

TRANSFORMATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The economic down turn in our country today is such that graduates of various programmes at levels from our educational institutions are faced with the problem of unemployment. To curb this problem, this write up focused on the need to transform the content of the programmes of business education in Nigeria tertiary institutions so that relevant courses will be introduced and improved this is intended to equip graduates of the programmes to fight unemployment and face the challenges of this country.

According to history, the introduction of business education programme emerged with private individuals. The need for the introduction of business education in government schools become necessary as a result of increase in commercial, economic and industrial activities.

Iheanyi (2000) opined that private commercial schools developed out of the need to fill the gap created in offices by lack of junior secretarial and accounting staff. Today

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business education has been broadened with more courses and increased to provide high level secretarial and accounting officers and lecturers of high academic excellence. To reform business education, however relevant courses are introduced so that graduates of this programme will be found relevant in the face of this technological era. However to make the graduates of business education self reliant by being able to establish and operate their business settings.

To support this more, Tony (2004) was of the view that, there will be a time when new civilization would drastically alter the manufacturing and production processes and communication networks.

Aghanta (2005) after assessing the wide range of courses offered in our technical colleges opined that some of the courses provided skills that were in inconsonance with current labour market needs.

Based on this background, this paper discusses the need for greater emphases to be laid on computer and entrepreneurship education as part of the transformation so that graduates of business will be well armed to face the challenges of this, present generation and be able to stand on their own feet.

Transformation

Transformation means to make better by connecting or making improvements, to change into an improved form or condition, to amend what is defective, corrupt or depraved, (Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary). To transform a system is to look into it by way of removing those things that are no longer tenable in order to bring in things that are more beneficial. Transforming the contents of business education programme is to look at the contents of the programme and the requirements of the present day world of work and its attendant technological needs. The objective will be geared towards making the graduates skill oriented and able to handle any problem that they are likely to face in the field of work.

In transforming the contents of the programme of business education, there is need to plan the curriculum of vocational business and technical education to address the following areas,

- a. Preparation of professional personnel in curriculum development. Oyedele (2000)
- b. Development of criteria for the evaluation and utilization of curriculum materials.
- c. Identification and utilization of the curriculum materials for other government agencies and the private sector.
- d. Preparation of plans for the coordination of national, state, local and private sector efforts in Curriculum development and production.
- e. Development of standards for the maintenance of curriculum effort.

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- f. Production and dissemination of curriculum materials
- g. Development of the curriculum to meet today's and tomorrow's needs.

Business Education and Unemployment

In Nigeria today, graduate unemployment is no longer new issues because the civil service has been filled to the brim. This is where government has been hammering continuously for education for reliance i.e vocational technical education.

Anao (2000) opined that a graduate of business education has two options either to work as a civil or public servant or to establish and run his/her own business outfit. They are able to do this because of the kind of training they have received. The issue of transforming the content of the programme is to bring in courses that will help to empower them more and make them more saleable in the labour market if they will go into paid employment or be able to stand on their own if they like to choose establishing and running their own business. So if the transformation is properly addressed and colourfully coordinated, graduates of business education will not encounter unemployment now and forever.

Some of the Needed Changes

General Education

However, it is necessary to maintain a good balance so that skills acquisition will not jeopardized in favour of other components. Business education has components such as computer education, moral education and entrepreneurship education.

Moreover, computer as a course is done once in a 3 years programme of the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). This course going by the present technological changes in the world, should be made a continuous course, that is, it should be done in year1, 2 and 3. of NCE business education programme so as to make holders of NCE in business education computer masters as against computer literate which presently obtained. The aim is to prepare them adequately to face with the current and future technological changes of the world.

Also, entrepreneurship education is another vital subject which requires students in depth knowledge. It is done once in a three years programme of business education. It is normally done in year two first and second semesters. Entrepreneurship education has become an important subject that two semesters is considered in adequate to give students. They supposed to know about starting and running a business venture of their own. Now government has taken broad step by introducing entrepreneurship education in the curriculum of senior secondary education and civic education compulsory subjects for senior secondary certificate examination. This paper emphasizes that both computer

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education and entrepreneurship education should run for all the three years NCE business education programme, the same thing should apply to the polytechnics and universities.

The attempts of the National Universities Commission (NUC), the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to see that the standards are maintained in our various institutions of learning is commendable. Efforts are needed to see that those courses which are not relevant in the minimum standard are removed.

Roles of Business Education

However, as an integral part of general education, whenever business education courses are introduced into the school curriculum they are intended to contribute directly and indirectly to the occupational development of the learners. UNESCO (2001) was of the opinion that features of good technology education should include employment for trainees, use of local resources and production for the local labour market. The content, scope and methodology, any business education must address the benefits the community will derive after the training. Osuala (2003) in his own contribution stated that vocational technical education capitalizes on the capacity of people to change, learn new and improved skills and develop creative approaches to the provision of goods and services. The basic role of business education is to provide adequate/necessary skills, knowledge and practical work experience to individuals with various abilities.

Entrepreneurship and Computer Education

The recent poor economic down turn of the country has worsened the problem of unemployment. Oyborhoro (2004) opined that the low level of industry/commercial activities has led to the reduction in industrial output resulting in loss of employment and untold hardship to millions of Nigerians. Moreover, entrepreneurial ability is therefore of special importance in human resource development.

The entrepreneur is an innovator, a risk taker and a decision maker who take the initiative in combining the resources e.g land, labour and capital in production of goods and services. Nwaokolo (1995) likened entrepreneurial skills to abilities to other forms of job-skills and knowledge and send that they can be taught and learnt in a formal school setting. Entrepreneurial skills and managerial abilities are needed for self employment and self reliance. Business education being a vocational education, it has becomes necessary to be imported in the business education students by designing three year programme in entrepreneurship education. However, the content of jobs especially those in the manufacturing and production processes are fast changing due to the

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emergence of computers. For this, Anyanwu and Osuaguru (2006) were of the opinion that every child needs to be computer literate whether the child is going to study science or engineering technology. Computers have become indisputable tools of technological development. It is because of this that Ugwu (2001) opined that knowledge of industrial applications of computers will increase the confidence of technicians/technologists who will inevitably be involved in computer Aids- So knowledge of computer will prepare the graduates of business education for industrial application of technological tools and machines controlled by computers, and increase the range of duties and responsibilities which they will perform as employees. Sound knowledge of computer not just computer literacy and other communication technologies has become a necessary skill for self employment and survival in a work environment.

Conclusion

The aim of business education as with other aspects of vocational education was the provision of skills to the youths in an effort to curb unemployment, poverty, urban migration (Nwaokolo, 2000). Based on these discussions, this paper concluded that in the light of this present technological changes of the world, some of the courses contents of the business education programmes are no longer relevant. A transform is therefore important so as to look at the course contents once again in order to ascertain causes that should removed and those ones that should be introduced and the I ones their study should extended for undergraduates as a result of their need. If this transform is properly done. It helps to boost the ego of the graduates of business education.

Recommendations

In other to make business education courses relevant, the following recommendations are made:

1. The transform should be carried out by curriculum experts in the business education.
2. The transformation should consider the introduction of other courses and elongation of period of study of such courses as computer and entrepreneurship education because of their importance in our society at large.
3. A transform of the contents of the programme of business education is necessary.

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