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BUSINESS EDUCATION AND THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined the Business Education and the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria, especially examined the concept of business education and its achievement of sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Business education; which is skilled oriented and self employment motivated, holds the key to Nigeria becoming technologically relevant and socio economically prosperous, if systematically packaged and adequately delivered. Business education prepares students for occupations in administration office systems, accounting and finance, marketing and management as well as stenographic and computer information system. It equip students (youths) with appropriate skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies that enhance individuals to be self employed and self reliant leading to sustainable economic development. Therefore, this paper is focused on how to achieve sustainable development in Nigeria through business education. The achievement and challenges as well as the strategies for strengthening business education were made towards achieving sustainable development goals in Nigeria. Conclusion was made and the implications were drawn.

Keywords: Concept, Business education, Achievement, Sustainable Development Goals, Challenges, Strategies, Nigeria.

Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skill, attitudes, interest, abilities, competences and the cultural norms of a society by people and transmits life to the coming generations so as to enhance perpetual development of the society. According to Akpakwu (2012) education is a lifelong process through which individuals acquire relevant knowledge and value which enable them become useful to themselves and the society in which they are domiciled education opens doors 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. According to Anyaeneh and Nzegwu (2015) education is the 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.

Business education being a dynamic field of study has transformed the educational system into one which aims at grooming manpower to fill the over growing vacuum created by unemployment. It is worrisome to note that graduate unemployment cut across all discipline in Nigeria Nwaigburu and Eneogwe (2013) states that it is however, impossible to indentify an academic field that is not adequately represented in the ever growing community of unemployment the graduates that are unemployed this perhaps explains how unemployment predicament has caused several other factors that has affected the socio-economic development in Nigeria, the problem of Nigeria Delta military, political thuggery among youths, the issue of Islamist military (Boko Haram) in the northern part of Nigeria, increased armed robbery, banditry, and kidnappin can be traced to graduate unemployment in the country. Mass unemployment in Nigeria could be as the result of students learning much of theoretical rather than acquisition of practical skills and knowledge in schools. According to Uddin and uwaifo (2005) the situation of unemployment in Nigeria is indeed alarming and worrisome, this is owning to the a fact, that thousand of unemployable youths/graduates are roaming the streets seeking government enhanced job, while the tertiary institutions keep producing graduates on a yearly bases, compatible with new jobs or vacancies to absorb these new job seekers.

In view of the foregoing, sustainable development means the all round development of individuals, it concerns not only personality development, but also nation building which goes beyond the construction of bridges, roads, skyscrapers and provision of other social facilities or amenities, without damage to environment (Madu, Uzoeshi, Agu & Kanu, 2005). Sustainable development is believed to be a holistic approach to improving the quality of life. it postulates that there are intrinsic links among economic and social and environmental well being. Changes in the area one area will impact upon the other. It is a pattern resource that aims at meeting human needs, while preserving the environment so that their needs can be met not only in the present, but also generation to come. According to Elujekwute (2019) it is development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations meet their own needs and it is a way of protecting the environment while improving living standard for all the populace.

Concept of Business Education

The term business education represent a broad and diverse discipline that is included in all type of educational delivery system ranging, from elementary, secondary and tertiary

institutions in Nigeria. Business education includes education for marketing occupations, office occupation, accounting, distribution, business teaching, business administration, business management, type writing stenography and secretarial education or studies. It is often times described as education or and about business whose primary purpose is to prepare individuals for gainful employment in business occupation (Nwosu, 2006). According to Nwaigburu and Eneogwu (2013) the value of business education programme could be determined by its ability to adequately prepare and equip appropriate individuals in such a manner that they could fit into specific jobs or establish themselves upon graduation from school it is a programme of instruction that consists of two parts as fellows office education for office careers through initial refreshers and up grading education learning to employability and achievement in occupations secondly, general business education: A programme that provides students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business world business education is a programme 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 higher school or tertiary institutions.

Abdulkarum (2009) sees business education as a programme of instruction designed with the deliberation intent of equipping students with the following; Requisite knowledge for making rational decision in the business world; the skills of inter personal relationship for effective management and communication of business operations and the attitudes of creativity; the innovation and adaptation contingent with changes in the world of business that leads to proficiency and efficiency in analyzing and operating business activities Okolie (2010) states that business education is an important part of the general education which emphasizes on skills and competencies acquisition for use in office and business related occupations Nwanewezi (2012) assertes that business education as encompassing education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding, hence the primary goal of business education is to produce competent, skilful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively and efficiently compete in the labor market.

In view of the above, business education embraces basic education for teaching career, entrepreneurship, business understanding, office environment and vocational practice and business education occurs at several levels, such as primary, secondary and tertiary institution, with the greatest activity in the latest. At the tertiary level of education in Nigeria, the philosophy of business education to make the students understand the concept and philosophy of the national policy, policy on education because of its importance in national development. It was based on this premise that Igboke (2005) identifies the objectives of business education as follows; to developed 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 future training in business studies and to provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life or work for those who may not undergo further training from highlighted objective mentioned the above. Business education is expected to produce graduate with the skills, knowledge, attitude and competencies required for employment either in public or private

organizations or become job creators thereby contributing for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria.

Concept of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The term sustainable development goals (SDGs) are a new universal set of goals targets and indictors, that were adopted on September 25, 2015 to end poverty in all its forms by 2030 and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental (UN Assembly, 2015). As a part of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda and expand on the eight (8) millennium development goals (MDGs) which were launched in 2001 and expired in 2015. Every country was requested to incorporate the ambitious seventeen (17) goals into their agendas and political policies and to work towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is interesting to note that MDGs considered targets for poor countries to achieve, with financial support from wealthy countries while MDGs focused primarily on poverty and health. The seventeen (17) goals comprised 169 targets, include new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice. Unlike the millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which arranged by a working group in the basement of the UN Headquarters in New York City, the United Nation (UN) conducted the largest consultation programme in their history in order to assess what the SDGs should cover. For the realization of this purpose, an open working group with representation from seventy (70) countries was constituted in March 2013 and at the same time the United Nation (UN) conducted a series of global discussion which included eleven (11) thematic and eight-three (83) national consultations and door-to-door surveys: as well as an online survey where people were asked to highlight topics they would like to see approached in the goals. The results of the consultation were taken into account in the working groups discussions. All the indicators were expected to be considered as an integrated package as many SDGs are interdependent and must be pursued together for one simple reason: progress in one field often depends on progress in others. Measuring the full spectrum of SDGs and their targets through a compact indicator framework and associated monitoring systems is a key prerequisite to achieve the goals within the period of fifteen (15) years and quite a high challenge "indicators will be the backbone of monitoring progress towards SDGs at local, national, regional and global levels" (SDSN, 2015:2). For the worldwide success of SDGs the target must be operationalized into a management tools that helps countries to develop implementation strategies, allocate their resources, measure their progress and guarantee the accountability of all persons involved. On the SDGs funding, the United Nation (UN) has states that, USD 3.9 trillion in annual investment will be needed to achieve the global goals. At the point of launching the SDGs, the level of public and private investment in the relevant areas was just around USD 1.4 trillion (UNCTAD, 2016).). The United Nations conference on trade and development (UNCTAD)'s investment policy framework for sustainable development (IPFSD) makes a key contribution to reform efforts in this area. The best and most consistent solution at this point seems to be the concept of a multi-stakeholder platform to finance SDGs, that was first introduced at the Third International on Financing for Development (FID) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2015 (IISD, 2016). One year later, in October 2016 UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon announced the launch of a new platform to strengthen innovative financial solutions. Meanwhile, the World Bank group released a 2030 vision document, in which they presented their contribution, including Open trade promotion and sustainable concessional financing for supporting SDGs (IISD, 2016). Within the multi-stakeholder platform and with participation

from all educational institutions, the implementation of the SDGs suggests new opportunities for tertiary institutions in Nigeria and a good opportunity to evaluate their research, teaching and learning so far, in respect of capacity building. According SDGN (2017) the role of tertiary institutions in regards to SDGs implementation is related to their extensive teaching and learning activities, including undergraduate and graduate teaching, professional training, executive and adult education, online learning, co-curricular activities among others.

However, the SDGs offers an opportunity to extend Education for Sustainable Development where Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is defined as a learning process based on ideals and principles that prepare people of all walks of life to plan for, cope with and find solution for issues that threaten the sustainability of the system across the globe and contribute to securing a legacy for future generations, although it should be noted that many definitions of ESD have been suggested, however Akinsemolu (2018) considers that the differences are important ensuring that ESD develops in ways that are locally relevant and culturally appropriate. This means it is not necessary to seek consensus over the meaning, the scope and practice of ESD. However there is a consensus that the holistic nature of ESD allowed it to be a possible to tool for achieving the MDGs and Education for all (EFA). Regarding the SDGs, since the launch of 2030 Agenda, Education has become central to their realization; there are a stand- alone goal (SDG 4), education is mentioned in targets of five goals, and more important is linked to almost all of other SDG in one way or other (UNESCO, 2017).

Business Education Challenges Hindering the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

Business education programmes are bedeviled with many problems in a bid to effectively and efficiently achieve its aims and objectives for sustainable development goals in Nigeria. According to Akinola (2006) these are the major challenges of business education which need to be addressed to attain the desired Sustainable Development Goals. These obstacles are briefly discussed below;

1. **Inadequate funding:** It is a well known fact that one of the major obstacles confronting education in Nigeria today is inadequate funding and business education is no exception. The educational institutions are not adequately funded. Sometimes funds allocated to education are re-redirected to the other sector of the economy. Un-coordinated and weak institutional support for education; the government and its agencies responsible for business development have not addressed the problem of business education at all levels of educational system.
2. **Lack of Motivation of teachers and poor remuneration:** The fact remains that teaching and learning depends on teachers for there can be no meaningful socio-economic and political development in any society without teachers. The Nigeria teachers, business education teachers inclusive are poorly motivated and remunerated. The teachers' salaries, allowances, entitlements and are regularly paid in arrears at times they are denied for these entitlements and their promotions delayed for so long. According to Elujekwute, Nyita and Elujekwute (2021) states that the issue of salaries goes beyond the institutional development as it affects the families of the staff (teacher) and his social status since salaries delayed is salary denied many teachers are always reluctant to work on an empty stomach and more especially when they cannot meet their social obligations to their families, relations and their exigencies

of life Elujekwute further maintains that poor remuneration of teachers is responsible for the low morale and performance and the temptation to leave their present job for the greener pastures. However institutions where staff (teachers) salaries are promptly paid, there is a high morale among the teachers because they are highly motivated and they can afford to provide whatever they want for themselves and that of their families. Poor remuneration is responsible for the poor attitude to work of some teachers, they go about doing their private business instead of concentrating on how to improve teaching and learning in the educational institutions.

3. **Insufficient Provision of Facilities:** the school facilities which refer to the physical facilities available in school such as the site, the building, school plant, school ground, sporting facilities, furniture, laboratories, equipment, tools, library facilities, lecture halls, and other materials for the effective implementation of business education curriculum content are not adequate provided, hence creates problems for business education teachers. Therefore graduates of business who were without these facilities will not in any way be able to defend their certificate and the skills and knowledge so acquired in the education institutions. Chukwurah (2013) is of the opinion that educational facilities are one of the major factors responsible for high or low academic achievement depending on its quality, operation and maintenance. Chukwurah further points out, school facilities hamper effective learning and prevent teachers from putting in their best. As a result many business teachers have found themselves extremely limited by the facilities with which they work. Shaibu and Mbaegbu (2012) agrees that quality and quantity of educational facilities available within and educational system have positive relationship with the standard and quality of educational system. These facilities such as building for classroom offices, chairs and tables for students and staff and other facilities are grossly inadequate in schools. The lack of teaching materials especially the right materials that are suitable for teaching of skills in Nigeria schools constitutes a challenge in business education.
4. **Problem of Teaching Personnel:** Trained teachers in business education who are to teach students are grossly inadequate in schools. The problem mostly is that qualified business education teachers prefer opting out of teaching to industries, thereby increasing business education and in the absence of these business education teachers, personnel from other discipline come into the department to teach courses without imparting the right knowledge and skills on the students. Most teachers or instructors do not know what to teach and the people who are being taught. Inability to distinguish between business education and management will always pose challenge to business.
5. **Poor Public Image of Business Education:** Some parents prefer their children to study courses like medicine, law, pharmacy, engineering among others. This is because they regard vocational education as a course for Never-do- well who could not secure admission into other disciplines. This attitude of the parents and society towards vocational education especially to business education contributes to the problem in teaching and learning of business education. It is important to states that many school administrators are ignorant of the value and potential of business education in national competitiveness and development. Therefore, business education in such schools may not have the level of support that needs to gain acceptance among students and parents.

6. **Inaccessibility of Digital and Internet Technology:** The absences or non-availability digital and internet technology in the most educational institutions has greatly affected business education teachers and students. The students who supposed to be taught the use of digital and internet facilities it must however, be stressed that the effective use of the various method of the ICT in teaching and learning depends on the availability of these facilities and teachers competence in using them. It was against this background that UNESCO (2002) stipulates that business education teacher must have the knowledge and skills to use the new digital tools and resources to help all students achieving academic standards; students and business teacher must have sufficient access to digital technology and internet in their classroom, schools and business education institutions and high quality, meaningful and culturally responsive digital content must be available for the business teachers and students.

The Impact of Business Education on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

The enhancement of business education on the development of human resources, productivity, socio-economic and economic growth cannot be over emphasized. It has become inherent in the national development strategies in much society today. However, to achieve sustainable development goals (SDGs) attention should be drawn to strengthening the gap between educations, schooling and preparation for the world of work with respect to improving vocational education (Business Education) in Nigeria. According to Ugwuogo (2013) business education holds the prospect of contributing through its job creation and self employment packages for the attainment of vision 20:2020. Nwagwu (2007) maintains that a gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capital, reduces poverty and employment which are some of the indices of development. Amoor and Udoh (2008) states that a well trained business educator can successfully be engaged into the following areas; teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification and competence and business enterprise as a promoter, manager, marketer account clerk, secretary word processor, sales, representative broker and among others. Further, business education plays a vital role in the political, social and socio-economic development in Nigeria this perhaps explains when jobs are created for the citizenry through the establishment of a lot of business that will accommodate the unemployed youths or graduates. A qualified graduated of business education is expected to have acquired enough skills relevant to the management of small scale business enterprise as well as creation of self employment. Oguejiofor and Ezeabasili (2014) notes that business education helps to reduces the problem of unemployment among youths, and other social vices in the society Amoor and Udoh (2008) asserts that business education plays a significant role in the area of economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners thereby assisting them to adequately pass same to others as well be able to handle the emerging office technology and information system. A business education graduate does not provide job for him alone, but provides for other as well. In order hand helps the individual to increase per capital income as well as the standard of living by so doing contributes to sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria. Osuala (2006) views sustainable development as a construct which envisages development as meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the need of the future generation. This implies that while business education meets the need of the present it does not compromise the ability of the future generation to meet own needs. Anyaeneh and Nzegwu (2015) points out that the major essential tool for achieving

sustainable development goals should include; improving the quality of basic education; re-orientation existing education programme to address sustainable development; developing public awareness and understanding and providing training for all sectors of private and civil society. Anyaeneh and Nzegwu further maintains that business education finds expression of entrepreneurial activities in areas like stenography, petty trading small scale business, account clerk, transportation business, thrift loan business, teaching, officer occupation and among others. Business education helps increasing employment opportunities and increase earning among youths resulting in an increase in their purchasing power.

Strategies for Strengthening Business Education for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria

Having considered the challenges of business education on the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Nigeria, the following strategies are suggested for strengthening business education have been drawn in order to help pave for self reliance and sustainable development goals (SDGs) as follows;

Funding of Education

The government should commit more funds to education so that basic facilities will be available in schools so as enhance the teaching and learning of business education the budgetary allocation to education over the years is still less 15 percent. This proportion is still far from UNESCO (2011) recommendation of 26 percent. The federal government should strive to meet the UNESCO standard in its budgetary allocation to education in order empower out educational institutions in provision of equipment and other facilities needed in the improvement of education states and local governments, voluntary agencies, corporate bodies, philanthropists and private individuals should also be encouraged to increase their financial commitment to education instructional facilities can be provided in educational institutions so as to maintain sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

Provision of Basic Facilities

Basic facilities or materials should be provided, match current demand of the society. The delivery of skills development programmes in educational institutions should be indentified with the teachers adequate furnished with repellant materials more basic infrastructure such as functional library among others, which are required for effective functioning of business education teaching and learning should be provided in schools through increased funding of education by the government and educational administrators. Provision of teaching materials should be provided match current demand of the society. The delivery of skill development programme in the country should be indentified with the teachers adequate furnished with repellant materials.

Educational Institutions Support

The government in partnership with agencies such as the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA), Industrial Training Fund (ITF), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETfund) among others should address this issues with the aim of providing funds and equipments to educational institutions for business education in order to assist promote self reliance and sustainable development goals in Nigeria.

Training of Teaching Personnel: There should be mass training of teachers in business education through institutions so as to effectively handle business education instructional delivery in educational institutions. The National University Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for College of Education (NCCE) and each university, polytechnic and colleges of education should build capacity in this area to have meaningful result. A good technique can be useful in enhancing teachers' morale in teaching business education in educational institution. The teachers should be allowed to attend seminars conferences and workshops so to update their knowledge, skills and experience that will be useful in the teaching and learning.

Students Proper Orientation: The issue of while collar job or wage earner culture should be discouraged among students but by encouraging a self reliant culture therefore, there is need for skill adult to have a significant promotional content that would stimulate and sustain students interest in the programme. Therefore, 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 students (Paul, 2005).

Public Perception: To combat the poor public perception and misconceptions about vocational education which business education is part of vocational teachers and other stakeholders as well as the educational administrators should embark on aggressive public education and career guidance progamme right from the secondary school level. The sanitization must be geared towards improving the image of vocational education for the public appreciate the advantages associated with vocational education as well as business education.

Creating Awareness: The government and educational administrators should endeavor to create awareness on the relevance of business education to individuals, society, and Nigeria at large, through seminars, conferences and workshops; this will enhance to boost the supply of qualified business education teachers in schools.

Curriculum Content: In ensuring 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 emerging in technologies changes in Nigeria.

Re-Adequate remuneration of Teachers: Teachers remuneration should be adequately enhanced or improved beyond what is presently obtained, by so doing will motivate fresh graduates to take up teaching jobs in business education as well as enhancing serving teachers commitment and efficiency towards making teaching career attractive and rewarding.

Conclusion

It is unfortunate that in spite of the numerous changes introduced in the Nigeria educational system, the country is still battling with basic issues of sustainable development. The way out of the quagmire is to introduce changes in the education sector as out lined in strategies for strengthening business education or sustainable development goals (SDGs). Once those changes are introduced, Nigeria will take elegant steps into social an economic prosperity in

a society: a society where teachers will receive their appropriate wages without having to go on strike before been paid: a society in which students would have access to affordable and qualitative education: and a society in which Nigerians would serve as the active agents in the accumulation of capital, exploitation of the country's natural resources, building social, economic and political organization and pursuing national development goals with conviction and a deep sense of nationalism.

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