country could be the result of students learning what is particularly not relevant to our stage of development (Uddin and Uwaifo, 2005). The situation of unemployment in Nigeria is indeed alarming (Ogunsola, 2009). This is owing to the fact that, thousands of unemployable youths are roaming the streets seeking government enhanced jobs, while the universities and other higher institutions keep producing graduates on a yearly bases, non-compatible with new jobs or vacancies to absorb these new job seekers (unemployable graduates)

According to Orim, Olayi and Ewa (2009), training in school is at variance with what labour market requires. This is because, there is a mis-match between school training and the realities in productive life in the job seeking world. The graduates concerned may not have been adequately

trained by their institutions to become employable or self-reliant in terms of starting their own small or medium scale businesses.

Although, several attempts have been made by the Government to find solution to the problem of graduate unemployment without significant success. In spite of all the efforts made by the UNESCO and Nigerian Government to enhance the skills of youths, later reports showed that all these did not pay sufficient attention to skill training for youths and adults (Babalola, 2010). Given the inadequacies of the current education systems, there is the need to incorporate Business Education for self reliance and sustainable development in the country.

2. Business Skill

The aim of business skill is to inculcate in the young people the need to see business opportunities, ideas and act on them promptly in order to take advantage over others. However, this should not stop at imparting knowledge alone but, ability to teach skills acquisition in various disciplines of study that a potential businessman might require, such as managerial skills, financial competencies, accounting skills, marketing and general business competencies. Business Education is one of that embraces skill building programme, creative thinking, productive development, marketing negotiation, leadership training and health generation (Kurato, 2003).

According to Ihekwoaba (2000) in Shaibu and Mbaegbu (2012), Business skill occurs when an individual develops a new venture or new approach to an old idea or a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resource in a unique way of giving the market place a product or service by using resourced in a new way under conditions of risks. In their views, Steinhoff and Burges (2003) in Shaibu and Mbaegbu (2012) opined that business involves risk financial material and human resources in a new concept or opportunity with an existing firm. It is also the dynamic process of creating incremental wealth (Hasty and Readon, 2007)

However, Gana (2008) looks at Business as the willingness, and the abilities of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and able to establish an enterprise successfully, based on the identified opportunities. Business skill is also the creation of an innovative, economic organization for the purpose of growth under conditions of risks and uncertainties (Dollinger, 2005). It is a clear manifestation of effective manipulation of human intelligence as demonstrated in creative performance.

3. Business Education

Business education represents a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all types of educational delivery systems-elementary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It includes education for office occupation, distribution, marketing occupations, accounting, business teaching, business administration, business management, typewriting, stenography and secretarial education or studies.

Business education is often times described as education for and about business whose primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupations (Nwosu, 2003). The value of Business Education programme could be determined by its ability to adequately prepare and equip appropriate individuals in such a manner that they could fit into specific jobs or establish themselves upon graduation from school. It is a programme of instruction that consists of two parts as follows:

- a. Office Education: For office careers through initial refreshers and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in occupations
- b. General Business Education: A programme that provides students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business world (Osuala, 1987).

Business Education is a field of training in business practices and in specific skills such as

accounting, management, information processing, keyboarding, typewriting, record keeping, shorthand. Business education is conducted on two distinct levels: education for administrative support personnel in business and industry, and collegiate education for business administration and for business teacher preparation (Cross, 2008). Business education therefore, should provide the individuals a foundation to work and live as productive citizens in a changing global economy

4. Self Reliance

The term self reliance can be seen to mean being able to depend on one self, one's resources rather than those of others. It has to do with what one can do himself/ herself. Self reliance also means relying on one's own abilities and efforts to be independent. The desire of most developing countries including Nigeria, is to have a self- reliant and resilient economy capable of generating an internally self sustaining growth.

5. Concept of Development

The concept of development has to do with improvement in the quality of life or well being of the citizens of a country. According to Adegite (2010) economic development is more fundamental than economic growth as it goes beyond the mere rise in national income. To her, underdeveloped countries are characterized by abject poverty, ignorance, diseases, and low life expectancy rate, high illiteracy rate, low income etc. she insists that development cannot occur without growth. Oyisiku (2009) corroborates this view by stressing that development is growth plus positive change or better future.

Traditionally, economists have measured development in terms of increase per capita income or gross domestic product. However, it is impossible to record an increase in per capita income while many people still remain below the poverty line.

Development at the international level has taken a new dimension with the adoption of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the commitment to meet these goals by 2015. Making a case for this new policy, Kayode (2009) opines that the achievements of the MDGs must be addressed within the context of national poverty reduction strategies, sound macro-economic policies, and executive management of public expenditure etc. for a country to have sustainable development, the development that had taken place over time must be enduring. Sustainable development therefore, implies increasing wellbeing over a very long time. The world commission on environment and development (1987) has defined sustainable development as "a development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

6. Sustainable Development

According to Mbata (2009), sustainable development means the all round development of individuals. It concerns not only personality development, but also nation building which goes beyond the construction of bridges, roads, skyscrapers and provision of other social amenities. Sustainable development should continue without damage to environment (Coventry and Nixon, 1999).

Sustainable development is believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life. It postulates that there are intrinsic links among economic and social and environmental well being. Changes in one area will impact upon the other. It is a pattern of resources that aims at meeting human needs, while preserving the environment so that their needs can be met not only in the present, but also generations to come. It is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). It is a way of protecting the environment, while

improving living standard for all the populace.

7. Classes of Business Skill

According to Paul (2005) business skill can be classified into the following occupations:

1. Mining and agriculture occupation: The business in this type of occupation is mainly on the provision of raw materials by extraction or basic preparation and selling of farm produce. Examples of such are those found in the quarry business, pot making, fishery, piggery, goatry, horticulture and cattle rearing.
2. Manufacturing/ construction occupation: The educators engaged in this type of business make or grow crops to be sold or engage in construction works. Good examples of people here are soap makers, bakers, carpenters, furniture makers, upholsters, leather workers, shoe makers, boat makers, architects, painters, book publishers, book producers, etc.
3. Distribution occupation: The educators here move products from their point of origin to where they are needed. Examples here are wholesalers, retailers, commission agents, insurance brokers, bakers, importers, marketers, general merchandize, etc.
4. Service occupation: This occupation is made up of educators who have artists (i.e. musicians, actors, comedians, etc), professional athletes, medical and health workers, hoteliers, caterers, dry cleaners fashion designers, cosmetologists, typists, computer operators, hair dresser, advertisers, etc.

8. Objectives of Business Education

Business education skills are needed to help the students from the starting stage of life to technological development. Business education should provide not only the skills required for operating machines or doing any specific job, but also to provide such knowledge and skills required for self reliance and sustainable developments.

According to Akinola (2006), the following are the objectives of business education:

1. To prepare the students for employment after graduation.
2. To meet the manpower needs of the society.
3. To increase the options available to each student and serving as motivation in order to enhance all types of learning.
4. To present a laboratory in which students practice skills, knowledge and attitude to make the classes instruction more meaningful and relevant.
5. To provide an opportunity through the use of local business for the students to acquire additional skill and knowledge.
6. To give the students background of training that would contribute to rapid advancement on the job.
7. To make students develop good working habits and attitude needed in the development of personality traits such as punctuality, responsibility, accuracy, fact, adaptability and service of responsibility that makes for efficient work.
8. To help develop the high attitude towards work and the habit of mind conducive to the proper use of technology.
9. To provide the knowledge and skills necessary for industrial, commercial and economic development.
10. To provide who can apply scientific knowledge to the improvement/solutions, and convenience of man.
11. To give training, and impart the necessary skills leading to the promotion of craftsmen, technicians and other skilled personnel who will be enterprising and self reliant.
12. It is also out to stimulate and encourage creativity and to enable our young and women to have an intelligent understanding of the increasing complexity of the society.

9. Relevance of Business Education

Below are, some relevance of business education before and after graduation:

1. The knowledge gained from business education can be used by the students to be able to flow effectively in the labour market.
2. The knowledge of business education will help the students to be experts in the production of powder soap, setting up barbing salon, tailoring business/computer centre, etc.
3. It will help the students to use modern machines in terms of communication and recording and storing of information.
4. It will help the students to interact and gain information, which will help boost teaching and learning.
5. Establishing printing publishing in the rural areas and will save the people there, the transport of going to the town to buy books and other stationeries.
6. Items will be sold at cheaper rates and would also get to the hand of the poor individuals at reasonable prizes.
7. The knowledge of skill will help the graduate of business education open up nursery/primary schools, secondary schools, extra mural lessons, etc. which will be useful to the society and enable them generate income as well, thereby bringing about sustainable development.
8. It encourages wealth creation which could lead to higher gross domestic product (GDP)
9. It would provide convenience for people in the country.
10. It helps to raise the standard of living of business beneficiaries and like most industrialized nations, may survive in a complex society.

10. Challenges of Business Education

According to Inegbenebor (2005), the following are the major challenges of business education which need to be addressed to attain the desired goals.

1. Orientation of school administration. It is important to state many school administrators are ignorant of the value and potential of business education in national competitiveness and development. Therefore, business education in such schools may not have the level of support that it needs to gain acceptance among students and staff.
2. What to teach and to who? Most teachers or instructors do not know what to teach and the people who are being taught. Inability to distinguish between business education and management will always pose a challenge to business.
3. Who is to teach? The skill business is seen by people to be an all comers' game. The popularity of the required preparation to jump in to the train or bandwagon. Yet, the teaching requires special training and experience.
4. Lack of teaching materials: The lack of teaching material especially the right materials that are suitable for the teaching of the skills in Nigerian schools constitutes a challenge in business education.
5. Un-coordinated and weak institutional support for education: The government and its agencies responsible for business development have not addressed the problem of business education at all levels of the educational system.

11. Ways Forward

Having considered the above challenges business education, the following recommendation or strategies have been drawn in order to help pave for self-reliance and sustained development of the nation:

- Proper orientation of the students: there is the need for skill edict to have a significant promotional content that would stimulate and sustain the interest of the students in the programme. The issue of wage earner culture should be discouraged by encouraging a self reliant culture.
- Proper orientation of school administrators: through intensified support, school administration should strive to educate them on education in order to be well equipped and help transform the country for sustainable development. The national university commission (NUC), and the national board for Technical Education (NBTE), should go beyond prescribing the minimum academic standards with respect to education organizing seminars and workshops with the aim of enhancing the competence of school administrators.
- Knowledge of what teach and to whom: these should be a forum for educators to brainstorm for the purpose of generating ideas for use by institutions of higher learning. This is not to suggest that a standard programme should be forced on them.
- Competent teacher to handle entrepreneurship: the National University Commission (NUC), and each university, polytechnic and college of education should build capacity in this area to have meaningful result. A good technique that can be useful in improving teachers' interest is to encourage the educational institutions involved to share resources, knowledge and experience in this area through seminars, conference and workshops.
- Provision of teaching material: Materials should be provided match current demand of the society. The delivery of skill development programme in the country should be indentified with the teachers adequate furnished with repellant materials.
- Coordinated and speedy institution support" the government in partnership with agencies such as the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA), Industrial Training Fund (ITF), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETF), etc should address this issue with the aim of proving funds to the University, Colleges of education and other institutions for business education in order to help promote self reliance and sustainable development.

12. Conclusion

Preparing the graduates for the competitive world of work has been the sole aim of Business in education. Skill acquisition and entrepreneurship education are considered indispensable towards self reliance and sustainable development of the nation.

Therefore, administrators, teachers, students and individuals of the public should be retrained in special skills via workshops, seminars, conferences, symposiums, etc. in order to improve their skills, knowledge and understanding of the programme in business education their capacity for self reliance and national development. Once tóhe above recommendations are strictly followed, they would go a long way in enhancing self reliance and sustainable development in the country.

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