



BUSINESS EDUCATORS' PERCEPTION ON GREEN SKILLS NEEDED IN BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM FOR CREATING A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY IN NIGERIA

Ebele, C. Okereke
*Dep. of Business & Entrep. Edu.,
Kwara State University, Malete*

Onokpaunu, Michel, O.
*Ph.D Candidate,
Department of Technology and Voc. Edu.,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
talk2michel231@yahoo.com*

&

Ikonomwan, Brown, A.
*Department of Technology and Vocational Education,
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.*

Abstract

The study examined business educators' perception on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. One research question and three hypotheses guided the study. A survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 122 business educators in tertiary institutions in Delta State. A validated 5-point scale questionnaire containing 12 items was used for data collection. Internal consistency of the instrument was determined by administering it to 20 business educators in Edo State and using Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research question and determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' means while t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that business educators perceived that waste management skills, wealth regeneration skills, climate change and ecological consultancy skills were very highly needed while water management skills, tourism management skills, energy distribution and recycling business skills among others were highly needed in business education curriculum for the creation of a sustainable society in Nigeria irrespective of their gender, institution type and age. The study concluded that business educators highly needed green skills in business education curriculum to produce students that will set innovative business firms and pursue self-employment ventures in the green economy to facilitate the creation of sustainable society in Nigeria. The study recommended among others that the National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should design a curriculum for green economy and skills in business education programmes in the nation's tertiary institutions in order to help promote sustainable society in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sustainable society, business education curriculum and green skills

Introduction

A sustainable society is a society that looks after the overall well being of human with capacities in place to prevent its environmental system from present and future destruction. According to Viederman (1993), a sustainable society is one that ensures that the health and vitality of human life and culture as well as nature's capital for present and future generations. Viederman posited that a sustainable society acts to stop activities that serve to destroy human life and culture and encourage activities that serve to conserve and restore nature capital from damaged and prevent future harm.

The Professional Practice for Sustainable Development (2006) described a sustainable society as one where:

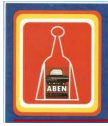


- a) Any materials extracted from the earth should not exceed the environment's capacity to disperse, absorb, recycle or otherwise neutralise their harmful effects to humans and the environment
- b) Synthetic substances in their manufacture and use should not exceed the environment's capacity to disperse, absorb, recycle or otherwise neutralise their harmful effects to humans or the environment
- c) The biological diversity and productivity of ecosystems should not be endangered
- d) A healthy economy should be maintained, which accurately represents the value of natural, human, social and manufactured capital
- e) Individual human skills, knowledge and health should be developed and deployed to optimum effect
- f) Social progress and justice should recognize the needs of everyone in ensuring that there is equity for future generations
- g) Structures and institutions should promote stewardship of natural resources and the development of people

The goal of sustainable development has been generally described as to achieve a sustainable society. This means a society in which economy and population size are managed in such a way that they do not do irreparable harm to the environment by overloading the planet's ability to absorb waste and pollution, replenish its resources, and sustain human and other forms of life over a specified period of time (Bodt, 2007). In order to establish a sustainable society, the place of business education is essential, because it is an educational programme through which students will learn and grasp the principles of sustainability in the promotion of cleaner production and consumption of goods and services.

Business education programme is a major component of vocational and technical education that provides students' with education for and about business. Jubril (2010) defined business education as a specialized area of vocational education that provides educational training, skills, development, attitudes and adjustment towards business orientation and academic challenges. It is an important part of the general education which emphasizes on skills and competency acquisition (Okoli, 2013). Extensively, business education is that aspect of general education that prepares students for employment and advancement in a broad range of office occupations, accounting professions, marketing occupation, teaching profession and entrepreneurship venture (Onokpaunu, 2016).

According to Igboke (2005), the objectives of business education programmes at all levels of education enables recipients to develop basic skills for personal use in the future; acquire basic knowledge and skills of business education; relate the knowledge and skills acquired to national development; develop basic skills in office occupation; prepare students for further training and provide orientation and basic skills with which to start a life of work for those who may not undergo further training. In order to make



business education remain relevant as always in the business world, its curriculum must not only recognized but also integrate trending workplace practices.

The objectives of business education can be deduced from its curriculum. Curriculum is concerned with the why, what and how of instruction (Akudolu, 2010). Curriculum is an idea that has its root in the Latin word *curere* which means race-course or probably more correctly to run a course. Curriculum is the reconstruction of knowledge and experience, systematically developed under the auspice of the school or relevant agencies which would enable the learner to have better mastery of learning experiences for the learners and society's wellbeing (Moronkola, Akinsola & Abe, 2000). Curriculum can be viewed as the overall learning experience and academic affairs shared between the teacher and students in educational institutions. Orji in Megbo and Saka (2015) defined curriculum as both planned and unplanned activities taking place within the school environment with the intention of achieving school's aims and objectives; such activities may include a host of courses, physical activities, guidance, specific instruction, testing and evaluation in specific field.

It is imperative to mention that an educational curriculum is more than a set of courses and subjects because it must positively transformed the student's life after schooling. Hence, Ajayi in Megbo and Saka (2015) defined curriculum as a structured series of learning outcomes. Relatively, business education curriculum is designed to build in the learner different skills and knowledge that would enable an individual's earn living by becoming an employee, entrepreneur, employer and self employed (Okoro, 2013). Okoro explained that the extent to which a curriculum assists students' to enter and succeed in the business world-of-work is what matters most. A worthwhile business education curriculum should be dynamic and relevant, possessing the following characteristics as outlined by Isyaku in Okoro (2013:115) such as;

- a) Business education courses should provide for students development of knowledge, manipulation competencies, attitudes and values which should be applied in real work setting.
- b) Business education courses should be based on societal needs, hence, curriculum oriented towards both the students and the support the curriculum should derive from employment opportunities that exists to the graduates
- c) A business education curriculum must be responsive to technological changes in the society. New developments in the area should be incorporated into the curriculum so that graduates can be better equipped to compete for jobs
- d) Equipment, facilities, supplies and instructional resources must be obtained for effective implementation of the curriculum
- e) The ultimate success of a business education curriculum issues that must be addressed students academic achievement but through the results of that achievement the result that take the form of performance in the workplace.

The transformation of business education curriculum into reality in all levels of education is under the expertise of business educators. According to Osuala (2004), a



business educator is any person who plays a critical role in making business education viable and visible in the community, plays the critical role of agent of change in business education, delivers high quality instruction in business education and is able to identify problems facing teaching and learning in the field as well as speculate solutions to such problems. The instructional responsibilities of business educators in the 21st century business world cannot be over emphasized because they are expected not only to expose students to current workplace practices but also help them acquire skills to create business enterprises that are essential to the creation of a sustainable society. The traditional design of business education programmes needs to be revamped to expose its recipients to the potentials of green jobs.

Green jobs are jobs that maintain the eco-systems, minimize environmental pollution and resources and conserve natural energies to a sustainable level healthy for human existence. The International Labour Organization (2008) defined green jobs as work in agricultural, manufacturing, research and development, administrative, and service activities that contribute substantially to preserving or restoring environmental quality. The International Labour Organization explained that the jobs are green when they contribute to reduce negative environmental impact, ultimately leading to companies and economies environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. It is, therefore, the responsibility of business educators to see that students acquire green skills to seize the opportunities available in the green economy by tapping into the business of low-carbon technologies, bio-fuels industry, renewable energy industry and waste management ventures.

According to Obi (2005), skill is the ability to use one's knowledge effectively and readily in performing an act, or habit in doing a particular thing completely without much supervision. Obi further stated that a person is said to have acquired a skill when he can finish a given piece of work at a given time with minimum errors. In their view, Paul, Uduonyi and Ini-Uwem (2016) defined skill as a talent or ability that comes from training or practice. In context of sustainability, the Board of Vocational Education and Training (2007) defined skills as the economic tools used to set up green jobs. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (2012) defined green skills as the knowledge, abilities, values and attitudes needed to live in, develop and support a sustainable and resource-efficient society.

Green jobs are found in many sectors of the economy from energy supply to recycling, and from agriculture to transportation. However, the acquisition of green skills stands to better business education graduates with self-employment opportunities to develop and establish green-oriented businesses. The green skills needed in business education curriculum for the establishment of green-oriented businesses towards creating a sustainable society in Nigeria have not been empirically ascertained. It is against this backdrop, this study was designed to determine the perception of business educators on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria.



Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine the perception of business educators on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to ascertain the:

1. Perception of business educators on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Research Question

The following research question guided the study:

1. What is the perception of business educators on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female business educators regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in universities and colleges of education regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria
3. Age of respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Method

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. A population of 122 business educators in Delta State was used for the study without sampling. A five point scale questionnaire was used for data collection. It contained 12 questionnaire items based on the research question raised for the study. A pilot test was conducted to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering it to 20 business educators in Edo State who were not part of the study and the data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha to obtain reliability coefficient of 0.84. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research question while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Mean ratings between 0.50 - 1.49 was regarded as very rarely needed, 1.50 - 2.49 was regarded as rarely needed, 2.50 - 3.49 was regarded as slightly needed, 3.50 - 4.49 was regarded as highly needed and mean ratings between 4.50 – 5.00 was regarded as very highly needed. For the hypotheses, any item with t-calculated value greater than critical value was rejected, otherwise the hypothesis of no significant difference was accepted.

Results

The result of the study are presented and analyzed in the following tables.

Research Question 1

What is the perception of business educators on green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria?

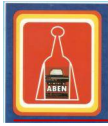


Table 1:

Respondents' mean ratings on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria (N=122)

S/N	Green skills needed for sustainable society	\bar{X}	SD	REMARKS
1.	Waste management skills	4.87	0.87	Very highly needed
2.	Climate change consultancy skills	4.64	0.76	Very highly needed
3.	Water management skills	3.99	0.71	Highly needed
4.	Environmental consultancy skills	3.62	0.80	Highly needed
5.	Recycling business skills	4.20	0.97	Highly needed
6.	Cleaner production skills	3.77	0.86	Highly needed
7.	Cleaner consumption skills	4.11	0.91	Highly needed
8.	Ecological consultancy skills	4.66	0.79	Very highly needed
9.	Wealth regeneration skills	4.74	0.83	Very highly needed
10.	Energy generation skills	4.03	0.90	Highly needed
11.	Tourism management skills	3.89	0.81	Highly needed
12.	Energy distribution skills	3.94	0.78	Highly needed
Grand Mean		4.21		Highly needed

Data in Table 1 reveal that four out of the 15 items had mean ratings ranging from 4.64 to 4.87 were very highly needed while the rest with mean ratings ranging from 3.62 to 4.20 were highly needed. The grand mean of 4.21 indicates that respondents perceived that green skills are highly needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. The standard deviations for all the items are within the same range which shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their opinions.

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the mean responses of the male and female business educators regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Table 2:

t-test analysis of male and female respondents perception on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Gender	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	68	3.87	0.82	0.05	120	1.93	1.96	Not significant
Female	54	3.60	0.75					

The result in Table 2 shows that male business educators had a mean of 3.87 and a standard deviation of 0.82 while female respondents had mean response of 3.60 and a standard deviation of 0.75. The calculated t-value of 1.93 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance and 120 degree of freedom. This means that male and female respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the green skills



needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of respondents in universities and colleges of education regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Table 3:
t-test analysis of business educators perception on the green skills needed in business education curriculum based on institutional type

Institution type	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
University	94	0.63		0.05	120	1.23	1.96	Not significant
Colleges of Education	113	3.80	0.79					

The result presented in Table 3 shows that the calculated t – value of 1.23 is less than the critical t – value of 1.96 ($1.23 < 1.96$) at 0.05 level of significance and 120 degree of freedom. This means that respondents from university and colleges of education did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria and the null hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

Age of respondents do not differ significantly in their mean ratings regarding the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Table 4:
t-test analysis of age of respondents on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria

Age	N	\bar{X}	SD	α	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
30 to 45 years	35	4.23	0.78	0.05	120	1.60	1.96	Not Significant
46 to 60 years	87	3.99	0.64					

The result presented in Table 4 shows that the calculated t – value of 1.60 is less than the critical t – value of 1.96 ($1.60 < 1.96$) at 0.05 level of significance and 120 degree of freedom. This means that age of respondents did not differ significantly in their mean ratings on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria and the null hypothesis is accepted.



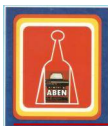
Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that business educators perceived that green skills are highly needed for the creation of a sustainable society in Nigeria. The integration of green skills into business education curriculum will propel students to set up innovative greener industries. This finding is in consonance with the report of the World Bank (2012) that green skills are crucial for job creation and facilitates the creation of a low-carbon economy. Findings of the study revealed that business educators perceived that waste management and wealth regeneration skills, climate change and ecological consultancy skills were very highly needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. The finding of the study is in line with the assertion of Oborah (2006) that employment opportunities for graduates of business education include consultancy and entrepreneurial employment. The acquisition of these skills will enable graduates of business education function effectively in the current highly competitive environment and strong market forces to turn business problems into business opportunities (Ezenwafor & Olaniyi, 2017).

Furthermore, the study indicate that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of business educators irrespective of their gender, institution type and age on the green skills needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. Supporting this, Umemezia (2003) asserted that business education produces manpower that possess the required knowledge, skills and attitude for harnessing green resources demanded by the society for satisfaction of their wants and needs. This implies that business educators recognized the importance of green skills in today's business environment. Findings of the study revealed that business educators perceived that water and tourism management skills as well energy distribution and recycling business skills among others were highly needed in business education curriculum for creating a sustainable society in Nigeria. This shows that business educations irrespective of their gender, age and institutional type want their students to move from office occupation to green economy. This finding is in agreement with the report of Ugwuogo (2013) that entrepreneurship, ICT and green skills embedded in business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages the attainment of sustainable development.

Conclusion

The development of green skills presents a major opportunity to start new businesses and develop new markets in the green economy. Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that business educators highly needed green skills in business education curriculum to produce students that will set innovative business firms and pursue self-employment ventures in the green economy to facilitate the creation of sustainable society in Nigeria.

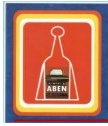


Recommendations

- Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made;
1. Governments and other stakeholders should strengthen the existing business education programme and curriculum developers should integrate environmental and green education courses to enable business education students think greener society.
 2. The National Universities Commission (NUC), National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) and National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) should design a curriculum for green economy and skills in business education programmes in the nation's tertiary institutions in order to help promote sustainable society in Nigeria.

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