



ISSUES AND TRENDS FOR DEVELOPING HUMAN RESOURCES IN TERTIARY BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR YOUTH EMPOWERMENT AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This paper observes that Nigeria's higher educational institutions have fallen short of expectations their products (graduates) lack the skills required by the labour market and this trend results in mass graduate unemployment, since they would have assisted them to be self-reliant. The ever-increasing pace of technological changes in the fields of business and economy generally has rendered the teaching of business skills and the training of skilled manpower ever more challenging. The problem posed by this development is the search for graduates and competent business educators with the knowledge and skills needed by employers of labour in business offices, industry and public sector. The task of producing skilled human resources development for youth empowerment, productivity, and efficiency in society lies with skilled trainers and the quality of the training institutions. The implications of the development of a virile higher-level skilled work force for the economy are critically analysed and recommendations are made to relevant publics, especially the universities and its tutors.

Keywords: Human Resources, Business Education, Youth Empowerment and National Development.

Introduction

The rapid development of any nation depends largely on the caliber of its youths, since every sector of a nation's economy is managed by competent personnel who are mostly young people. The introduction of microelectronics, telecommunication equipment, internet and computers into modern offices calls for training and



development of competent youths who are equipped with the various skills needed by the market. One of the goals of Nigerian tertiary education is the acquisition of both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society (FRN, 2014). It is the statutory duty of the Nigerian higher education to groom the required human capital through relevant manpower training, abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge (Babalola, 2007). An outstanding human capital assumption is that after finishing formal tertiary education, graduates should be able to make a successful transition from these institutions of higher learning to become productive workers, self-reliant entrepreneurs, responsible parents, good citizens, selfless leaders, and live healthy lives. It is assumed, also that after graduation, young people can then develop additional skills through training and experience that could further enhance their opportunities, capabilities and second chances in life.

Despite the effort of the government to create about two million jobs per annum, most tertiary graduates stay far above the age of 34 years before entering their first job. Bello in Babalola (2007) reveals that unemployment incidence in Nigeria affects energetic youths within the ages of 20.24 and 25 years more than any other age groups in Nigeria. This implies that many youths with dynamic resources wonder around without being gainfully engaged. With this huge human capital waste, the question which this study will attempt to answer is do large numbers of university graduates go jobless for months or even years, while labour complain of lack of skilled workers; and how can universities assist in training skilled business graduates for the Nigerian economy? The answer to the above questions according to FME (2006) and other employers of labour are:

That there is a mismatch between teaching in the institutions of learning and the needs of the labour market.

It also shows that majority of students learn through lectures and academic textbooks and are academically sound but they have limited opportunities of acquiring practical experience by using machinery, equipment and practical techniques associated with the professions.

There is lack of qualified teachers to teach vocational, innovative, entrepreneurship and job skills.

Finally, there is lack of consultation with private sector which has led to teaching of outdated curriculum, outdated resources and outdated teaching methods.



The findings from Federal Ministry of Education confirm the earlier assertion by World Bank (2012) that the growing unemployment among recent graduates, especially at the tertiary level, stems in part, from the mismatch between educational output and requirements of the labour market. Skill mismatch is a major concern in Nigeria where tertiary education graduates acquire skills that are not demanded by the labour market.

Concept of Human Resources

The word human resources refers to people in work organization who are endowed with a range of abilities, talents, and attitudes; who also influence productivity, quality and profitability (Out, 2014). It includes all the people working in an organization. All activities of any enterprise are initiated and determined by the persons that make up that institution. Human resources, not capital constitute the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and cause national development. Succinctly put, no nation can develop above the intellectual ability of its citizens (Bel-Molokwu, 2015).

According to Mba (2016), the real wealth of a nation is in its people. It is the people who employ, promote, organize, lead, mobilize and decide which product and quality of services are to be delivered. Dessler (2014) was also of the same opinion when he maintained that it is the workforce and the company's inability to recruit and maintain good workforce that constitute the bottleneck for production.

Human resources differs from other resources the employer uses because individuals are endowed with varying levels of ability including aptitudes, skills and knowledge with personality traits, gender, role perception and differences in experience, and partly as a result of differences in motivation and commitment. Human resources also have the capacity to form groups and trade unions to defend or further their economic interest.

Human resources are those acquired and functional knowledge and skills which individuals can supply and gainfully utilize for purposes of achieving optimum productivity. Human resources consist of improving individuals functioning within a production system, making use of their knowledge and skills for purposes of improving development. The individual can perform such related tasks as design, construction, organization, quality control, administration and supervision, marketing, training and retraining, operation repair and services (Olaitan, Igbo, Ekong, Nwachukwu & Onyemaechi, 2010).



Human resources in an organization detects how efficient, successful and competitive such an organization should be. Supporting this opinion, Armstrong (2017) expressed that people and their collective skills, abilities and experiences coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interest of the employing organizations are now recognized as making a significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a major source of competitive advantage.

Aliyu (2016) defined human resources as the available manpower or labour force which an organization has at a given period and being used for the production of goods and services. Aliyu went on to explain that human resource in an academic understanding would encompass all the persons (both men and women) from the top to the bottom (highest to the lowest) hierarchy of an organization. According to him, these workers have skills, values, attitudes and experiences which are crucial for producing high quality standards.

Concept of Business Education

Business education programme is the aspect of vocational education programme that assists individuals to acquire skills, which they can apply to solve problems in business and office occupations (Ndinechi, 2011).

According to Osuala (2009), Business education is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts:

Office education being a vocational education programme for office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in office occupation.

General business being a programme of instruction to provide students with information and competencies which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business world. From the above definitions, we can see that everybody needs business education either for occupational purpose or for a general business use.

Business education involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories and process of business. Education at this stage occurs at several levels including secondary education and higher education with the greatest activity occurring in the latter. Business education typically prepares students for an occupation in business or a business-related field or a teaching career in academics (Dhaka, 2013). It is that aspect of vocational education that prepares skilled manpower that will be productive in a paid employment or in employment. In Business education attitudes, skills and knowledge learnt help the individual to be efficient and effective in his



work in accordance with the needs of the society at any point in time. Aliyu in Ojechi (2015) supports the above meaning of Business Education when he says that Business education is education for the acquisition and development of skills and competencies, attitudes, and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system. In like manner, Amor in Onwuachi (2013) affirms that Business Education is aimed at production of competent, skillful, dynamic and knowledgeable graduates that can work in the world of work or impart knowledge into others, and be able to handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. From the above, it can be seen that Business Education equips graduates with necessary skills they will utilize to become employers of labour instead of job seekers thereby enhancing and reinforcing quality in education.

Okwuanasor and Nwazor (2012), defined business education as a process of instructing a person what happens during business transacts in offices, banks, markets and anywhere money changes hands. It is also a type of education that helps someone to learn the facts, acquire the skills, develop abilities, solve problems and be able to have business-like attitudes useful for success in business situations. Obijole (2015) sees business education as a type of specialized education that is concerned with informing students about economic and business concepts and skills that might be of use in later life. He further stated that it helps a lot in solving national economic problems by matching workers to jobs, thus overcoming unemployment bottlenecks.

Objectives of Business Education at Tertiary Level

Business education at the tertiary level is much more specialized, for instance, while business graduates from a College of Education or faculty of education in a University are prepared as educators and/or trainers, business graduates from polytechnics and business/social science faculties of universities are groomed for positions in the public and private sectors. COOU (2017) outlined the objectives of Business Education at tertiary level as thus:

To assist the education sector by producing a committed and efficient breed of business education teachers for junior and senior sections of the Nigerian secondary schools.

To produce manpower endowed with analytical and critical knowledge of the major factors in contemporary business world to influence the development of a virile economy.

To provide a course of instruction and all necessary facilities and explosive for the pursuit and acquisition of learning and knowledge for services to humanity.



To provide adequate educational foundation for interested graduates to pursue higher degree in business education or other relevant areas in education.

Other objectives include:

To equip students for careers as professional secretaries, accountants, managers and business consultants.

To prepare students for employment in business and industrial establishments and cooperatives colleges, as well as in the various government/rural development schemes.

To provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of business and economic system of the nation so as to enable them participate actively as producers and consumers of goods and services.

To develop in students the basic awareness of the contribution which business and office employees make to the nation's economy.

To enable students have career consciousness and economic understanding of the free enterprise system.

To prepare students to be the entrepreneurs of tomorrow. That is equipping students to be job creators rather than job seekers on graduation.

As result of inadequate number of qualified teachers, not much of the above goals have been achieved. The teaching cadre according to Aleyideino (2000) is still riddled with a vast army of professionally unqualified staff, and severe shortages especially in some crucial subject areas have continued to plague our educational system. Business education is one of such subject areas. Very few federal and state universities offer business education in Nigeria in its full programmes. Also, the qualities of equipment and facility in the universities have both deteriorated and the existing ones are grossly inadequate for the large number of students admitted per programme.

Youth Empowerment

The BBC English Dictionary (2013) defines empowerment as “giving to the individual power to take decisions in matters relating to themselves”. Hornby (2009) sees empowerment as “to give someone the power or legal right to do something.” The term 'empowerment' according to Awojobe (2013) is a derivative from the word 'power', and from the lay man's point of view means to enable an individual or group of people to gain power. Bhasin (2014) sees empowerment not



as having power over others or to control more shares, but rather as power to fight, power to control one's greed and avarice, power to nurture, treat and care for others, power to fight for justice, ethics, morality, power to achieve inner growth leading to wisdom and compassion.

Youth empowerment according to Latino (2015), means to authorize someone to exercise power. Looking at the various definitions given by different authors, youth empowerment could be said to connote a process through which the growing individual between the ages of 18 to 35 years are provided with experiences that promote self-actualization, greater control over their individual and collective destinies and their ability to effectively contribute to the advancement of their unmediated and global communities over a period of time. It can be regarded as a dynamic process which enhances their ability to change structures and ideologies which make them feel marginalized. Youth empowerment in a nutshell therefore means providing an enabling empowerment to develop their true potentials so that they can contribute meaningfully to the development of the society in which they live. Generally, empowerment implies acquiring power or energizing an individual or an identified homogenous group through the concerted provision of appropriate experiences or process, to act in a pre-determined capacity and/or direction. It could also mean how individuals/communities engage in learning processes in which they create appropriate and shared knowledge, tools and techniques in order to change and improve the quality of their own lives and societies. Through empowerment, individuals not only manage and adapt to change but also contribute to or generate changes in their lives and environments.

Office Technologies and Youth Empowerment

Office technologies are those machines and equipments used in carrying out office functions. These include computers, communication gadgets and word processors. Technological advancement in business education refers to the improvements in office machines and in the methods of their use and application in business, commerce and industry in order to increase productivity and facilitate effective management.

There are many telecommunication gadgets which are in use in offices today and which business educators and the students must be familiar with Agomuo (2005) opined that the ability to use modern communication and information technologies are some of the competencies needed in today's business environment. All the



business skills and competencies required for use in business offices, clerical occupation's and economic affairs especially in the areas of accounting, business management, data processing, office education, marketing and communications are now being performed through the use of computer.

The demands of the modern office today are highly technological. In other words, the acquisition of office technology skills and their use in offices and personal lives would definitely lead to self reliance and eventual development of the economy. Youths would be skilled in word processing, data processing, telecommunication, reprographic, micrographic, computer and communication competencies. These are core areas of office technology that would make the youthful graduate to be gainfully employed or self-employed thus becoming another employer of labour.

Tertiary Education Human Resources Development (HRD) and Youth Empowerment

The resources employed in the management process are both materials and human. Ohakwe (1998) in Usoro (2000) saw human resources as the people with different specializations, roles and capabilities who are an integral part of the organization. Human resources constitute all people resident in the nation or organization who are capable of contributing to the social and economic well being of that nation or organization. They may be direct employees, clients or customers, temporary employees or consultant, part-time persons or any person, with different types of other relationships to the organization. Physical/mental resources include: computer, audio video recording, infrastructural facilities stationeries, vehicles, television, sports equipment and models. However, resources in education can also include a piece of evidence, any piece of information, any idea and any contribution of these items which can help the young earner to develop his ability to learn, think, feel, discriminate and create, thereby being empowered. In organizational settings, human resources constitute the ultimate basis of a nation's wealth. This implies that youths are active catalysts who constitute wealth creators, material resources exploiters, builders of social, economic and political organizations and agents that stimulate national development; while capital and material resources are passive productive factors.

Efforts in developing human resources for higher-level manpower by institutions of learning come in levels. Colleges of Education award certificates for middle level training Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE). Some of these colleges award



degrees in affiliation with federal universities. Polytechnics and colleges of technology award OND Ordinary National Diploma and HND Higher National Diploma; while Nigerian universities award B.Sc., M.Sc., and Ph.D in business education and business management programmes. The acquisition of these qualifications is expected to equip a graduate with skills that should make him employable or self-employed thereby becoming an employer of labour to better the economy of the nation. Since business education programmes require the services of well-qualified personnel, technical experts of varying grades to operate the different equipment materials and facilities available, it is necessary that their preparation for the world of work should be carefully planned and executed by higher educational institutions to achieve the desired goals of youth empowerment.

Strategies Available for Human Resources Development and Youth Empowerment

Training and Retraining of Business Youths: As technology changes and advances rapidly, it necessitates corresponding rapid changes in human resources needed. The prevailing business condition at any time determines the number and type of workers needed. In recognition of these above facts, there is need for training and retraining of business youths to meet the challenges of newer technologies to man Nigeria's vehicle of industrialization.

Acquisition of Practical Skills: There is need for practical skills that would reduce unemployment among youths and raise the tone of social and economic structure in Higher Education. Human resources managers should strive to assure that youth empowerment employment programmes have a high stability. The effective and intensive development of human resources among youths will solve the menacing unemployment problems, intensive skills development is needed.

Early Introduction of Technology: There is need for early introduction of technological knowledge in the secondary and tertiary institutions, providing and maintaining technology too in these institutions. Developing educational programmes to emphasize critical thinking and knowledge discovery and link them to technical/vocational development and youths empowerment.

Mentoring: Mentoring is another strategy available for human resources development. It is a practice in which a more experienced youth takes on a



less experienced one for the purpose of guiding, supporting, advising and assisting him/her towards professional development or efficiency. The strategy prepares the business youth for the challenges of the new millennium. The less experienced youth who is attached to the mentor consults the later on all matters and is properly guided in his/her professional activities. The innovation of mentoring is a very useful human resources development strategy because the youth learns from his/her mentor all that he/she could have gone elsewhere to learn.

Need to Set up Training Department: Another strategy is the need to set up a department of training and development in every youths institution. This department will be responsible for identifying training needs of staff, designing and implementing training and development programmes which will raise the performance level of youths in general and of business youth in particular.

There is need for consultancy units to organize short-term courses to improve the skills and competencies of business youths in the area of computer studies, use of modern audio-visual equipment and general maintenance of the computer and other office equipment.

Finally, there is need to mount regular workshops, symposia, conferences, short courses and seminars, and attendance at these seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. be made compulsory for business youths, in order to update their knowledge and keep abreast with new devices, technological changes and innovations coming up in their area of specialization.

Implications

The implications of this study is that institutions of learning and youth trainers should watch changes and demands of the labour market so that they could rethink, repackage, reposition and re-engineer their missions, messages and methods in line with the changing requirements of the labour market and those of the local communities continue.

Nigerian institutions need to prepare a youth for life sustenance in all positive forms. Business educators should re-think their approaches and strategies of training, and possibly consider adopting the competency based mode of educational delivery. Here, training is centred on specific skills and learners are assisted to develop them. Also, the need arises for the equipment and facilities position of the training



institution to be revisited. Effective business training requires, inter alia, that machines and equipment be suitable to learners on a one on one basis to ensure sufficient practice and development of facility and speed.

Conclusion

The role of grooming middle-level, intermediate and higher-level business graduate by the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions is gradually becoming very challenging. Since there are fewer job openings than graduates, the major challenge facing the institutions is to equip the graduates with appropriate skills and competencies for self-employment, self-reliance and where possible, employment in the formal sector. It is the possession of these skills needed by the labour market that will enable them contribute maximally to national development of the Nigerian nation.

Recommendations

A department of training and development should be set up in every higher educational institution. This department will be responsible for identifying training needs of youths, designing and implementing training and development programmes which should ensure high performance level of youths on graduation.

Consultancy units in conjunction with computer departments as well as the centre for educational services in our institutions of higher learning should be charged with the responsibility of organizing short term courses to improve the skills and competency level of business youths in areas of computer studies and information communication technology (ICT).

Skills acquisition programmes should be organized for new youths in the field of business to train and empower them. This will enable them develop a positive attitude towards work and labour.

Modern office machines comparable to those used in modern business offices should be provided for business education departments in higher institutions. This will ensure that business youths are adequately equipped for the challenges of office automation. The student-equipment ratio must be 1:1.

Business educators should be encouraged to register their membership in professional associations such as Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN), Nigerian Technical and Vocational Instruction Department



(NTVID), and the Nigerian Association for Educational Administration and Planning (NADAP). Professional Associations will provide them with the medium for interaction with professional colleagues as well as exchange of ideas and the cultivation of professional ethics. Nigeria youths need to be given adequate awareness on soft loans for entrepreneurship development activities. This is to encourage self-reliance and self-employment on graduation from the formal institutions of learning.

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