

# THE ROLE OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN REALIZATION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA BEYOND 2020

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## **Abstract**

In realizing the important role which education plays as a veritable tool for the growth and sustainable development of the nation, there has been a clarion call for a more qualitative and functional education all over the globe. Business Education, which is skill-oriented and self-employment motivated, holds the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and economically prosperous if systematically packaged and adequately delivered. It prepares students for occupations in administrative office systems, accounting finance, marketing, and management and computer information system. Business education equip youths with appropriate skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies that can enable the individuals to be self-employed and self-reliant, leading to sustainable economic development. This conceptual paper therefore is focused on how to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria through Business Education. The relationship between Business education and sustainable National development were also discussed. Recommendations were made toward achieving sustainable national Development through Business Education.

The world's constant innovative changes have shown that the future is unpredictable especially as it concerns education, skills, competencies and technology which are considered the bed rock of economic, social and political growth. Supporting this statement, Roma (1990) stated that countries whose populations have high level of education are fertile soil for information-based technology. Krueger and Micheal (1990) also stated that increase in a country's overall level of educational attainment have caused corresponding increase in their overall rate of economic growth. It was in realization of the critical role of education that a National Policy on education was formulated.

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, interest, abilities, competences and the cultural norms of a society by people and to transmit life to the coming generations so as to enhance perpetual development of the society. (Yekini, 2013). According to Akinpelu (1981) cited in Chukwurah (2013), education is a life-long process through which individuals acquire relevant knowledge and value which enable them to become useful to themselves and the society in which they are domiciled. Education opens the door for all citizens to participate in development activities and when citizens are denied education, they are excluded from the development process especially in the emerging knowledge society (Okeke, 2008)

From the above definitions, education can be described as a process through which individuals acquire necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that will enable them handle the challenges of life as they come and be able to contribute their own quota towards national development.

There are various disciplines in education such as Technical education, Agriculture, Health, Engineering, Medicine, Business education and lots of others. This paper tries to identify Business education as a type of education by analyzing its roles in the realization of sustainable development.

## **Concept of Business Education**

Business Education has no generally accepted definition because there are as different meanings of the concept as there are many experts who have tried to define it. Azuka (2000) defined Business

Education as a programme of study which offers students who wish to pursue a career in business an opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to enter, perform and progress in business occupation after graduating from high school or the university. Abdulkarim (2009) sees business education as a programme of instruction designed with the deliberate intent of equipping students with the following:

- a. Requisite Knowledge for making rational decisions in the business world.
- b. The skill of inter personal relationship for effective management and communication of business operations and the attitudes of creativity.
- c. The Innovation and adaptation contingent with changes in the world of business that leads to proficiency and efficiency in analyzing and operating business activities.

Okoli (2010) described business education as an important part of the general education which emphasizes on skills and competencies acquisition for use in offices and business-related occupations. Nwanewezi (2010), viewed business education as encompassing education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. Thus, the primary goal of Business Education is to produce competent, skilful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and woman that will effectively compete in the job market.

In the light of the above, Business Education embraces basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practices. Business education occurs at several levels, such as primary, secondary and tertiary, with the greatest activity in the latest. At the tertiary level of education in Nigeria, the philosophy of business education is to make the students understand the concept and philosophy of the national policy on education because of its importance in national development. It was based on this premise that Igboke (2005) enumerated the objectives of Business Education as follows:

- ❖ To develop basic skills for personal use in the future.
- ❖ To acquire the basic knowledge and skills of business education.
- ❖ To relate the basic knowledge and skills acquired to national development.
- ❖ To develop basic skills in office occupation.
- ❖ To provide the needed background for teaching in business subjects.
- ❖ To prepare students for further training in business studies.
- ❖ To provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life or work for those who may not undergo further training.

From the above objectives mentioned Business Education is expected to produce graduates with the right skills, knowledge, attitude and competencies required for employment either in public or private company or become job creators thereby, contributing to national development.

### **Concept of Sustainable National Development**

Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequent quoted definition is from the Brundtland Commission's report (1987). "Sustainable development is development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It contains within it two key concepts: Viz

- ❖ The concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- ❖ The idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environments ability to meet present and future needs."

Starkey and Walford (2001) defined sustainable development as a concept that seeks to define a fair and just development. In the views of Adebola (2007), sustainable development is a kind development that can be initiated and managed properly in such a way as to give attention to continuity and preservation as people explore and explicit available resources for the enlargement of their existence.

### ***The Role of Business Education in Realization of Sustainable Development in Nigeria Beyond 2020***

Kundun cited in Ugoh (2008), viewed sustainable development as a construct, which envisages development as meeting the need of the present generation without compromising the need of the future generation. This implies that while education (Business education) meets the need of the present, it does not compromise the ability of the future generation to meet own needs.

Arogundade in Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) pointed out that the major essential tool for achieving sustainable development should include;

- Improving the quality of basic education
- Reorienting existing education programme to address sustainable development
- Developing public awareness and understanding
- Providing training for all sectors of private and civil society.

#### **Relationship between Business Education and Sustainable Development**

As a result of the impact of Business education on the development of human resources, productivity and economic growth, It has become inherent in the national development strategies in many societies. To achieve sustainable development, attention should be paid to strengthening the bridge between education and schooling and preparation for the world of work with respect to improving vocational education (Business Education) in Nigeria.

Business Education finds expression of entrepreneurial activities in areas like stenography, petty trading, small scale business, account clerk, transportation business, thrift loan business, teaching, office occupation and so on. In the Nigerian environment, Business education plays a vital role in the social, political and economic development of any nation. This is possible when jobs are created for the citizenry through the establishment of a lot of business that will accommodate the unemployed youths in the country. A qualified graduate of business education is expected to have acquired enough skills relevant to the management of small business center: - Creation of self-employment. This, according to Olorunmolu (2008) helps to reduce the problem of unemployment and other social vices in Nigeria. Amoor and Udoh (2008) noted that Business Education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners thereby enabling them to adequately impart knowledge to others and handle sophisticated office technologies and information system. An entrepreneur does not only provide job for himself/herself alone, but provides for others too. This in turn, helps the individual to increase per capita income as well as the standard of living. Supporting this, Ugwuogo (2013) opined that Business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of vision 20:2020. Thus, he stated that a gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capita, reduces poverty and unemployment which are some of the indices of development. Ugwuogo outlined that a well trained business educator can successfully be engaged into the following areas:

- Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification.
- Business enterprise- as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary word processor, sales representative, broker etc.
- Proprietorship of private schools- primary, secondary, tertiary, computer training institute and so on.

Based on these assertions, Business education will no doubt be used as major weapon in reducing the worrisome, untamed and over rising problems of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria hereby attaining the status of one of the twenty most developed economics of the world by the year 2020.

#### **Obstacles Hindering the Achievement of Sustainable Development in Nigeria through Business Education**

Business Education programmes are faced with numerous obstacles in a bid to effectively achieve its aims and objectives.

Among the numerous obstacles are:

1) **Shortage of Qualified Business Teachers:** The problem mostly is that qualified business education teachers prefer opting out of teaching to industries, thereby increasing the shortage of qualified personnel in business education and in the absence of these business education teachers, people from other discipline come into the department to teach courses without imparting the right knowledge on the students.

2) **Poor Funding:** In Nigeria, educational institutions are not adequately funded. At times, funds meant for education are directed to the other sectors of the economy. That is why Ugwuogo (2013), expressed that “it is a well known fact that one of the major problems bedeviling education in Nigeria today is inadequate finding and business education is no exception.

3) **Inadequate Provision of Facilities:** Laboratories, equipment, tools, library facilities, lecture rooms, work books and other materials for the effective implementation of business education curriculum content are not adequately provided. This creates problems for business educators. Therefore graduates of business who were taught without these facilities will not in any way be able to defend their certificates.

4) **Poor Remuneration and Motivation of Teachers:** Nigerian teachers, business education teachers inclusive, are poorly remunerated and motivated. The problem of teacher’s remuneration in the education system in Nigeria has been from its inception. Teachers salaries, allowances, entitlements are always paid in arrears; at times they are denied of these entitlements. According to Okpuzo and Ogidan (2012), poor remuneration is responsible for the poor attitude to work of some teachers, they go about doing their private businesses instead of concentrating on how to improve teaching and learning in the school.

5) **Poor public image of Business Education Programme:** There is still poor public image of business education programme. This is in line with the observation of Olufunke, (2003) that parents prefer their children to study courses like pharmacy, medicine ,law ,engineering, e.t.c because they regard vocational education as a course for “Never –do –wells” who could not secure admission into other disciplines. This attitude of people towards vocational education, especially to business education contributes to the problems in teaching and learning of business education. Idialu (2007) stated that there is still a strong tendency towards white collar jobs as a result of low status associated with Vocational Education, business education inclusive.

6) **Inaccessibility of Digital and Internet Technology:** The non-availability of digital and Internet technology in the classroom has greatly affected both Business educator and students. Students are supposed to be taught the use of digital and Internet facilities. This is against the UNESCO (2002) view, that the following conditions must be met:

- ❖ The business education teacher must have the knowledge and skills to use the new digital tools and resources to help all students achieve high academic standards.
- ❖ Students and business educators must have sufficient access to digital technologies and internet in their classroom, schools and business education institutions.
- ❖ High quality, meaningful and culturally responsive digital content must be available for the educators and learners.

## **Conclusion**

Business education is paramount for the sustainable socio-economic development of any nation because it inculcates necessary skills, knowledge, attitudes and values in its recipients that will enable them handle the challenges of life as they come and be able to contribute their own quota towards national development. For this reason, it is pertinent for stakeholders and government to work together by adopting the recommendation in this paper in order to ensure functional and reliable Business Education programme in Nigeria.

### **Recommendations**

- The following are made in line with the preceding discourse:
- 1) Government, school proprietors, donor agencies and all stakeholders should join hands in providing funds for education so as to ensure that necessary facilities are provided and maintained. This will greatly improve the standard of education (Business education) in Nigeria.
  - 2) Teachers remuneration should be enhanced beyond what it is presently. This will motivate fresh graduates to take up teaching appointments in business education as well as increase serving teachers' commitment and efficiency, thus making teaching career attractive and rewarding.
  - 3) The government should create awareness on the relevance of business education programme to individuals, society and the country at large, through seminars, conferences and workshops. This will help to boost the supply of qualified business teachers in schools and colleges.
  - 4) To ensure sustainable development through business education, the curriculum of business education programme should be reviewed and restructured to incorporate emphasis on practical teaching and to reflect the current development and technological changes in the country.
  - 5) To combat the poor public perception and misconceptions about vocational education which business education is part of, vocational educators and other stakeholders should embark on aggressive public education and career guidance programme right from the secondary school level. The education must be geared towards improving the image of vocational education for the public to appreciate.
  - 6) Students should be motivated with very conducive teaching and learning environment, facilities such as internet, computers, textbooks, and related reading materials and possibly, award scholarship to business education students.

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