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Enhancing Sustainable Development through the Promotion of Business Education: Implications for Educational Evaluation

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Abstract:

The role of business education in the development of any nation is highly indispensable and should begin with training people in business in a formal school setting. Knowledge acquired in business education can sharpen one's thinking and behaviour by making one have the necessary skills needed as the bedrock of national development. The paper highlights how business education, a component of technical education makes people to be self-reliant, professionally competent, and employable thus leading to sustainable development. The implications for educational evaluation were also stressed and recommendations made.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Business education, Education evaluation.

1. Introduction

The world today is predominantly and significantly shaped by the overwhelming impact of vocational and technical-science education. This is where the concept, theory of human capital comes in, because, investment in human beings yield more returns in the form of increased productivity. The economic value of education of every nation attains its sustainable analytical attention when its growth is maximally sustained and promoted. This is achievable only when: (a) education is able to raise the productivity and income level of workers either through the diffusion of skills or the organization of work procedures: (b) education can increase the allocative efficiency by increasing the flexibility and mobility of the labour force in response to change in the demand of labour: (c) education is able to promote technical change and thus productivity and output growth in various ways (Sheeham in Olu, 1997)

The declining trend in enrolment of business education at tertiary level and its allied subjects at senior secondary school certificate examinations calls for serious questions as to what are the policy makers and those who implement them doing to redress the ugly, sad and disturbing scenario?. Proper identification of the possible causes of low enrolment on both post-primary and post-secondary institutions will go a long way in redressing the trend. (Abba, Bello & Aliyu, 1999)

A close look at the collapse of the 6.3.3.4 system of education shows that the death of the system could be attributed to the poor implementation of the policy on the part of government, unattractiveness of vocational-technical teaching and the stigma of extreme poverty and pity associated with teaching. Others include vocational-technical teachers abandoning teaching for more lucrative appointments, non-payments of teachers' allowance and overcrowded time-table. (Abba, Bello & Aliyu, 1999).

2. Man, the Society and Business Education

Man as part and parcel of the society and as a homo-sapient is business oriented: right from the creation of the universe, God in His magnificent status has demonstrated explicitly that He is a business-oriented God. It took God six solid working days to create the world. In the vein, right from birth our life and existence have been associated with business, while our experience, growth and development have always hinged on education which is drilling, shaping, developing, learning and training. The word "Business" therefore, is conceptualized in different perspectives. It connotes occupation, work, trade, professional (science), activity (technology), skill (activity), action, top quality, patronage, governance, management, practice etc., while the word "Education" symbolizes drilling, tutoring, teaching, Guidance, directing and counselling etc. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Business education as a component of technical education is about training people in business in a formal school setting with a view of helping them to be self-reliant, professionally competent, employable, and agents of national development (Isaiah 2001). As every

profession is business-oriented, experts in business education are required to complement the role of each profession. This is where secretarial, accounting, sales and human management come in. There is no notable establishment or organization that can dispense easily with the complementary role of business experts (Ubulom, 1999). Their role in every nation's economic growth is highly indispensable and therefore requires a formal training for proper accountability and astuteness in dexterity: that is; a training that will ensure transparency in behavior, honesty and integrity, geared towards elimination of unscrupulous behavior pattern that are capable of bringing any establishment and the nation to disrepute (Amaehule, 1999, Olwa, 2001). The foregoing extrapolations are clear embellishments of the objectives of the business education. It is in the light of this argument that Amaehule (1999) explained how the knowledge acquired in the teaching of business education can sharpen our thinking and behavior by ways of ensuring correct attitudes, skills and teachings against dishonesty, disloyalty, tardiness lack of initiative and promotion of cooperative efforts in organizations, which in addition are accomplished through programme offerings, that cover office practice, secretarial duties, business ethics and practices, that enhance productivity and serve as the bedrock of national development.

Conceptually, business education as an aspect of pedagogical orientation offered at the higher institutions of learning, prepares students for careers in business. Its aim as earlier pontificated is to teach people how to handle their affairs in business and be good citizens of the society. It is also designed with the fundamental aim of uplifting one's skill as well as provisions of required skills needed to secure gainful employment for the purpose of earning a living and success in life through further education. It is equally indispensable as preparation for many professions such as that of being a civil servant, accountant, administrator, lawyer, and business teachers (Ubulom and Ukwuije, 2000).

3. Business Education and National Development

There are two types of development; intrinsic and extrinsic development. While intrinsic is qualitative in nature, extrinsic is quantitative. For a nation to be seen as a developing nation, it must develop both qualitatively and quantitatively. Quantitative development represents an appreciable increase in the number of basic infrastructure put in place by a nation, while qualitative development encompasses increase in a nation's human capital. This brings us to the meaning and scope of human capital theory: which states that people spend on themselves in diverse ways, not only for the sake of present employments but also for the sake of future pecuniary and non-pecuniary returns. They may purchase health care; they may voluntarily acquire additional education: they may spend time searching for job with the highest possible rate of pay instead of accepting the first offer that come along. They may purchase information about job opportunities, they may choose job with low pay but high learning potential in preference to dead-end jobs with high pay (Blaug, 1980 in Nte and Amadi, 2005). That is why Ulinfunin Awaehwule (1999), averred and posited that business education must answer Nigeria's many problems which include problems of ethnic grouping, problems of language, problems of greed, ignorance and health, problems of underdevelopment due essentially to lack of highly trained talents and problems of pitiable wastage.

In addition, Eze (1991), succinctly puts that one major objectives of training management personnel is to enable them improve their efficiency and effectiveness at work, as no organization can survive if its personnel are lacking in these two qualities: bearing in mind that the training of management personnel is the most important aspect of human resource management which plays a significant role in manpower planning and organizational development. It is in this regard, business education is said to be contributing through its objectives and programme offering significantly to industrial productivity and by implication, economic development of the nation (Amaehwule, 1999).

4. Epileptic Growth of Business Education

In several cases the term "business education" says Ubulom in Ubulom and Ukwuije (2005), is wrongly and interchangeably been used in place of such terms like "business administration", "business management", and "business studies". The term therefore is a comparatively new development in the pedagogical system of most developing nations like Nigeria and as such different from those other concepts. Unfortunately, there has been a downward trend in the growth of business education in Nigeria with a dwindling interest in students' enrolment both at tertiary and secondary levels of education. A study on "wastage in business education" carried out in the federal college of education (technical) Asaba, Delta state of Nigeria. By Okwelle and Obiyai (2002), revealed that the estimate percentage drop in business teacher education between 1990 and 1991 academic session, showed that 14.27% dropouts and 29.76% repeat students in three-year cycle witnessed the greatest wastage in the second year of study. The high number of dropout recorded in the first year of study as shown by the school records was due to voluntary withdrawal of students from the school records were as a result of the students failing to obtain the minimum cumulative point average (CPA) to proceed to the next level of study.

In another study on "gender perspective of career choice of business education option among undergraduates of Rivers university of science and technology from 2000-2004" by Gabriel and Isirimah (2006), it was found out that, going by the data from past records in the department, gender significantly influenced the occupational preference for secretarial administration and management options in favour of females as against males in favour of accountancy and marketing options. A situation which implied that there was a disparity in the choice of career of business education among males and females.

A study which investigated the "relationship between attitudes, interests and values of students and their academic achieve in junior schools certificate business studies of some selected secondary schools in Port Harcourt metropolis" and carried out by Enyekit and Ubulom (2001), revealed that students who had positive attitude towards business studies, students who had interest in business studies, and those who attached much value to business studies performed much better than those who did not.

Negerebo (2006), investigated the impact of "technological advancement on the acquisition of secretarial skills in Nigeria". Using Rivers state university of science and technology as a case study, discovered that there was a negative relationship between

technological advancement and the acquisition of secretarial skills hence, recommended that in order to benefit from the high productivity of the computers, identified solutions to the problems militating against the acquisition of knowledge should be implemented in universities.

Okala (2001), in a study on "Government Funding of business education programmes in public schools as poor funding equipment, buildings and staffing were responsible for the decadence in business education programme in Nigeria hence, the need for alternative source of funding.

5. Enhancing Sustainable Development through Business Education

In an opinion survey undertaken by Amaewhule (1999), on the "Appraisal of the role of business education in Nigeria's industrial productivity". Using experts and practitioners in economics and education in Port Harcourt metropolis, found out that business education as part of vocational education through its objective and programme offerings contribute significantly to the nation's economic development through its emphasis on skills development, entrepreneurship, and ethical practices in the work place, and as such should be sustained if the nation is to attain an appreciable level of economic development.

The study which investigated "people's attitudes towards secretarial education", with special focus on secretarial teachers, parents of the secretarial education students, secretarial education students, non-secretarial students and the general public for Port Harcourt metropolis and Rivers state university of science and technology by Ubulom (1999), revealed that respondents had positive attitude towards secretarial education hence no significant difference were recorded among them. An indication that people are more than ever before becoming aware of the vital role of secretarial education in the improvement of the Nigeria economy. In view of this, Owens in Isaiah (2000), suggested that career paths may change dramatically as a result of office automation. And for this reason, business education has ceased to be a dumping ground for the dropout " as modern technology takes over the office, the discipline itself, demand more intelligent, versatile, creative and hardworking people. The need to organize learning relevant to real world situation is crucial to business education hence, more pragmatic method are needed to achieve this aim. That means the activities must be tailored in such a way that students hear, see and do, as doing provides the information of genuine learning.

6. Implications for Evaluation

For business education to adequately promote sustainable development in Nigeria, there should be strong evaluation strategies will be seared towards to producing graduates who are highly motivated and equipped to push the work force to the next level. Graduates need to be skilled enough to be self-employed. They will be guided towards becoming employers of labour rather than looking for white colour jobs. There is need for graduates to work on their own without much supervision. For this to become real there must be an integration of both formative and summative evaluation. Developing students' evaluative skills according to Gillepsie (2015) is one of the greatest challenges of teachers of business education. This requires patience and dedication on the part of teachers. Formative evaluation- should include different strategies like, self-evaluation, peer evaluation, useful descriptive feedback which together form "evaluation for learning". While summative evaluation "evaluation of learning" should be conducted for certification. For business education graduates to be trained for self-employment and sustainable development much of self-evaluation should be practiced. This provides an opportunity for a student to evaluate his own achievements which should focus not just on the present but also on long-term plans (CIO, 2013). This involves teaching students to set success criteria and work towards them as they learn to learn even when out of school and can always evaluate their works against the set criteria. This skill can take them through life and help them carry out projects on their own. Students can learn to relate programme out comes directly to objectives and by choosing and using appropriate words that demonstrate objectivity with specific meanings, suggesting specific improvements and including task related action plans, they have acquired live- long skills(AMA,2015).And when they set success criteria they can work out to achieve them. This way graduates come out confident, self-reliant, purpose driven and equipped to develop the society sustainably. This shift in evaluation is necessary as the conventional method has only produced unskilled graduates with paper qualification who cannot function effectively in the work place.

7. Conclusion

It is the averred position of this paper that if Nigeria must develop its full potential, it will be necessary to study the deficiencies in the principles guiding the present application of the tenets of vocational-technical business education. This means that there must be substantive radical changes to avoid something similar to that which affected Germany in the early 1920s. The concerted efforts made by some developing nations in improving their GDP (Gross Domestic product) and human capacity building saw an unprecedented turn around in their economy. This makes them rank high among the developing nations of the world, for example; India, Malaysia, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico, Korea, to mention but a few (Freeman, 1995). That also bring us to the use of the term "sustainable development". It is a compound term that has ranked highest on the political and economic agenda of all developing countries of the world. For us to forge ahead and meet with challenges of the time, we must begin to address the issue on the way forward to attain sustainable development (Uzor, 1999). For Business Education to lead to sustainable development, evaluation strategies should be geared towards evaluation for learning than evaluation of learning to equip graduates who will effectively make their marks in the development of the society.

8. References

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