EVALUATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: CHALLENGES AND CHANCES

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Abstract  
The Nigerian educational system in general and the Business Education Programme in particular require realistic evaluation system that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. This will go a long way in showcasing the correlation between skills and competency displayed by graduates of business education and the certificate they claim to parade looking for white-collar jobs in the world of competition. Hence, a valid evaluation system should form the basis and true worth of educational outcomes upon which sensitive and viable decisions can be made. Therefore, business education graduates should as a matter of urgent importance be able to put to practice the skills professed by their certificates. Consequent upon this, the major challenge is that scholars in the area of business education are still in serious need of an acceptable technique, procedure and means of measurement for high quality business education graduates that should turn things around in the world of business education. However, the paper explains evaluation, as it relates to business education, the purpose of evaluation, areas requiring evaluation in business education, types of evaluation, techniques of evaluation, salient principles of evaluation of business education programme, criteria for evaluation, obstacles to effective evaluation, challenges of business education in Nigeria, and chances of business education in Nigeria. It further recommended among others that evaluation should be based on the behavioural outcome or goal of the programme and should be consistent.  


Introduction  
The Business Education programme as a matter of urgency requires a positive and effective evaluation that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. Most schools in Nigeria adopt evaluation instruments like the test, assignment, term paper, projects, research report, giving practical work, and examination to evaluate or measure the performance of their students. However, the test, and examination methods are common methods used. According to Okoro (1994) the term evaluation is seen as a process of passing judgment on the adequacy of the scores or marks obtained through measurement. It is the process of determining how much knowledge or attribute a student has. To Obi
(2005) in Olowodun (2010) evaluation is the process of determining the changes in the students’ behaviour and appraising them against the values represented in the objectives to find how far the objectives of education are being achieved.

In his view however, Aliyu (2001) posited that people evaluate students’ progress in terms of their abilities to take dictation, to analyze and record correct book keeping transactions to prepare and present good sales demonstration, and to reveal their understanding of the essentials of contract. Therefore, evaluation involves value judgement on a subject matter based on the learning outcome. It is essentially the provision of information, idea or remark for the sake of facilitating decision making at various stages of curriculum development.

On their parts, Brueckner and Burton (1955) opined that, evaluation is the process of making value judgements on the basis of pertinent information that can be gathered about any significant aspect of the educational programme. Evaluation is a process or cluster of processes enacted to provide data so that decision can be made as to whether something should be accepted or changed, modified or eliminated (Olowodun, 2010).

According to Chiaka (2005), teaching can never be completed without evaluation because evaluation would go a long way to help the teacher to find out how well the instructional objectives have been achieved. Evaluation is concomitant with learning in the mastery formula (Saylor, Alexander and Lewis, 2003) in Chiaka (2005). It provides the basis for re-teaching in the effort to develop mastery in teaching. It is a conceived effort in determining the connivance between performance and objectives. This is why in evaluating the progress of business education students, the teacher’s ultimate goal is to develop in his students the ability to evaluate their progress. Hence, the burden of evaluation is expected to move gradually from the teacher to the students.

Evaluation involves valid judgement about the strengths and weaknesses of the students, and which ends in decisions about the needed changes and improvements in curriculum, teaching and guidance (Ekaira, 2003). Evaluation being a complex process begins with the formulation of objectives, owing to the fact that before a teacher sets out to teach, he has the goal in mind, he can only say that the goal has been achieved or partially achieved or not achieved through evaluation of the learners.

**Business Education**

Business Education holds a lot of promise for the recent spate of privatization of government parastatals and establishment under the past government of President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan as it seeks to inject the principles and strategies of business management to these establishments for greater efficiency on profitable results. According to Njoku (2006), Business Education is an educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills. Therefore, Business Education is the preparation of an individual for meaningful living (Chiaka, 2005).
Business Education as a programme of instruction consists of two parts as follows:
1. **Office Education:** This is a vocational programme, an office career programme through initial refreshers and upgrading education.
2. **General Business Education:** A programme meant to provide students with information needed by all in managing personal business affairs and using the services of the business (Osuala, 2004).

Therefore, Business Education promotes learner with an autonomy and access to the world of business concepts and ideas. Autonomy here, is the capacity for detachment, critical reflection, decision making and independent action. It presupposes, but also means that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning.

Business Education is saddled with a lot of objectives among others (Aliyu, 2006):
- To develop a matured understanding of the general nature of business.
- To provide the needed background for teaching in business subjects.
- To provide training for leadership.
- To provide training in specialized phases of business activity.
- To lay a cultural and ethical foundation for the development of the fore-going objectives.

However, on his part, Igboke (2005) noted that business education at all levels enables the recipients to:
1. Acquire skills and knowledge.
2. Develop basic skills for personal use in the future.
3. Relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development.
4. Develop basic skills for office occupation.
5. Prepare students for further training in business studies.
6. Provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training.

**Purpose of Evaluation**

Evaluation in business education is set out to achieve numerous goals in line with the policy programme of the federal government of Nigeria. The general purpose of evaluation is to be able to make value judgment on the adequacy or otherwise of a business education programme. It facilitates policy decision making on every sphere of the business education curriculum. It also helps to shape, maintain, extend, and improve existing business education programmes.

According to Okoro (1994), the purpose of evaluation in business education is to:
1. Determine whether students understand what they are being taught.
ii. Provide feedback to students on how well they are doing.
iii. Enable the teacher know students who need special attention.
iv. Enable the teacher to provide education and vocational guidance to students.
v. Supply information needed in programme evaluation and curriculum development.
vi. Assist the effectiveness of the teacher.
vii. Determine when students have the necessary knowledge and skills to graduate from the programme or enter the work force.

To Chiaka (2005), evaluation is conducted for the following variously reasons:
i. Evaluation seeks to appraise what students have learnt.
ii. Evaluation influences the methods of study employed by students.
iii. It provides students with opportunities to express themselves.
iv. It provides a basis for the location of errors during the teaching/learning process and corrects them.
v. It provides the basis for marks and reports of progress.
vi. It motivates the students to study especially when they are informed of their progress.

Areas Requiring Evaluation in Business Education

The following are some of the areas requiring evaluation in Business Education:
i. The students’ learning outcome.
ii. The physical facilities and teaching equipment.
iii. The efficiency of the programme of instruction.
iv. The business education publications and professional literature.
v. The availability and effectiveness of instructional aide in the field of business education.
vi. Library facilities of business education department.
vii. Quality, quantity and effectiveness of teachers.
viii. Behaviour and attitude of the learners in business education.

Types of Evaluation

The concept evaluation can be divided into three major areas as follows:

1. **Formative Evaluation:** This type of evaluation occurs in the early stages of the teaching/learning process. It may be made between the beginning of the course/programme. It helps the teacher to assess the progress made, and therefore, helps in developing and modifying the objective, course content, and teaching methods of the programme. The feedback information from such evaluation is used as an input to improve the programme further between its formal adoption by the teacher in evaluating the learner.
2. **Summative Evaluation:** This type of evaluation is made at the end of the training or a teaching programme. The students performance, the quality of teachers, the processes, and strategies used by the teacher are evaluated to give the final verdict as to the usefulness of the programme. This takes the form of quizzes, tests, term paper, report, personal observation of students, class contributions and annual examinations.

3. **Ultimate Evaluation:** This evaluation takes place after the student has completed his/her course programme, passes the prescribed examinations and actually starts work in the position he/she was trained. Here, if the person performs well in the place of employment/career, his/her educational process will be said to be successful.

### Techniques of Evaluation

The following are the three major techniques of evaluation:

1. **The Evaluation of the Educational System:** This is achieved by studying its product, that is the students.
2. **Accepted Standards:** This is achieved appraising the educational establishments as they are measured against predetermined standards.
3. **Evaluating Organizational or Behavioural Outcomes:** This is carried out in terms of goals which have been established. This is by far the most meaningful in evaluating business education programme.

### Principles of Evaluation

Business education as a programme has common segments used in evaluating students, teachers, or a single department. In evaluating the different outcomes in business education, the following principles should hold dear:

1. Evaluation should include economic factors as well as educational objectives. They should be one of the prime factors considered in determining whether a programme is a success or a failure.
2. Evaluation should include appraisal of both student outcomes and the educational establishment like the accreditation of educational programmes.
3. It should be made in terms of the objectives of the programme.
4. Evaluation should be conducted on the basis of what should have been accomplished as well as what has been accomplished.
5. It should be integrated and interpreted into a portrait. This means that evaluation is more than gathering of data for information. It includes the analysis of the data and value judgments of the data collected.
6. Evaluation has to be a continuous process. It should be conceived as a continuous cycle of related activities/operations.
7. Evaluation should be targeted at areas of interest word to achieve stated objectives.
Criteria for Evaluation

The following evaluation criteria have been recommended (Nanassy, 1979):

i. Every programme of business education should have a statement of purpose (objective).

ii. Business education should make certain that the graduates have at least one occupational skill sufficient to obtain an initial job.

iii. Business occupational training should be treated as an integral phase of the entire learning programme.

iv. The larger responsibilities of business education must not be overshadowed by training in skills. That skill training is important since it is the means by which prospective workers get their initial position.

v. Business education should develop an ability in students to adapt themselves to occupational changes.

vi. Business education should focus the attention of students on the social values of their field of study.

vii. Business education training should be based on realization of the need for developing a more adequate social and economic order.

Obstacles to Effective Evaluation

The obstacles militating against a better understanding of an effective evaluation exercise cannot be over emphasized. However, in order to develop the proper evaluation attitude, it might be well to explain some of the obstacles of business which confront ineffective evaluation such as:

1. **Threatened Security:** This obstacle is due to lack of understanding and not having been involved in the planning for evaluation. Here too educators feel insecure as they think that they may lose their job. Some of the educators feel that evaluation might make them look bad or expose them to unfavourable circumstances.

2. **Uncertainty:** This obstacle is a problem to most educators whose programme is being evaluated since they are not involved in the planning of evaluation and do not understand exactly what is being evaluated.

3. **Tradition:** This plays a very big role in the way educators function on the jobs and in how they view evaluation. People here resort to traditional approval to evaluation instead of adopting new challenges. This can be done away with by carefully examining business education programme that may disclose many needs that are no longer met using the old traditional approach.

4. **Sensitivity to Criticism:** Business educators are in most cases disturbed because individuals question their programme. Hence, they need to accept constructive
criticism and not be overly sensitive or defensive in their response to such criticisms.

5. **Displacement of Priority:** Most planners often times misplace priority while trying to evaluate the interest and objective of the various stakeholders.

### Challenges in Business Education Evaluation

It is important to articulate that the challenges facing evaluation in business education are diverse. To Ekaira (2003), they include the following:

(i). **Course Work:** Most teachers test their students whether they are taught or not, and in some of the courses at times, the score on a test is used severally in the subsequent test because of the demand on the teacher by the school management. However, the business education teacher and the school management should consider the fact that feedback from evaluation has future implication, hence should not assess for the sake of assessment (Raina and Joseph 2004).

(ii). **Large Class:** This has to do with a class comparatively big in size, number or quantity than usual or expected. In most higher institutions in Nigeria, the population of business education students in the class is too much for effective teaching and evaluation to take place.

(iii). **Incomparability of Standard:** Incomparability is something that is unequalled in quality. It has to do with excellence, outstanding or unique as to have no equal.

(iv). **Aptitude Testing:** The common practice in business education evaluation that is against the principle and practice of education is the placement of students which is very challenging for example, some students when having science background would go for business education courses at tertiary level simply because they could not get admitted into science based course. Such placement is done on the basis of their achievement and not on their aptitude.

However, below are other common challenges of evaluation in business education:

- **Irregular Supply of Electricity:** Most business education equipment requires electricity supply to operate during the conduct and assessment of tests and assessments. Its absence negatively affects the administration of examination.

- **How to make Better Use of ICT:** How to make better use of information technology in education process is a major challenge in evaluation. Hence, the equipment and facilities must be made available in our schools.

- **Dearth of Qualified and Dedicated Business Educators:** There are no enough qualified and sufficient number of dedicated business education teachers needed to teach the content of business education curriculum.

- **Financial Challenge:** Here, money is needed for the procurement of required materials and services. Implementation has failed due to insufficient funds.
Inadequate Infrastructural Materials/Equipment: This leaves the students ignorant in the use of the modern facilities in teaching and learning. The teaching of business education in the higher institutions is devoid of adequate and functional facilities and instructional materials such as model offices, classrooms, textbooks, typewriters, shorthand laboratories, ICT facilities especially computers, and where they exist. The educational system in Nigeria has witnessed a tremendous expansion within the last two decades in the midst of limited resources and dilapidated educational facilities (Oyeniyi, 2010).

Inadequate Funding: It has been pointed out by Okeke and Eze (2010) that sufficient fund has not been channeled to vocational education which is a major problem plaguing the system. Poor funding causes acute shortage of computer system, typewriters, furniture and sizable laboratories for business education programme to become effective and efficient (Ugaigbe, 2003). Adequate funding of business education should be a priority of government and stakeholders (Chukwurah, 2011).

Also, Owoeye and Yara (2011) submitted that the smooth running of an educational system depends largely on the availability and adequacy of facilities and equipment in place. Once they are lacking students are not exposed to the use of machines and basic hand tools found in the work places.

Curriculum Challenge: There is deficiency in the curriculum content of business education. However, there should be reasonable degree of correlation between the curriculum in use and knowledge and skills required by the employers.

Poor Public Impression and Apathy to Business Education: Olufunke (2003) observed that parents prefer their children to study courses like Engineering, Pharmacy, Medicine, Accountancy, etc. because they regard business education as a course for “Never do-wells” and drop outs who could not secure admission into other disciplines.

Technological Challenge: Oke (2003) posited that the greatest challenge that faces the practice of business is the progress and innovation offered by technological development since mid-1990s.

Incessant Strike Action: Frequent strikes leading to closure of tertiary institutions are rampant in Nigeria today, hence reducing the quality of business education graduates.

Inadequate/Poor Research: One of the greatest challenges of business education is the slow adaptation to researches (Ekpenyong and Nwabuisi, 2003). Some business educators do not have time for research either because they are lazy, pursing business activities, or have poor knowledge of research.
Chances of Business Education in Nigeria

In spite of the numerous challenges of business education in Nigeria, the profession has made a lot of progress within the limits of human and material resources available for its success. However, below are some ample opportunities which can be exploited and explored to widen the boundaries of business education.

(i) **Research Improvement:** Research efforts in the areas of infrastructural software packages which reflect the Nigerian background will have to be undertaken with professionals in the area of engineering and technology.

(ii) **Staff Improvement:** The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) posited that no education can rise above the level of its teachers. Therefore, the teachers’ improvement remains cardinal and pivotal in the success of business education programmes. To this end, every business teacher is expected to be acquainted with the present issues of technological advancement.

(iii) **Curriculum Improvement:** The current curriculum must take into cognizance the current demands of the society and work places as well as the contemporary trends of technology and globalization. Hence, the gap between theory and practice in the curriculum must be bridged.

(iv) **Facilities Improvement:** There is the need for a proper and strengthened synergy between the governments, schools, industries and other relevant stakeholders. Facilities and equipment are the pillars upon which any educational programme stands, hence the need for the provision of improved facilities.

(v) **Opportunity for Training:** Business education practitioners must show the willingness and be given every opportunity for training and retraining in modern methods of instruction and managing business in order to be relevant in the world of competition.

Conclusion

In the wake of evaluation in business education, the future of business education in Nigeria is considered promising and calls for government and other stakeholders to show commitment to the agenda. The conduct of evaluation in business education should be based on specific criteria that constitute the major factors which should be considered in conducting an educational evaluation.

Business educators therefore, should see evaluation as a continuous process which should be conducted on a regular basis because continuous evaluation provides basis for adjusting programmes to meet the manpower needs of the country. Hence, it provides the best means of quality control for our programmes.

If evaluation is properly addressed with positive approach, business educators will be in a better position to critically analyze and determine how effective education changes are to be handled. Finally, the process of evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of business education is a question of whether the programme would lead to...
the desired results and whether they are attained efficiently to fill the existing gaps to be bridged.

**Recommendations**

The following are recommendations that would go a long way in solving the challenges of evaluation in business education:

1. There should be a shift from examination to continuous assessment to curb alarming situation of examination misconducts in business education classes.
2. A test that is characterized by standard related to business education should be constructed by specialists in the evaluation of business students.
3. Business education experts must develop efficient strategy for the assessment and evaluation of students because students now have the freedom to assess education irrespective of time and geographical limitations.
4. Evaluation should be done with positive intention to ensure critical analysis of the new challenges facing the business teachers.
5. Evaluation should also be based on the behavioural outcome or objective of the programme.
6. The performance of the educator should be continuously monitored to keep them on their toes.
7. Feedback should follow evaluation and should be made available to the appropriate stakeholders for effective implementation and follow-up.
8. Evaluation should be very objective and transparent to avoid window dressing and favoritism in the award of grades.
9. The placement of business education students should be restricted to arts or commercial courses.

**References**


