

# **BUSINESS EDUCATION: AN IMPEKATIVE FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

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## **Abstract**

That a nation is developed is determined by a number of factors. Prominent among them is the level and quality of education that its citizens possess. Hence, the nature and quality of educational programmes obtainable in that nation to a large extent helps them to attain their national objectives. This paper has as its highlight, the career opportunities that abound in Business Education, implications and contributions of business education to national development and recommendations offered.

## **Introduction**

There are some basic justifications for an articulate Business Education programme in Nigeria. It is often common to hear that the financial records of some business concerns are in shambles and this often leads them into involuntary liquidation (Okoli, 2003).

However, if the growing population acquires the skills business education offers, they will be able to curb certain factors that lead to frauds and subsequent liquidations or distress. Hence, there is need therefore to promote and finance adequately the programme of business education, as it is an imperative for national development. Okorie (1980) observed the alarming rate of youths delinquencies and immorality in the society, thereby remarking that the schools have failed the society. According to him, our educational school system has failed to furnish the students with minimum training to fit them for work.

However, the skill and knowledge obtainable in business education is capable of creating employment opportunities for our youths even in this era of computer technology as an aspect of business education, i.e. Secretarial Studies a mere transition to the computer world. It can easily be agreed that through the training offered business education, the productive capacity of the country can increase commensurately thereby boosting the national development. Hence, the goal of business education as with other aspects of Vocational Education, is the provision of skills to the youths in an effort to fight unemployment, poverty, urban migration and ignorance in economic affairs.

## **Business Education Defined**

According to Popham et al (1975) Business Education is that education that prepares students for entry into advancement in jobs within business; and prepares them to handle their own business affairs and function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. They opined that educating for business, business education is vocational for business majors; and in educating about business, it is general education for all students (Nwaokolo, 2000)

Furthermore, Hill (1992) defined business education as a phase of education where in emphasis is laid on the preparation and participation in occupations of social value. It prepares an individual in a specific occupational field like Accountancy, Management., Marketing, Computer Studies, Secretary-ship etc.

Going back to the definition offered by Nwaokolo (2000) by education "for business" it means in addition to providing general education, business education is also designed for vocational preparation (Tonne, 1954;Ulinfun, 1986). That is, it provides manners with the necessary occupational intelligence and skills for occupation, choice and development, while by education about business on the other hand, the individual is provided with the information and knowledge required to make him become aware of his role in the society as a producer, consumer or citizen. It means that Business Education offers the individual the opportunity of becoming an intelligent consumer of economic goods and services. It does this by enabling him understand the economic system of his society through such knowledge as Economics, Consumer Education, Computer Education, General Business Law, Marketing etc. (Kwairanga, 1999)

### **National Development Defined**

National development can be defined from the economic perspective as man's ability to apply increasing levels of efficient technology to the control of nature's resources in order to bring about marked increases in the levels of growth of national output per capita of the population (Ibe, 1998). Kwairanga (1999) opines that the development of any nation is said to be linked with its economic, educational and political systems and the socio-cultural behaviour of its people. He further went on to say that the Nigerian economy has undergone many upheavals from the traditional buoyancy through imperial exploitation, oil boom, indigenisation, oil glut, austerity, countertrade, Structural Adjustment Programme, privatization and commercialization, deregulation to unguided deregulation and these have led the nation to so many economic predicaments ranging from poverty, huge foreign debts, low levels of employment and industry capacity utilization, low value of the national currency (Naira), balance of payment squeeze, high inflation and ultimately declining standard of living (Aina, 1991).

Any nation with the above dominants can never talk of development, as there is no headway for them. However, education, especially business education can enable a nation to wriggle out of these considering the skills, ingenuity and the technical know-how that abounds in the course. To add to this, Adam Smith dealt extensively with labour in his "Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations". He concluded that it is a well trained specialized labour force, which to a large extent determines the economic development of any nation.

### **Career Opportunities that Abound In Business Education**

Several fields of endeavours abound in business education like Accounting, secretary-ship, Finance, Banking, Insurance, Marketing, Data Processing, Management etc. (Ulinfun, 1988) These are distinct but integral disciplines which are capable of sustaining one's life. They are all offshoots of Business Education. To further buttress this, virtually every organization whether profit and nonprofit oriented in one way or the other requires the services of business education products (Okoli, 2003). By the virtue of this assertion, it can easily be said that business education contributes tremendously to economic development and consequently to national development.

### **Implications of Business Education on National Development**

Harbinson (1973) contends that human resources not capital, nor income nor material resources constitute the ultimate basic of the wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production, human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organizations and carry forward national development.

John and Morphet (1965) emphasizing the connection between technological skills and national development observed that "modern civilization demands knowledge, understanding and technological skills. Development of these through education provides the opportunity for progress. Neglect invites misery, exploitation and eventual disaster". These persuasive arguments in favour of human resources development as an investment in the future development and prosperity of nations has received a fast and wide acceptance in developing countries like Nigeria. The Federal Government of Nigeria convinced that skilled human resources are indispensable to economic development and growth has noted in the national policy document on education that "Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise, but a huge government venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of Government complete and dynamic intervention and active participation. The Federal Government of Nigeria has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development.

The acceptance of human resources as the purveyor of national development and technological advancement in Nigeria makes it imperative that business education should be encouraged and relied upon as the fulcrum for the production of adequate trained labour force for the development in commerce, industry and public service in Nigeria.

### **Contribution of Business Education to National Development**

The following are some of the areas business education has contributed to national development.

- a) Increase in labour force:- Business education contributed its quota on this issue and will continue to contribute as the world is still broadening both in population and in technological advancement. This fact is claimed as virtually no organization irrespective of how small it is that does not make use of business education products.
- b) Economic Awareness: The study of business education has helped in creating economic awareness to all the citizenry that embraced it. This agrees with the views of Anyaduba (1986) who opined that economic literacy is the right of every citizen, which should encompass bodies of knowledge about how the wealth of the nation is derived, how it is distributed and the place of the individual in the scheme of the economy.
- c) It has provided educational opportunities for the students preparing for careers in fields other than business to acquire business knowledge and skills needed to function effectively in those careers.
- d) Inculcating appropriate work habits and social values: As opined by Kwairanga (1999) success in the field of work is said to be dependent not only upon the acquisition of job knowledge and skills but also upon the display of appropriate attitudes on the job. Therefore, for any educational programme to be useful, it must be able to change the attitude of its participants (beneficiaries) towards a positive direction. Business Education programme avails its students the opportunity for an on-the-job training thereby giving them the feeling of working on actual job situation before completing their studies. Business Education has wide-ranging programmes include field study trips, seminars, workshops, conferences, Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (S.I.W.E.S) etc. These programmes give the individual a taste of feeling of working in real job situation before taking full time job. By so doing, the individual acquires such traits as co-operation, loyalty, accountability, prudence, personal character, business etiquette, etc. The inculcation of these traits go a long way in increasing our productivity at the workplace, vis-a-vis national development.

### **Recommendations**

As a way of ensuring that Business Education is an imperative for national development, the following recommendations are made;

- a) Business Education should be inculcated in the educational curriculum starting from primary school level.
- b) The Government should subsidize the cost of business machines so that they will be affordable for teaching and learning business courses.
- c) Teachers of Business Education should be given incentives to motivate them accordingly.

### **Conclusion**

The fact that business education is imperative to national development is not in doubt judging from the foregoing. Hence the paper opines that the government of the nation should throw in their weight fully in order to provide all the necessary prerequisites that will enable the programme realize all its objectives.

This single act will have a consequent effect of developing manpower, which in turn is an indices for national development.

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