

RENEWING BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

Mrs. Anita Amiaya

Abstract

The greatest challenge of business education today is keeping up with the changes taking place in the technological world. Business Education programme is being encouraged in the polytechnics, colleges of education, secondary schools as well as primary schools in Nigeria. Business education is a dynamic career-oriented programme which must be analyzed, practiced and kept under constant renewing if it is to retain its currency. The more a business occupation is involved in communication process, the more it will be affected by the ongoing technological revolution. The most crucial question in the minds of business educators today is that of relevance of business education programme to the societal need. The goals of business education have been to prepare the students for business vocations and to impact general education that will enable the recipients to become effective citizen in the world of work, but today, the situation is different, this is due to the fact that they cannot operate the modern equipment which took place of the old ones and perform the business education function as they are expected. Apart from the goals of business education, therefore, which must be geared towards the provision of experiences that emphasize both today and tomorrow in order for the student to easily adjust to changes and possess a better base on which to make decisions? This paper therefore, highlights the need for business education to be renewed and suggest strategy in 'renewing it.

Introduction

Business education today, is seen as that aspect of the total educational programme that provides that knowledge, skills understanding and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as producer or consumer of goods and services that business offer Afolabi (2005). There is no doubt that the programmes of business education are essentially relevant to the needs of the Nigerian Society, but what has come under contention is the standard in relation to the dynamic nature of business, advancements in science and technology and the consequent changes in societal tastes and styles. These changes imply shift from tradition office machines to the sophisticated electronic machines/equipments. The only way to keep up with the speed at which innovations are turned out old ones is to continue to renew and review the curriculum of business education. Business education is taught in all the various level of education, at the secondary school level it is called business studies, it is been taught at the junior secondary school in the Junior secondary School level.

Just as the business organization has changed, so must our educational programme. The skills demanded of office employees today require emphasis on skills and knowledge for the use of modern facilities. The school environment must be exactly like the office. The content of business education should be based on what the students, after graduation are going to encounter later in the world of work. The focus of this paper is to highlight some strategy that can be used in re-newing business education at the secondary and tertiary level so that the student will end up acquiring knowledge and skills that will be in use today and in the future.

What is Business Education?

Business education is the acquisition and application of the unique set of knowledge and skills used in commercial or industrial establishments. It is an integral part of total programme. Its mission is to develop and apply the use of technology, business economic concepts and legal principles essential for all persons. Business education teaches the necessary skills for entry-level employment and post secondary education. When one considers the assertion of Makeri (1990) that general education educates one about business, while business education educates one for business. In the same vein, Ajayi (1990) sees business education as the total education programme that provide skills, knowledge and attitude, necessary to function in the complex business world as a producer and consumer of goods and services.

With the definitions above, it can be deduced that business education is the educational

process of training which has to do with vocational and professional preparation for a career. This is through the teaching of subjects like book-keeping, accounts, commerce, typewriting, shorthand, business law, marketing, business management, economics, office administration, secretarial studies, data processing and office organization. It is also related to subjects that are related to commercial activities.

Business education at the secondary school is called Business Studies. It is introduced as a vocational subject to the senior secondary school while pre-vocational subjects were introduced to the junior secondary school level. Business studies is one of the pre-vocational subjects offered at the junior secondary level of education in Nigeria. The pre-vocational subjects such as; Agriculture, Introductory technology, Home economics and business studies form part of the curriculum of the junior secondary school. The pre-vocational subjects provides students with a process of orientation in production and consumption through experiences in planning, testing, servicing and evaluation types of consumer and industrial goals.

Students at the junior secondary school level are exposed to various opportunities available in the world of work, properly oriented in many occupational areas to enable them to see the need for school continuity at the senior secondary school level and beyond.

Aims and Objectives of Business Education

The aims of business education can be broadly categorized into three according to Ehametalor (1990) are:

1. Manpower/skill development

Business education is intended to:-

- Enable students develop vocational skills, such as shorthand, typewriting, accounting, etc.
- Provide general awareness of the professions available in the office.
- Enhance manpower production to fill vacancies in industries both public and private
- Meet manpower target necessitated by an expanding economy.

2. Economic development

The level of economic development will depend on the caliber and sophistication of available manpower. As a result, business education is geared towards:-

- An understanding of the functions of various components in the economy.
 - Management of resources, both personnel and industrial
 - Consumer behaviour-ability to understand the products and make wise choices of those products that will best suit needs.
- Personnel finance-ability to select among alternatives and spend money wisely.

3. Work habits and Attributes

Student's general awareness of the nature of business and its role in the development of the economy will enhance the positive development of attitudes. The average Nigeria's attitude towards work could be considered. This attitude reflects ambivalence ignorance poor education, lack of motivation by management and lack of job satisfaction. In consequence, we expect business to leads to the following development of better attitude to work because the individual knows that the contribute to the growth of society; personal satisfaction in acquiring an employee shall, ability to provide for the needs of one's family through the provision of specialized services because of the income; ability to understand the relationship between work and self survival.

The business subjects' programme for Nigerian Secondary Schools is offered at two levels. At the Junior Secondary School level, business studies (which is composed of Office practice, Commerce, Book-keeping, Typewriting and Shorthand are taught). The idea is to give pre-business orientation to all students. At the Senior Secondary School level, the following subjects are offered. Shorthand, Typewriting, Commerce, Financial Accounting and Economics. Unlike the business studies taught as a simple subject, each of these subjects at the Senior Secondary School (SSS)

Curriculum level is studied separately and has its own specific objectives.

The pre-vocational studies at the secondary level are taught as an integral subjects comprising all the vocational business areas, which include five basic subjects, book-keeping, commerce office practice, shorthand and typewriting at the senior secondary level. However, the business studies are allowed to stand on their own as separate subjects. At this level, the students are trained towards a career option which he is likely to pursue further.

The National Business Studies Curriculum (1985) outlines the following as the objectives of Business Studies.

1. To enable the student to acquire the basic knowledge of Business studies.
2. To develop the basic skills in office occupants.
3. To prepare students for further training in Business studies.
4. To provide orientation and basic skill with which to start a life to work for those Who may not undergo further training.
5. To provide basic skills for personal use in future,
6. To relate the knowledge and skills to the National economy.

Business Education objective can be looked at in 2 approaches.

1. General Business Education
2. Job training for business.

The general business education can be grouped in 2 ways.

- (a) Basic business education for all.
- (b) Pre-vocational business education for those planning to enter business.

Job training for business can also be grouped into two (2)

- (a) Occupational intelligence i.e. a specialized phase of human relations.
- (b) Specific skills training such as Typewriting, Recording and Selling.

These two (2) approaches see business as education for and about business.

According to Anyanduba (1986:5) in Afolabi (2005:83) educational for business means to develop occupational skills such as recording, retrieving, co-coordinating, analyzing, organizing and reporting data used for business decisions, to develop occupational skills to market, merchandise and management flow of goods and services (i.e. Distributive Education) and improve personal use skills useful in business occupation.

Objectives of Business Education at the Secondary School Level

The specific objectives of secondary school business education according to Afolabi (2005:83) are:

- i. Vocational competency
- ii. Personal use competency
- iii. Consumer-business competency
- iv. Social-economic competency

Vocational Competency

At the secondary school, the major objective of business education is to prepare the student for employment in graduation. Business education is vocational, that is education to enter or advance in job. It includes des development of technical competencies to required business students. The students or learner acquires an understanding of the business system commensurate with the level of instruction.

Personal use Competency

Business education prepares student to handle their own business affairs and a function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. In education for business, business education is

vocational education for business majors. In this regard, emphasis is placed on occupational intelligence as well as the development of job training for business. As the students find themselves in business* they begin to understand how their skills are used in business, how workers relate to each other and to supervisors, how work is designed and controlled. What constitutes acceptable business appearance, decorum and adored to and how responsibility relates to tub success.

Consumer Business Competency

One of the cardinal objectives of business education programme is to enable the student assure his role as an effective and intelligent consumer of goods and séances offered by business. As a result of this, business educators have an increased responsibility for developing a programme which will use to the relegation of this objective. To this effect, consumer education which may take the form of a course in consumer goody or a course in consumer economics. Consumer education can be taught' at all levels of education primary, secondary and tertiary. Not in this tending where consumer education is taught, it should be part of the programme of all students. The business teacher, due to the nature of his training, is a unique position to contribute to the development of an effective consumer education.

Social Economic Competency

Through a well-articulated programme of studies in business education, the student or recopied acquires knowledge, skills and abilities which are put in (he service of man for an economically and socially viable nation. Strategies for Renewing Business Education:

Business education programmers should reflect the changes trends in the industry and in business. Training programmes in business education should aim at not only preparing the students for the existing jobs, but also for the jobs beyond the present.

Strategies in Renewing Business Education

The following are the suggested strategies in re-newing business education.

1. Business education Teacher; Okoro (2004) observed that a teacher who is well trained at the beginning of a career rapidly fall behind as a result of explosive developments and technology unless such teachers continue to receive additional training. If the new technology is to be used wisely than business education teachers will need higher and current training. This may be through in-service training, workshops and seminar for efficiency and effectiveness. The emergence of new industries has given ride to demand for training and retraining in new skills in the existing and new occupational areas so that people can Fit into today's and tomorrows world of work.
2. Curriculum Innovation: The curriculum of Business education need to be innovated in order for the programme to be beneficial, it must closely be parallel to the actual working situations and concurrently prepare the students to adjust to every changing job demands.
3. Time Allocation in terms of instructional periods: Enough time for the skill subjects (Shorthand/Typewriting) should be given, amidst the other subjects, during the school period and even during the holidays, a practice similar to industrial attachment can be introduced, this will enable the students not to relay theory to practice but to also help them relate.
4. Inadequacy of business studies equipment and facilities: One major requirement of business studies programmes is that the student should be trained with machines, tools, equipment and" processes and infect, in the replica of the work milieu of the eventual employment. This process and environment replica must be made available in our training institutions in the re newing of business education.
5. Finding: One of the major problems of business education today is that of finding, Azuka (1991) has suggested an alternative approach, which will involve the government (Federal,

State and Local), the industries, missions, and business organizations and all beneficiaries/consumers of business education products. Another alternative to effective finding of business education programme is through co-operative planning of business education programmes. Co-operative planning creates a forum for the teacher, the industry, and the business organization, the government and interested private groups to make inputs in the planning of programmes. It is envisaged that the involvement of those groups will encourage them to see themselves not only as consumers of business education products but also co-contributors to the overall success of the system.

1. Plays the critical role in making business education viable and visible in the community.
2. Plays the role of great of change in business education.
3. Delivers high-quality business education programme that are equal to any academic offering in the school system.

Is able to identify problems facing learning in business education subjects and is able to speculate solution to these problems.

Renewing business education programme is an integral part of the business educator's job. Prospective students and the public need to be familiar with the activities and course offering of the business education department. The business educators have the following responsibility regarding business education according to Osuala (2004).

1. Sponsor business seminars for students.
2. Develop a resource library in the business education department.
3. Organize an open house for students and parents.
4. Encourage inter-school activities.
5. Encourage enthusiasm and professionalism among the business education members.
6. Participate in professional and civic organizations.
7. Conduct follow-up study of students from business education class that are considered as general business.
8. Be involved in the placement of graduates.
9. Evaluate curriculum offering regularly.
10. Take field trip to local business firms and industries.

Conclusion

Educational programme should try to reflect modern trend and development in occupations especially as regards relevant and needed skills to meet with the demand of modern commerce and industry with emphasis to modern facilities and equipment in business education. Business education programme should focus on enhancing based learning using innovative technology for knowledge building as well as way to bridge the virtual and [he physical work Osuala (1998).

Modern business education is a dynamic career-oriented programme which must be analyzed, practiced and kept under constant review if it must meet the ever-changing needs if the economy. The business educator has a central role to play in this process Ekpenyong (1990).

Reference

- Afolabi, Sariat Oluwatoyin (2005), *Multidisciplinary Journal of Research Development* vol. 5 (5) pp 83.
- Ajayi, S. A (1990) *The Relevance of Business Education in the Present System of Education Services*. Paper Presented at the College of Education, Ikere Ekiti.
- Azuka, E.B (1991) *Funding Business Education by the Year 2000*, *Business Education Journal* 11 (3). 20-23.

Ekpenyong, L. E. (1990) *Conceptual Basic of Teaching and Methods of Imparting and up- Dafing Teaching. Teaching Techniques..Business Education Journal* Vol. 2 (2).

Makeri, G. 1. (1990) *Strategies for Preparing Youths for Jobs in Business Education Journal*, vol.2 (2)pp 77-80.

Okoro J. and Okoro P. U (2004) *Improving Shorthand in Business Education In Nigerian Business Education*, Book of Reading vol. 4.

Osuala E. C. (2004) *Foundations of Vocational education*. Enugu cheston Agency limited. 5^{1st} edition.

Osuala E. C. (1998) *Placed-based Learning using Innovational Technology for Knowledge Building as well as Ways to Bridge the Virtual and Physical World*.