

CHALLENGES OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN ACHIEVING EMPLOYMENT EFFICIENCY

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Abstract

The study takes a holistic view of the challenges facing business education in its bid to achieve employment efficiency such as federal government's lukewarm attitude towards business education, perception of the society towards business education, lack of candidate interest for business education, non-uniformity of course content, low level of participation in national and international organizations amongst others. Despite these challenges, there are prospects for improvement in the nearest future if the federal government creates more awareness of its existence in Nigerian universities and other tertiary institutions on the televisions, newspapers, conferences, workshops, seminars to educate the public of the significant and potential role business education plays towards achieving employment efficiency. It is recommended amongst others that the federal government should provide scholarship to students who desire to pursue a career in vocational business education in order to improve job creation for a widened economy.

Education is the totality of life experience that man acquires which enables him to cope with and derive satisfaction from living in the world. This is because it enables him to achieve social competence and optimum individual development. Business education which is the subset of general education can be seen as the development of person's head, heart and hands for his self fulfillment and optimum service to

humanity. While the head responds to reasoning, intellect or understanding, the hearing refers to emotions or feelings, habits, attitudes while values and the head refer to motor or manipulative. To meet this aspect, business education came into being.

Anao (1986) concluded that business education is the sum total of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for successful promotion and administration of a business enterprise. It is the preparation of individuals for gainful and meaningful living. Business education is defined as a type of training which helps the students to achieve all the aims of education at any level of learning but has as its primary aim the preparation of students for a business career or enabling those in that career to become efficient and to advance to higher business positions.

Employment Efficiency is a management tool used by a nation in order to increase the turnout rate of employers. It is getting the right and maximum employment output with minimum input. Business education is seen as that tool useful in creating this employment efficiency, creating employment for youths and improving the standard of living of the nation as a whole.

Concept of Business Education

Business education as a concept to Bassey (2005) is relatively new in Nigerian education system. What is now known as business education was called several names in

the past, such as commercial studies, commercial education, secretarial education, office education, distributive education and so on. The concept gained prominence when emphasis was placed on acquisition of practical and applied skills for national self-reliance and development.

The early proprietors of business education were private individuals and organizations whose effort were not enough to publicize the new and benefits of business education. Business education is the type of education that assists individuals to acquire skills, which they can apply to solve problems in business education such as secretaryship, accountancy, administration, management, marketing, word processing etc. It is education for and about business. Business education is a part of vocational, technical and general educational system.

The joint committee of National Business Education Association (1980) defined business education as a broad comprehensive discipline whose instructional programme encompasses:

- (a) The knowledge, attitude and skills needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic systems and;
- (b) The vocational knowledge and skills needed for entry level employment and advancement in a broad range of business careers.

This definition by Akpan (2005) has identified all the components of business education, the skills needed and the type of people that benefit from it. This definition agrees with Anao (1986) who sees business education as the sum total of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required for successfully promoting and administering a business enterprise.

Areas of Business Education

The following are areas of business education:

1. Secretarial education
2. Accounting education

Concept of Secretarial Education

Secretarial education, according to Anao (1986) is one of the options in business education. It is offered to students at NCE level, diploma and higher diploma and at bachelor degree levels. Secretarial education is sometimes called office education, secretarial studies or office systems management.

Secretarial education is a business educational programme which equips an individual to function effectively as a secretary or acquire skills in teaching business subjects. The secretarial profession is regarded as one of the most skilled professions, because there is no office without a secretary, no matter how lowly placed. A secretary also possesses a combination of skills which assists to function in legal services, engineering services, civil services, religious, political and all sectors of the economy. It is necessary that all secretaries should be computer literate to keep abreast with the 21st century technology.

Concept of Accounting Education

The National Policy on Education (2013) was designed to be functional, practical and qualitative. The aim is to relate education to the needs of the people by emphasizing vocationalism. Accounting is used as a vocational subject and in a wide range of business careers such as payroll clerk, audit clerk, bookkeeper, cashier etc (Bassey, 2005).

Accounting education is an option in business education. It is the education for the training of accountants, accounting officers and teachers of accounting education. As a vocational and technical subject, trainees are assisted to acquire skills in understanding, analyzing, interpreting and displaying various accounting information.

Concept of Employment Efficiency

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For any company (especially a producing company) to function effectively in terms of production processes, distribution processes, and profit making pursuit, the following is seen as those factors to be considered;

1. Make it easy for employees to communicate with each other. Regardless of which office tool you use to track the whereabouts and activities of employees.
2. Make certain that all the employees use it to notify the rest of the team when they are traveling, at a client's site, working from home or on vacation.
3. Build an infrastructure that allows servers and email access no matter where an individual is located- whether at home, office conference room, training room/workshop, airport or taxi.
4. Encourage them to share their cell phone numbers with co-workers so that they can be contacted when out of the office.
5. Make sure all employees respect the privacy of their co-workers and keep all shared cell phone numbers confidential.

6. Engage them in regular training on how to use technology that allows and encourages remote sharing of information so they can work in virtual mode whenever it is most efficient.
7. For your infrastructure to function properly, it is just as important that employees have access to managers when outside the office as to their fellow employees.
8. An "open door" policy is most effective when the manager can be reached via email, phone calls, text messaging or other means especially when that manager typically makes critical decisions throughout the workday.
9. In many companies, managers must be willing to make themselves available during off-hours or weekends (Akpan, 2005).

Goals of Business Education

The goals of business education according to James (2012) include but not limited to:

1. To equip graduates with the right skills, knowledge and attitude in a life of work in the office as well as for self-employment.
2. To produce well qualified and competent graduates in business subjects who will be able to teach business education subjects.
3. To develop within an individual an acquaintanceship with the broad range of occupational opportunities in the business sector of the economy.
4. To develop within an individual a level of economic literacy sufficient to enable the individual to analyze alternatives, to make reasoned judgment and sound decisions and to

- take intelligent actions as a citizen in a democratic society.
5. To equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that will enable him or her to use sound reasoning in making personal business decisions as a consumer of goods and services.
 6. To develop within an individual an understanding of and an appreciation for country's business enterprises system, emphasizing both the privilege and responsibilities for participating in preserving and improving.

Challenges of Business Education in Achieving Employment Efficiency

The challenges of business education in achieving employment efficiency include:

- **Federal Government Lukewarm Attitude towards Business Education:**

Federal government of Nigeria has failed to appreciate the contribution of business education programme to national economic development even though it is one of the tools to combat unemployment and poverty in our societies. As a result of this attitude, government has not found it necessary to adequately finance both planning and implementation of standard and sustainable business education programme in Nigerian universities. The government has failed to adequately finance business education in order to improve teaching/learning of business education programmes in Nigeria, which will in turn equip students with the skills, values and attitudes needed for a successful business career.

- **Public Perception of Business Education:**

Most societies do not accord respect or recognition to the graduates of business education. The fallacy is that business education being an aspect of vocational education is meant for the unintelligent and under-achievers.

According to Amoor (2009), most parents do not encourage or guide their wards to take a course in vocational education programme; this is because the society does not place any significant value or dignity on the programme. This poor perception of business education discourages potential students from enrolling for the programme, reduces the morale of business students and weakens the strength of business education in achieving employment efficiency.

- **Lack of Candidates Interest for Business Education:**

Siffon (2009) opined that many candidates aspiring to acquire university education do not have interest in business education programme. When there are no interested candidates to enroll in business education programme and acquire the necessary skills to become employers of labour instead of waiting for non-existing white collar jobs, the ability of business education to achieve employment efficiency is shortened.

- **Non-uniformity of Course Content:**

Most of the Nigerian universities that offer business education programme do not have uniform course content. This disparity in course content of business education programme in universities poses a great challenge for the standardization of the programme (Umoh, 2015).

- **Low level of Participation in National and International Organizations:**

The departments of business education in Nigerian institutions are not active members of national and international business education associations. As a result of this, their knowledge, skills, scope and experiences are limited and they may not be able to compete in the global market and be employers of labour.

● **Lack of Equipment and Poor Learning Environment for Business Educators:**

These are the bedrock of business education in any western world. For business education to achieve employment efficiency, there is need to equip it with the right facilities that will aid teaching/learning processes both theoretical and practical. Also, there is no conducive environment for teaching/learning business education in order for students to acquire the skills needed for business work.

Prospects of Business Education in Achieving Employment Efficiency

Despite the challenges confronting business education in achieving employment efficiency, there exists prospects and opportunities for future growth and development of business education in order to achieve employment efficiency. The prospects include:

Rapid economic Development:

Economies of developing nations in which Nigeria falls is growing rapidly as a result of efforts made by governments and developmental agencies of the United Nations towards this direction. Thus, it is expected that demand for jobs will increase and the enormous positive impact of business education in providing these employment opportunities will be visible as business educators are trained to be employers of labour instead of being dependent on non-existing white collar job (Basseyy, 2005).

Rising levels of Business Education Worldwide:

The importance of education is most clearly reflected in the link between levels of business education and employment rates. The problem of unemployment co-exists with a massive shortage of employable skills, values, attitudes, and knowledge business education offers its beneficiaries.

Therefore, more and better business education is a powerful and effective means of ensuring continuous rapid social development and ever fresh avenues for achieving employment efficiency. One of the most effective strategies for ensuring higher rate of job growth is to raise the mandatory minimum levels as well as the average level of business education in every country.

Demographic Trends:

According to Joe (2013), the world is now in the early stage of another tremendous demographic revolution, which promises to have tremendous impact on the future of employment worldwide. This revolution is the result of a steep and steady decline in birthrate and an increase in life expectancy in the economically advanced countries. Projected job shortage in developing countries is based primarily on anticipated domestic economic growth and demographic trends. The growing demands for job creation will be reduced in the future, because most individuals will become business educators, entrepreneurs and employers of labour.

Tremendous Increase in the Number of Skilled Business Lecturers:

The importance of skilled business lecturers in teaching business education programmes cannot be over-emphasized. Business education lecturers contribute effectively to curriculum development, course planning and improved teaching strategies at all levels of education (Akpan, 2005). These lecturers will in turn equip business education students with the right skills, knowledge, attitudes, and values to perform effectively in the business world.

Public Awareness of the Existence of Business Education:

There is expectation for the federal government through the National Universities Commission (NUC) to create more awareness on television, newspapers, conferences and seminars to educate the public of the significance and potential role business education plays towards employment efficiency.

Conclusion

It is therefore concluded that business education programme in Nigerian universities has not attained the maximum level of performance of its potential role in national economic development. This is due to neglect by the federal government outlook of the society and other variables that hinder its development and contribution to both growth and employment efficiency.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

- ❖ Adequate funds for planning, implementing and co-ordinating business education programmes in tertiary institutions should be made available by the federal government.
- ❖ The federal government should as well give scholarship to the candidates wishing to take a career in business education as a bait to attract more candidates' interest and enrolment into the programme. Once this is done, it will take care of the society and candidates' interests for the programme.
- ❖ Conducive environment should be provided for effective teaching/learning of business education programme.
- ❖ Seminars should be organized for students to widen their knowledge in the field.

- ❖ The government should provide equipment and facilities should also be provided to facilitate learning.
- ❖ In-service training should be organized by the government for business education teachers.
- ❖ The curriculum designers should harmonize the course content of business education programme in Nigerian universities and change the nomenclature of the degree offered. This will go a long way to standardize the programme to make it more efficient and effective, and also entice the youths to enroll for the programme.

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