

FUNCTIONAL VOCATIONAL BUSINESS EDUCATION: A PANACEA FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN NIGERIA.

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Abstract

Sustainable development Goals is a Global agenda aimed to make the world a better place to live and help drag the underdeveloped and developing countries along the world trend. The 17 point agenda is meant to turn the world around in fifteen years beginning from January 2016. No country of the world can achieve these without education. Nigeria can achieve a great chunk of sustainable development goals through vocational business education. Vocational Business Education was established to equip the beneficiaries with the knowledge of business and office education to enable earns a living, alleviate poverty and contribute to national development. For Vocational Business Education to achieve these objectives, the curriculum content must reflect the six components of vocational business education. Any curriculum of Vocational Business Education, which is not based on these components, is a programme about business studies. The paper examined the concept of Vocational Business Education, objectives, sustainable development goals and how vocational business education can be used to achieve sustainable development goals. Conclusion was drawn and recommendation made on how vocational business education can be used to reduce poverty, make its beneficiaries self-reliant and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

Key Words: Vocational, Business Education, Sustainable Development Goals.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is a 15 year development plan agenda adopted by the member states of the United Nations on 25 September 2015. Following the adoption, United Nations (UN) agencies, under the umbrella of the *United Nations Development Group*, decided to support a campaign by several independent entities, among them corporate institutions and International Organizations. The Campaign, known as Project Everyone, introduced the term *Global Goals* and is intended to help communicate the agreed Sustainable Development Goals to a wider constituency. However the decision to support what is an independent campaign, without the approval of the member states, has met resistance from several sections of civil society and governments. There are also concerns that Global Goals is a term used to refer to several other processes that are not related to the United Nations.

Vocational Business Education is relatively a new comer in the Vocational Education lexicon. It is by nature almost economics oriented because of its interdisciplinary nature but wider in scope because of its focus in employable skills. It is a programme of instruction which comprises of office education, basic or general business studies, marketing/entrepreneurship education as well as general education and professional education. Office education is a vocational education programme for office careers through initial, refresher and up-grading education leading to the employability and advancement in office occupations, while general business education is a programme which provides students with instructions and competencies needed in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the world and providing services to others. Osuala, (2010) defined Vocational Business Education as that part of the total educational programme provided to help the individual attain the basic knowledge, skills, abilities, understanding and attitudes that will enable the person to become a worthy human being, effective member of the society, catering for his own needs and the needs of others.

Vocational Business Education is not the same with business studies. The term Vocational Business Education could be regarded as a body of related occupationally focused and systematically arranged subjects prescribed for graduation and certification after completion of the units of instruction and/or passing a prescribed examination at the College or University level (Osuala, 2008). He further defined Business Studies as a body of knowledge which emphasizes on the management functions. The major distinction between vocational business education and business studies is the emphasis on employability skills and pedagogy.

Conceptual Frameworks.

Concept of Vocational

Vocation or vocational could be described as what one does for a living. It is a type of work or way of life one believes is especially suitable for him or her. Vocational education is the type of education that acquaints its beneficiaries with suitable skills to earn a living. Adekojo (2009), viewed vocational education as the type of education designed to equip the individual for entry into an occupation that are within the spheres of skilled crafts, engineering and scientific professions associated with the use and application of basic principles of science and technology apparatus and machinery in the creation of goods and services and finding answers to societal problem.

Concept of Sustainable Development Goals.

The history of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can be traced to 1972 when governments met under the auspices of the United Nations Human and Environment Conference, to consider the rights of the human family to a healthy and productive environment. It was not until 1983 that the United Nations agreed to create the World Commission on Environment and Development as an independent body of the UN. In 1992 the first *United Nations Conference on Environment and Development* was held in Rio. It was here that the first agenda for Environment and Development was developed and adopted, also known as Agenda 21.

Twenty years later, at a Conference, a resolution, known as The Future We Want was reached by member states. Among the key themes agreed on were on poverty eradication, energy, water and sanitation, health, and human settlement.

Concept of Business Education.

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Objectives of Vocational Business Education.

The major objective of Vocational Business Education is in the area of manpower production as documented in the National Policy for Education, (2012) as follows;

1. To provide trained man power in business particularly at craft and advanced craft and technical levels.
2. To provide vocational skills necessary for commercial and economic development.
- 3, To give training and impart the necessary skills to individuals who shall be self-reliant economically.

Aina (2010), emphasized that the major objective of business education is to develop vocational knowledge and skills necessary for initial employment and advancement in business career. He further stressed that vocational business education should in addition perform the following functions.

1. To provide general business education to all youths in knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to be effective in economic understanding and communication.
2. To provide knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that will enable the beneficiaries to use sound reasoning in making personal business decisions as a wise consumer and producer of goods and services
3. To provide an understanding and appreciation of the nation's business enterprise system. Emphasizing both the privileges and responsibilities for participating in preserving and improving it.
4. To raise the level of economic literacy sufficient to enable the individual to analyze alternatives to make reasoned judgment, sound decision and to take intelligent action.

The above objectives are both academic and economic and are capable of revamping vocational business education in Nigeria for economic empowerment and national development. Any programme of business education that is not based on the above objectives is a programme about business and capable of producing interlopers in the field of business education.

Functional Vocational Business Education: A Panacea for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

The Official Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted on 25 September 2015 has 92 paragraphs, with the main paragraph (51) outlining the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and its associated 169 targets. This included the following goals:

1. **Poverty** - End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. **Food** - End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. **Health** - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
4. **Education** - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. **Women** - Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. **Water** - Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. **Energy** - Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and clean energy for all
8. **Economy** - Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. **Infrastructure** - Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. **Inequality** - Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. **Habitation** - Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. **Consumption** - Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. **Climate** - Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. **Marine-ecosystems** - Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. **Ecosystems** - Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. **Institutions** - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. **Sustainability** - Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Vocational Business Education as Panacea for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals in Nigeria.

Achieving the SDGs requires economic growth that will provide the resources for achieving the range of goals that are considered. The most important determinant of *economic growth* is the “knowledge capital” of nations, which they define as the

aggregate skills of the country's population and which they measure by achievement the economy. The whole range of the sustainable development goals cannot be achievement by the government alone without incorporating the other sectors. This argument indicates that the importance of the education goal should be elevated, because achieving it would provide the resources to reduce poverty, to improve health, and to provide for inclusive growth that lessens inequality within and between countries. In related analysis, education vocational business education inclusive provides a measurable definition of quality: basic skills, for achieving Level 1 of the sustainable development goals. With this definition, they show the economic gains for each of the 76 countries with test data that can be achieved by reaching universal secondary schooling along with all students having basic skills. While access to school is important (consistent with the prior Millennium Development Goals), improving the quality of schools provides a much larger economic impact for both developing and developed countries.

Vocational Business Education is a programme to prepare skilled personnel at both professional and sub-professional levels. It refers to a systematic learning experience designed to provide the beneficiaries with gainful employment in business occupations as skilled or semi skilled workers. Osuala, (2008), pointed out that any programme of Vocational Business education that does not emphasis on skill development and have employment objectives is a programme about business. The content of vocational business education should include guidance and counseling services in connection with the training and other instructions directly related to business occupations. Indeed the programme of Vocational Business Education should be designed to develop skills, knowledge, attitudes and work habits in business oriented occupations. Vocational Business Education Programmes should include preparations for employment in business related occupations in which specialized education is required for which there is societal need. A good programme of Vocational Business Education should develop the students for academic and economic abilities.

Any programme of Vocational Business Education meant to prepare students for self-reliance, eradicate poverty or economic empowerment and bring about sustainable development should have both academic and economic objectives

Conclusion.

Vocational Business Education in Nigeria was established with the premises of equipping the beneficiaries with the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary to earn a living in the field of work either as employee or self-employed (economic empowerment). These dreams if actualized will bring about the achievement of sustainable development goals..

Recommendations.

To achieve sustainable development goals in Nigeria using Vocational Business Education the following recommendations are made.

1. Vocational Business Education program must be academic and skill oriented.. Teachers of the programme must be masters of their subjects, updating their knowledge with challenges of technology and emerging developing world.
2. Vocational Business Education programme must be taught by occupationally qualified business educators, who will inculcate skill consciousness in the learners, thereby producing job creators instead of job seekers.
3. The governments should create enabling environment for private individuals to participate in job creation. The economy should be people centered and people driven instead of the present government driven economy.
4. The institutions offering Vocational Business Education should be equipped with modern office facilities, equipment and machines such as are found in industries and commerce.
5. The spirit of entrepreneurship and job creation should be inculcated in the learner by the teachers of the programme through practical exposure and intermittent industrial visits.

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