



## BUSINESS TEACHER EDUCATION: ROLES, ISSUES, AND CHALLENGES FOR ENHANCING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

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### **Abstract**

*Many of the challenges facing humankind, such as climate change, water scarcity, inequality, hunger, poverty, lack of good health are critical this time due to nation's population growth and global competition. As a result, organizations, societies and individuals are looking for a way out of environmental, social and economic problems. Sustainable development thus emphasized on how to protect ones environment, securing economic development, social equity and justice. A skill oriented programme such as business teacher education programme can be relevant to promote sustainable development goals and targets. This paper highlighted current issues and challenges in business teacher education that could help educators and students to become bold leaders and innovative thinkers now and in the future. Roles of business education in enhancing sustainable development goals, and investing in the future of business, individuals and societies at large were discussed. Conclusions were drawn based on these and the paper proffered some recommendations that potentials of Business Teacher Education, if accorded proper status by our government and other stakeholders, can help to promote these targets of sustainable development towards 2030 agenda. Improvement also should be made on the quality of business teacher education programme delivered by our tertiary institutions in order to produce high quality graduates into the current global market.*

**Keywords:** *Business Teacher Education, Sustainable Development, Skilled Oriented Programme*

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### **Introduction**

Business education covers a wide range of spectrum of economic life activities in any society, and also refers to the pedagogical and desirable business competencies necessary for self-employment or being employed with a view to make the recipient self-reliant (Amesi, 2010). Business education includes education for an office



occupation, distribution and marketing occupation, accounting, business teaching, Office Technology and Management, business administration and economic understanding. Its relevance was not only to personal life but also to national economic growth and sustainable development. Several definitions of business education exist, Amesi and Nnadi, (2015) stressed that it encompasses knowledge, attitudes and skills needed by all citizens in order to effectively manage their personal business and economic system and advancement in a broad range of business careers. In this regard, it is necessary to state that business education means education for business or training skills, which are required in business offices and clerical occupation. Olaleye (2012) opined that business education has been set aside as a programme for sustainable development and growth due to its contributions to the nations.

### **Origin and Concept of Sustainability Development**

The term 'sustainable development' first appeared in an official document signed by thirty-three African countries in 1969, under the auspices of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). In the same year, the Environmental Protection Agency was set up in the United States whose guidelines have had a huge impact on developing theories and practice in global environmental policies. The law that constituted the NEPA (the National Environmental Policy Act from 1969), defined sustainable development as: 'economic development that may have benefits for current and future generations without harming the planet's resources or biological organisms'. Sustainable development means the all-round development of an individual. According to International Institute for Sustainable Development (2018), sustainability is development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, in a bid to find solutions to globalization and population growth problems. There is a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which are a global agenda, adopted by countries since 2015, with a vision of ending poverty, protecting the planet and ensuring that all people enjoy peace and prosperity. Thomas (2019) opined that sustainability strategy is the integration of economic, environmental and social aims into business goals, activities and planning, with the aim of creating long-term value for the firm. Sustainability strategies are formulated to protect enhances and sustains the natural resources to meet the future needs. The report produced by a commission led by Doctor Gro Harlem Brundtland uses the term 'sustainable development' as we



understand it today for the first time. In reality, it came about due to the overriding need to study and identify the impact human activity has on the environment, something completely necessary and which does date back to some years earlier. Thomas Malthus published his 'An Essay on the Principle of Population' where he set out his famous 'theory of population'. This theory states that the population tends to grow quicker than resources. This is true today in an overpopulated world where resources are exploited ever further. The planet has no time to regenerate.

### **Strategic Plans of Sustainability Development**

The 17 global strategic plans or goals of sustainability development were as listed from the United Nations DESA Knowledge Platform (2018) websites as follows:

1. No Poverty: To end poverty in all its form everywhere
2. Zero Hunger: To end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Good Health and Well-Being: To ensure good health, lives and promote Well-being for all at all ages
4. Quality Education: To Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Gender Equality: To achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Clean Water and Sanitations: To ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Avoidable and clean energy: To ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: To Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: To Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
10. Reduce Inequality: Reducing Inequality within and among Countries
11. Sustainable Cities and communities: To make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Responsible Consumption and Production: To ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns



13. Climate Action: To take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
14. Life Below water: To conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Life on Land: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
16. Peace, Justice and strong Institutions: To promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
17. Partnership for the goals: To strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, and capacity building, trade, systemic issues, multi-stake holders' partnership, data, monitoring and accountability.

The Chairman of ACCIONA Social Networks (ASN) (2019), one of the largest business networks based in Europe summarized above 17 goals to read the following. That these goals are interrelated and that often the key to one's success will involve the issues most frequently linked to another. This writer linked these goals as it is related to business education programme for sustainability:

1. Eradicate poverty and hunger, guaranteeing a healthy life: One of the most crucial challenges facing humanity in all nations around the world is hunger and poverty. Global goals from the United Nations calls to address this great challenge, to ensure everybody enjoys equals opportunities to live a better life without compromising our planet (ASN, 2019). It has been the responsibility of business teacher education to fix this character and culture of sustainable development into the learners. Technology, accounting, management and marketable skills and competencies were being imparted to make them relevant in the society, become owners of businesses and to be employable all to live a better lives.
2. Universalize access to basic services such as water, sanitation and sustainable energy: Business education is involved in creation of societal value by reducing externalities of production (Thomas, 2019). Taught conservative skill, waste management and management of human, material resources skills, Communication skill, Collaborative learning skill. A good



- business educator would learn how to conserve and keep his/her environment clean, though the improved and better skills of acquiring these can be integrated from sustainability development targets.
3. Support the generation of development opportunities through inclusive education and decent work: Business education has been education for business and about business. Business education programme has been promoting job creation, local culture and products through entrepreneurship skill.
  4. Foster innovation and resilient infrastructure, creating communities and cities able to produce and consume sustainably: Business education teaches and encourages how to produce raw materials and maximize energy efficiency using fewer resources and generate lesser waste through entrepreneurship courses (Thomas, 2019).
  5. Reduce inequality in the world, especially that concerning gender: The nature and principle of business education programme accommodates special and differential treatment. Business education ensures equal opportunity to reduce inequalities outcome. They promote social, economic and political inclusion of all irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, origin or ethnicity.
  6. Care for the environment combating climate change and protecting the oceans and land ecosystems: Business education has been designed and developed to identify with entrepreneurship, innovation and leadership to allow creativity in everything it represents.
  7. Promote collaboration between different social agents to create an environment of peace and sustainable development: Business education programme teaches significantly how to reduce all forms of violence and related death so as to progress in life-long business opportunities. That is why they teach customers orientation and that customers are always right. Business education develops and encourages effective, accountable and transparent skills at all levels of education.

### **Issues in Business Teacher Education in Nigeria**

According to oxford Advanced Learners dictionary, issues are discussed topics that are neither here nor there, topics that were seriously argued upon and each discussant



will defend his/her opinion. There are a lot of issues relating to business teacher education programme in Nigeria among which are:

- a) There is the issue of phasing out shorthand in Business Education Courses. Business education has now undergone rapid transformation, moving from working in their age-old traditional role of taking notes in shorthand and transcribing on manual typewriter to a new and multiple roles of using electronic, computer and recording devices. As a result, it has been an issue in business education, whether it is appropriate to phase out shorthand completely or to make it an elective course of study for learners. The technological advancement had gone global. Backwardness in technology in Nigeria is responsible for the economic vicissitudes of the country. American Association of Secretaries (2014) and Norris (2008) opined that advancement in office technology and new management styles have brought about changes to the office environment. If business teacher education programme is to enhance sustainable development, students must be imparted with modern technology skills to allow them compete with other graduates in the market now and in the future to avoid unemployment for business educators. Linus (2018) wrote that, the UK Government has recognized four objectives for sustainable development which are, progress and equality, environmental protection, conservation of natural resources and stable growth. Having shorthand knowledge can help educators in keeping and maintaining secret diaries but should not be part of the core course in business education.
- b) Some higher Institutions in Nigeria now decided to operate teaching and learning of business education with no options. This field of study offers every individual an opportunity to develop those abilities, skills and understanding of the vocational opportunity available. Olabisi (2018) argued that importance of business education programme cannot be over-emphasized. She added that to meet the needs of the society, the National Policy on Education should de-emphasize our liberal education system for the utilitarian type of education. In recognition of this, Business Education programme was incorporated into our educational system right from the junior secondary school level for a gradual skill development and competency. The fact that business education covers a wide range of business activities such as office technology, marketing, accounting, economics and management demands areas of specialization to maximize its



objectives. Kamel (2019) argued that if business education or business schools cannot educate students to be employees of choice or self-employable with the desire to create, innovate, expose them with practical tools, connecting them with venture capitalists and with diversified background, there would be difficulty for their graduates competing in the market place.

- c) Of recent, it has also been an issue in business education that traditional typewriter should be discouraged in tertiary and higher Institutions and computers desktops or laptops should be used for teaching and learning. Business education is that form of education which emphasizes the development of occupational skills needed as preparation for work. Using old arcade machines for teaching current graduates will not help students. Our tertiary institutions must strive to be current to give graduates marketable skills. In an article published by the Environmental Professionals Networks (2014), business education should design new curriculum, shifting to sustainable way of delivering lectures to promote Sustainable development.
- d) Should Business Educators and Students participates in Business Education curriculum planning and development or be excluded. In Researcher's opinion is YES. This is because they know much about the actual particular areas to be included as learning experiences in diverse business studies subjects and curriculum principles, models and process. Orientation receives by learners should be beyond fundamental or elementary skills. It should rather cut across challenges facing humanities. Haski-Leventhal (2015) stressed on doing all things to promote sustainable development goals. He further said that SDGs is a big agenda that government alone cannot solve without businesses, enormous resources, power and knowledge assistance.

### **Challenges of Business Teacher Education**

Business teacher education challenges can be best addressed through integration of sustainable development strategies that cut across all disciplines. This is the only way we can change our unsustainable ways into more sustainable outcomes, in order to balance our economic, environment and social prosperity now and in the future.

- Lack of Qualified and Experienced manpower. Okon, Mattew, Bassey, and Ukut (2014) affirmed that inadequacy of skilled and experienced manpower



contributed to business education problems, most especially in the western region Nigeria Universities where it was of recent introduced. These and many more contributed to why they are using related Lecturers to teach business education students since there is shortage of qualified manpower both at secondary and tertiary levels of education, but more pronounced at the tertiary level. Non availability of qualified teachers will hinder above roles from being imparted into educators. Most especially in the area of specialization, business educators are skilled expertise in the maintenance and management of natural, human resource and social issues. A business educator is aware of consequences of over-production of unwanted products that could lead to environmental degradation. Likewise sustainable development encourages conserving and enhancing resources base. All these skills will be missing through an unskilled manpower teaching current students.

- Lack of parental interest. Most parents refuse to cooperate with their wards to study business education, claiming the general perception that business education is meant for individuals who are academically less endowed. If student eventually constraint themselves to study business education, inability of parents to buy necessary study materials for the course of study is another qualms. With the advent of sustainable development trends, all parents should be advised to expose their wards into the value of studying business education.
- Successive government and other major stakeholders have been handling business education programmes with levity (Edokpolor & Owenvbiugie, 2017). Lack of government support for business education is the factors hindering improvement in business education.
- Inadequate funding: Funding is one major problem in business education due to the fact that the course of study is a capital intensive programme that requires a lot of money for procurement of gadgets, equipment, machines and infrastructures. All requires capital intensive.

### **Roles of Business Education in Sustainable Development**

Al Marashi, (2017) confirmed how the private sectors and individuals can play an influential and crucial role in alleviating poverty through SDGs. She expressed her opinion that while governments will have to take the primary responsibility for financing SDGs implementation, it will not be enough for them to do without other



stakeholders' involvement. It is something that the UN too has highlighted many a time. Business Education Programme, if it is well implemented can enhance sustainable development through reduction of the country's overwhelming dependence on donors for development needs. These goals and targets are universal, meaning they apply to all countries around the world, not just poor countries. Reaching the goals requires action on all fronts governments, businesses, civil society and people everywhere all have a role to play. This tallied with the statement made by China, Lilly and Igbemi (2017) that sustainable development is all about improving the lives of people. Business Education programme is in line with SDGs training to impact marketable skills and competencies.

In the writer's opinion, the roles and relevance of business education in promoting sustainable development in the nations cannot be over-emphasized. This is because of its potentials and capabilities of equipping students, educators and society at large with relevant skills for self-employment and be employed. It is therefore in conformity with the affirmation made by ABEN, (2017) that business education can be a major instrument for national development since it promotes industrialization. Nevin, (2008) addresses the role of education in business in achieving sustainable development. He further emphasized that changes in knowledge, skills, values and attitudes will enable a more sustainable and equitable society. As business education aims to empower and equip students to be useful in the society, sustainable development goals aims to meet both current and future needs of the society using a balanced and integrated approach to the economic social and environmental dimensions (SDGs, 2013); Storey et al (2019). This research topic will add to knowledge by let loose importance and roles of business education programme for sustainable development. Thus, the roles of business education in sustainable development as proffered by Storey et al. (2019), Ghoshal (2005), O'Toole and Bannis, (2009), Guteress (2017), and Thomas (2019) were as follows:

1. Business education teaches and encourages the usage of different modern office technologies; this is in support of quality education. Sustainable development encourages quality education that develops skills of technology usage at all levels of education.
2. Business education role in marketing option teaches how to maximize materials and energy efficiency, using fewer resources and generate lesser waste, emissions and pollution. This will reduce environmental impacts and increase organizational resilience to facilitate sustainable development.



3. Part of Sustainable target is how to protect ones environment, securing economic development and social equity and justice. Business education create value from waste by teaches how to reduce pollution and costs in production that need processing or dumping into the environment.
4. Business education requires support in form of assessment method, pedagogical approaches, student engagement, teaching resources and curricula. They should design curriculum that would go beyond incorporating current issues, knowledge and skills, but focusing more on developing students' abilities to critically think and make ethical decisions in a range of circumstances, to future-proof their education along the sustainability dimension.
5. Business teacher education ordinarily addresses element such as attitudes, beliefs and values. To perform as an agent of change and as an activist expert catalyst, Visser and Crane (2010) suggested an individual student must be motivated through essential facilitators. This is because; sustainable development is beyond usual skills and knowledge currently imparted. If this orientation is imparted on the educators, it would further allow them to build their own relationship around sustainability in future.
6. It should be the role of business educators to engage with other disciplines to sustain development. This could take their students outside slim understanding of what sustainability means (Storey et al, 2019).
7. Ghoshal (2005) suggested that professionals and educators in business education need to find means of interpreting their own field-specific expertise to be accessible by other field and yet acquiring new knowledge. This would help to minimize any misalignment between bad management practices and field of education.
8. To further build students accountability principles, stewardship and good-government, O'Toole and Bennis (2009) affirmed that shared understanding, responsible leadership and innovative needs to be developed in student for future sustainability. Ghoshal suggested by so doing would help students to understand the norms in one's field in order to contribute to sustainable development now and in future.
9. Storey et al. (2019) admonished business schools and business education that are in charge of building future educators and leaders that there are ranges of



partnership organizations and networks coalesced through sustainable development meant to provide for them. He claimed they are working to promote responsible management education across the six continents to connect purpose, values, research methods, and dialogue for business education. It is therefore the role of business educators in Nigeria to research and enjoy the facilities provided through these organizations for sustainable development. He mentioned some of such groups as United Nations Sponsored Principles for Responsible Management Education (UN PRME); the Globally Responsible Leadership Initiative (GRLI); The Global Business School Network (GBSN); The Academic of Business in Society (ABIS); and the Environmental Association for Universities and colleges (EAUC).

10. To further cement sustainable development, it is the role of business education graduates to be well-positioned to the social, environmental and economic changes around them. They should combine schools strategy with teaching and research in related areas.
11. To be Self-employed and empowerment are easily made available through business education programmes as it contributes to high rate of self-reliance, creativity and competitiveness among the citizens of a nation. This was more emphasized by sustainable development to reduce poverty in the society.
12. Impartation of skilled knowledge of public human relation has been the fundamental issues in business education. This teaches customers' orientation and sustainability, to keep the business rolling. This secures economic development as maintained by sustainable development.
13. Business education teaches neatness, cleanliness and punctuality as the sole of business. A business educator is fits into all disciplines. The realization through sustainable development of a goal that society cannot live in a healthy society with so many environmental degradations begins with business education programme.
14. In the opinion of Onajite, (2016), business education is considered to be one of the crucial vehicles for social equity as well as sustainable development if it is accorded proper status by the government and other stakeholders.
15. Business education is rooted in Vocational Education with specific mandate of providing skills, attitude and competencies required for successfully promoting and administering business enterprises.



### **More on Promoting Sustainable Development**

Some other things business education programme can do to promote sustainable development apart from the above roles mentioned are listed below. Since Sustainable development goals are a big agenda that government alone cannot solve without businesses input, business education should focus on how to integrate greatest challenges that faced humanity into their curriculum. Of such challenges are misery and war, poverty and hunger, unfairness and inequality with the aim of putting an end to it (Leventhal, 2015). The following therefore speaks for itself as proffered by The Environmental Professionals Networks (2014):

1. Due to technology improvement, existing products from conventional methods must be improved upon by individuals. Sustainable products were made cheaper, better and available over traditional products in the market. Business educators that wish to become owners should recognize the trends by delivering good and quality services, all to wipe out poverty and make standard of living affordable to humanity (EPN, 2014).
2. New methods of doing business or teaching business education must be researched by educators. They must not lack the knowledge or technical abilities for researching new methods. How to impart new skills of purchasing practices in a sustainable method must be known by teachers and students.
3. To develop or add skills of practicing how to plant vegetables in the backyard garden has many benefits without using chemicals or pesticides. By recycle kitchen waste as fertilizer, this could help exercising the body and maintain good health and environment (EPN, 2014).
4. African mentality of driving car always should be discouraged through new curriculum. Doing this will promote and sustain good health boarding buses to offices once in a while. It can as well reduce transportation costs of buying fuel, carbon emissions from the car which has great impact on the air quality receives in our cities.
5. Students and educators should learn to search for the supporting organizations that are more dedicated to sustainability. This can help making big difference in our local communities, society and environment (EPN, 2014).



## **Conclusion**

Based on literature review, the realization of aims of business teacher education in a global world largely depends on how much some challenges are urgently tackled by the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN), to enhance sustainable development goals, such as unqualified teachers; use of obsolete technologies for teaching and learning; under-utilization of computers; poor funding and finance and graduate competencies. Despite all these challenges encountered, roles of business education programme, now and in the future are highly relevant as an unbendable tool to promote sustainable development goals and targets. Osuala (1996) affirmed that the major mandate of business education is to produce manpower that is needed in a modern business offices and teachers that would be able to inculcate quality vocational education aspects of business education into the society. They equally have lots of duties to perform as the direct tutor and mentor of future leaders that form the societies. The concept of sustainable development had been established years back to relate humanity's development with the need to manage resources in the best way possible. These common goals as defined by the United Nations requires active involvement by governments, businesses, civil society and people everywhere, all have an important role to play.

A good business educator that possesses essential life training will have sound personal finance and money management training that could bring higher profit for the sector where they are employed or self-employed; thereby sustaining the industries to be well established in order to reduce unemployment, poverty and then enhancing economic growth. Specifically, since United Nations Sustainable Developmental Goals and Targets meant to equip graduates with vital skills to end poverty, and promote well-being of people, reduce pollution of environment through wastages, thus individuals, society and nations standard of living would be improved. These can no doubt create great awareness of business education programme and encourage the Federal government to fund and improve its curriculum to reduce problems of business education in our nation Nigeria.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the above, business education programme can be of great importance for improving sustainable development goals if some challenges faced are solved and students, individuals, educators, society and nations were provided with needed manpower to be self-employed through small scale businesses. Therefore it is recommended that:



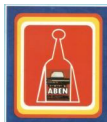
1. Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals through business education programme by individuals and society at large will help improve the environment for doing business and building markets.
2. Since development in materials, mental, psychological, physical, institutional and organizational innovations are such a positive growth in knowledge, skills and attitudes for a nation, business education should be made compulsory in all tertiary institutions thereby creating more awareness for the programme and problems of lack of funds and instructional materials could be resolved in tertiary institutions.
3. More business education teachers and lectures should be recruited by the Authorities to strengthen the teaching staff.
4. Issues such as functional equipment, computers, and modern IT services, virtual and online libraries should be provided to enhance proper and better training for sustainability.
5. Business education department should maximize their contributions towards achieving the SDGs, and also capitalize on the business opportunities in updating curriculum development and implementation.

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