

RE-ENGINEERING BUSINESS EDUCATION INSTRUCTIONAL FACILITIES IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

Instructional facilities constitute an indispensable factor in teaching skills to learners in business education. Vocational business education is relevant to the nation and is a programme that involves practical exercises which could equip learners/individuals with necessary skills which can at the end of studies offer individuals employment or be self employed and become self productive. The paper discussed how business education could be improved through improved status of instructional facilities in school. Problems facing the use of instructional facilities and standard role of business education in Nigeria are stated. Strategies for re-engineering business education instructional facilities for employment, self reliant and self productivity are highlighted. In conclusion, the paper makes certain recommendations towards sustainability of employment, self employment, self reliance and productivity of individual through effective and appropriate provision of business education instructional facilities.

The fundamental prerequisite for the desired technological development for self sustenance and productivity is the availability of capable manpower that has passed through a viable and sound educational programme. During the period of 6 – 5 - 4

system of education in Nigeria, Nigerian educational system was based on emphasizing intellectual or mental development. This shows that very little or no attention was paid to the development of skill that could be utilized by individual learners to gain employment. The present economy requires people who are vocationally skilled in various occupations. The importance of any particular education and training is work and work is part of living and one cannot successfully discuss the issue of work without Business Education.

Business education is an aspect of vocational education programme in institution of learning which trains individuals for gainful employment through the acquisition of skills and knowledge that affects the business world. Business education trains people who will have the competencies of being employed or being self-reliant. Business education is therefore defined as the sum total of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for successful promoting and administering a business enterprise (Anao, 1986). Osuala (1993) described business education as a programme that prepares youths and adults for employment in a specific occupation or family occupations by providing those experiences, which enable them to develop the competencies needed to qualify for employment. The skills and knowledge to be acquired in business education should be necessary for economic and social changes.

According to Isaac (2009), Business education is one of the major areas in vocational technical education. It should be geared to the development of specific skills required for economic and social changes. Based on this, Abegunde (1990) enumerated major aims of business education to include:

1. To equip students with required skills needed to perform specific office functions.
2. To provide manpower that possesses the requisite knowledge, skill and attitude for harnessing resources and bringing them into co-operative relationship yielding the goods and services demanded by society for satisfaction of their wants and needs. This simply means that individuals acquiring skills and competencies will be capable of being productive in the area of production of goods and services for the survival of the nation. He will be self-reliant, self-employed and capable of depending upon his expertise.
3. To provide technical knowledge and expertise to students needed to use business services to handle their personal affairs.

The objectives of business education among others are:

1. Develop individuals who will be properly equipped with requisite knowledge and skills for productive work life.
2. Develop individuals who will be capable of meeting the modern technology challenges.
3. Equip individuals with requisite attitudes and skills toward work.

4. Enable the youths relate their expertise to the needs of their local communities.
5. Develop a pool of competent manpower capable of being mobilized in times of national and economic emergencies.

The above objectives are impeded as a result of numerous factors. These include:

1. Non availability of instructional facilities
2. Inability to be aware of the mission of business education programme by the academic and non academic members of the society.
3. Lack of employment of qualified and competent business teachers in schools.
4. Poor funding is another major factor hindering the achievement of business education objectives.
5. Lack of spacious classrooms is another factor.
6. Library, machines and reading materials are not used by both teachers and students.

In as much as business education programme is meant to train people for the acquisition of appropriate skills and knowledge necessary for gainful employment and independent productivity, instructional facilities are cardinal requirement for the achievement of this goal in Nigeria. For the attainment of these goals of business education, there is need for instructional facilities to be available and adequate for the needed practical exercises in instructional classroom.

Instructional facilities, according to Daniel (2002) and Isaac and James (2008), are things that enhance the effectiveness of the techniques or methods or strategies of teaching and learning. These authors also emphasized that instructional facilities are either materials or equipment. It therefore follows that instructional materials could be machines, books, audio and audio-visual aids that can make teaching and learning more concrete and effective.

Improving the Image of Business Education through Instructional Facilities

For every occupation, there is a need for a minimum productive ability which an individual needs to possess so as to secure and retain employment either self or paid employment in that occupation such as in business education. If vocational business education is not effectively carried out with adequate instructional facilities, it is neither personally or socially effective. The teaching of business education is materials and equipment based.

1. **Proper Selection and Effective Utilization of Instructional Facilities**
Teaching and learning can be improved when there is proper selection and effective utilization of instructional facilities Babangida (2000) in Isaac and James (2008) argued that instructional facilities in some institutions of learning are generally inadequate and non-existent and this hinders effective teaching of

students. Again, Soley (2000) observed that lack of instructional facilities affects the training of vocational technical subjects including business education in this country. Hence, effective teaching and learning of business education are guided by the availability and application of materials and equipment. The effective learning of business education by students emphasizes problem solving technique because students have to carry out activities.

2. **Effective Implementation:** The curriculum that would meet the objective of business education should be effectively implemented. Business education should aim at promoting in the learner the capacity to reason, use intuition and understand changing relation through whole thinking.
3. **Absolute Identification of Business Education:** Lack of identity is an important fact in vocational business education. Isaac (2009) emphasized that business education is a practical subject because it involves the acquisition of practical skills, knowledge and attitude necessary for acquiring employment or to be self employed. The problem with business education as a course of study is that it lacks identity; this is as a result of limited understanding of what business education is all about. To improve vocational business education status, there is need to create more awareness to the people in the academic environment and beyond in the widest perspective.
4. **Integration of Societal Values into the Business Education Programme** Societal values need vital consideration; the relevant should be integrated into the business education programme. This is because it will help someone to identify and appreciate his/her intended levels of performance. At the same time individual will strive to realize the time the goals have been attained. Isaac and James (2008) advocated that the vocational technical education planners require adequate information like re-engineering of the instructional facilities information to become fully aware of the prevalent occupational needs of both the learners and society. Based on this assumption, it implies that, the programme planners should consider the manpower needs, job enrolment as well as the other important economic needs. This is done based on:
 - Adequate provision of favourable learning experience to appeal to learner's natural interest.
 - Adopt appropriate teaching methods during teaching process through the use of varied learning experiences than using obsolete and non-functional instructional materials/facilities.
 - Business education teachers should teach with the aim of promoting better understanding and relationship among all the vocational education subjects instead of separating them completely from each other and work place.
 - Learners should be evaluated based on the application of appropriate approach which can reveal the acquisition of concrete learning experiences than experiences that are based on forecast and probabilities.

5. **Provision of Adequate and Quality Education** The quality could only be attained if significant advances in the provision of primary, secondary and tertiary education are made. This will attract more candidates to seek admission into tertiary institutions to study business education. Government should be interested and participate significantly in the provision of business education programme. Business education is a practical and skilled training programme which is given to those who need to be employed, self reliant and self productive.
6. **Administration of Business Education** The administration of business education should be looked into and qualified business educators should be appointed into the administration positions. This individual will be able to provide quality leadership that can reduce the burden facing business education in Nigeria.
7. **Financing** Provision of adequate fiancés by government and well to do Nigerians toward the development of business education is required for the improvement of business education. Much instructional facilities that are not promptly provided could be acquired through funds provided by government as grant in aid.

Problems Facing the Use of Instructional Facilities

1. Instructional facilities are poorly managed especially in schools where they are made available.
2. Poor funding has caused instructional facilities to be in short supply. Essential instructional facilities are not provided in school for use in teaching business education.
3. Instructional facilities are not adequately maintained. The maintenance involves taking appropriate and specific measures to ensure that the instructional facilities such as books, library, building, equipment, machines, laboratories, studio, classroom, seats and many others function well within the stipulated life span (Kalat, 2007). There should be routine checks on instructional facilities, prompt repairs and serving of facilities, cleaning and lubrication of machine parts and compliance to the operational guidelines of equipment etc.
4. Poor use of instructional facilities in school during teaching and learning process by teachers is a major problem. Most facilities are not utilized where they are used. It is either under or over used. However, effective use of instructional facilities can bring about:-
 - Promoting students memory development and recall
 - Assisting students skill development activities
 - Demonstrating specific skills
 - Performing specific office functions.

5. **Teacher's Ability or Skill** Most teachers of business education lack the skill of using the related instructional material during classroom instruction. There is also inability to direct the learners on how to use the available materials, equipment, books, machines, and library and so on. When learners complete their years of study, they lack ability and feel reluctant to search for the utilization of certain machines and equipment in work place and even at their private affairs.
6. Business education teachers are not recognized. They are not identified coupled with poor wages. Therefore the status of business education is low in the country. Based on this, Nwaokolo (1999) in Kayoma (2009) pointed out that teachers of vocational education programme (business education inclusive) in Nigeria are double tragedies, first down-trodden technicians and secondly as derided teachers, resulting in few unmotivated technical vocational teachers to implement the programme.
7. The social setting in which instruction occurs is a major factor affecting instruction and use of instructional facilities/materials.
8. Increase in students' enrolment overwhelms the capacity of available instructional facilities in schools in Nigeria.

Standard Role of Effective Business Education Instruction

Effective teaching of business education in institutions of learning brings about the following standard roles:

Business Education for Employment

Business education is educational programme which aim at preparing people for the roles in enterprises, and these roles could be as employee, entrepreneur, employer or simply self employed. People are prepared for employment in specific occupations or family occupations by providing those experiences, which enable them to develop the competencies needed to qualify for employment. Graduates of business education have opportunity to acquire skills, attitude, interest and knowledge to carry out economic and social work which is more useful lucrative to them as well as the society.

Business Education for Self Reliance

The context of self reliance implies individual effort acquire skills, attitudes and knowledge capable of helping individual learners to be independent, self reliant and viable assets in the society (Isaac, 2009). Business education helps individual learners to acquire entrepreneurial skills that lead to the much desired entrepreneurial development and economic growth in Nigeria. Individual is self reliant by way of equipping him with managerial skills to manage the human, machine and material resources of their own business as a result of skills and competences acquired in computer, marketing and

entrepreneurial training (Isaac, 2009). The product of business education would be vocationally independent either being self employed or employer of labour without relying on white collar jobs. Therefore, the country demands credible and serious entrepreneurs with innovative, initiative ideas and manipulative skills to embark on small and medium scale businesses to reduce unemployment.

Business Education for Self Productivity

The significance of business education can never be over forgotten because knowledge, attitude and skills are acquired for self productivity in the face of economic crises in the country. Vocational business education truly is designed to develop business skills as well as competency necessary for the individual to properly function in his society. Effective business education instruction breeds and maintains adequate manpower and gingers the labour force for independent productive ventures. Effective instructional facilities enables business education graduates carry out skills work for varying nature and the productivity is high and the products and services are good. Business education facilitates higher productivity and accelerated socio-economic development and higher standard of living (Isaac, 2009).

Strategies for Re-engineering Business Education Instructional Facilities for Employment, Self Reliance and Self Productivity

1. Proper identification of instructional facilities for business education programme instruction is necessary. When instructional facilities are identified, classroom instruction will be effectively carried out by the teacher while the learner continues to carry out effective learning activity. The identification and selection of the most appropriate instructional materials are essential in the discharge of the formidable business task of transmitting psycho-skills to the learners.
2. **Availability and Effective Use of Instructional Facilities** Instructional facilities such as studio, machines, library, visual and audio visual aids, classroom, materials for practical and others should be made available and effectively used for the achievement of the goal of business education. Learners' effective learning of business education enables them to acquire the requisite skills leading to employment and self productivity.
3. **Adequate and Proper Choice of Instructional Facilities** Kalat (2008) rightly advocate that intelligent selection demands the development of professional attitude towards the process for better judgment. It therefore implies that for effective choice of any instructional facilities/materials, such materials are necessary to reflect some scholarship and ideas. Again the materials need to cover the necessary topics in all angles suitable to the class so as to promote well developed concepts and make information adequate. Facilities/materials chosen should relate to the objectives of the course content. It is also worthy to

note that the materials choice should give room for individual differences, considering the principles of simple to complex, and known to unknown. The lesson content, ability of the learners, competency in performing and using materials require consideration too.

4. **Provision of Financial Aid** Adequate funds should be provided for effective acquisition of instructional facilities and implementation of business education programmes.
5. **Re-Training of Business Education Teachers** Teachers of business education require extra opportunities for re-training and updating skills necessary to business teachers to be competent in utilizing instructional materials/ facilities.
6. Improvisation of instructional materials is necessary for re-engineering business education instructional facilities for employment and self productivity. If provision for teacher -made materials is made possible in the absence of first hand or ready made materials during instructional/learning processes, skills and knowledge would be attained for employment and productivity for life sustenance.
7. **Quality Administration** Successful implementation of vocational business education for employment and self productivity is dependent upon the quality of leadership provided. Isaac and James (2008) asserted that the nature of the educational system in Nigeria and the production of good administrators in the area of Vocational Technical (business education) have proved to be difficult. This according to them is as a result of poor recognition accorded business education. Therefore, good and quality leadership for administration, teaching/learning of business education for self reliance and productivity is a guarantee factor.

Conclusion

Instructional materials, machines and facilities form the bedrock of vocational business education in Nigeria classroom. Business education is a skill acquiring course needs sound and continuous attention in order to enable its products gain employment or be self reliant, assist in the growth and development of the nation's economy and become productive in the society. Poor state of business education instructional facilities has been in recent time, and attendance problem that demands urgent attention. This urgent situation has tended to create a set back to effective business education as a means for national development. All the instructional facilities used in business education need to be changed and modified for the betterment of every individual and society.

Recommendation

For the purpose of re-engineering business education instructional facilities for employment and self productivity, the following recommendations are made:

1. Schools should be provided with adequate libraries and storage facilities.
2. Schools should be provided with sufficient and adequate instructional facilities.
3. Adequate funds should be provided for acquisition of instructional facilities.
4. Instructional facilities in schools should be properly managed.
5. There should be strict and stringent control of facilities.
6. Absolute maintenance culture of instructional facilities should be adopted. Proper maintenance leads to improved productivity.

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