



REBRANDING BUSINESS EDUCATION IN NIGERIA THROUGH PROFESSIONALIZATION

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Abstract

The study examined rebranding business education in Nigeria through professionalization. Three research questions guided the study. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 1,373 business educators and NCE Parts 1-3 business education students with their parents/guardian in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo due to COVID 19 pandemic. Purposive sampling was used to select 153 respondents (136 NCE Parts 1- 3 business education students and their parents/guardian plus 17 business educators). People's Perspective about Business Education and Professionalization (PPBEP) which was duly validated with a Cronbach Alpha reliability co-efficient of 0.75 was used to gather data for the study. A total of 105 (69%) out of 153 copies of the questionnaire administered were retrieved and used for the study. The data collected to answer the research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. Findings of the study revealed among others the reasons behind people's poor perspectives about business education, discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages enjoyed by business educators and their counterparts in highly valued disciplines and benefits that will accrue to business education if rebranded through professionalization. Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made among others: that business education be professionalized as soon as practicable; involvement of core business educators in curriculum review from time to time be ensured; and salary cum other welfare packages of business educators be reviewed upward like their counterparts in highly valued and lucrative professions.

Keywords: Rebranding, business education, professionalization.

Introduction

Business education is an aspect of vocational and technical education which from inception has been perceived by students, parents/guardians and those in other highly valued disciplines as a discipline for those who were not academically sound. To promote business education in Nigeria tertiary institutions therefore, and in order to achieve its goals and



educational goals at large, there is the need for rebranding. The rebranding of business education in this context implies disabusing the mind of people by enlightening them on correct perception of business education through professionalization, creation of new look to make the discipline more attractive to learners and the entire society like other highly valued disciplines.

Rebranding is a process of giving a product or an organization a new image, in order to make it more attractive or successful (Collins, 2020). Likewise, Wikipedia (2020) describes rebranding as a marketing strategy in which a new name, term, symbol, design, concept or combination thereof is created for an established brand with the intention of developing a new, differentiated identity in the minds of consumers, investors, competitors, and other stakeholders. The Economic Times (2020) defines rebranding as the process of changing the corporate image of an organisation. It is a market strategy of giving a new name, symbol, or change in design for an already-established brand. The idea behind rebranding does not necessarily mean change of name, but, it is to create a different identity for a brand from its competitors in the market. Consequently, rebranding of business education is giving the profession a new face-lift that will make it attractive and lucrative like others which are already so considered highly valued professions such as medicine, law, engineering, accounting, architecture, pharmacy and nursing, to mention a few.

Business education is simply education for business and education about business. To Olagunju (2020), business education is a branch of education that involves teaching the skills and operations of the business industry. Amaewhule, Okiridu and Nwoko (2019) see business education as education that prepares youth and adult for employment by providing experience which enables them to develop competences needed in the job. The duo of Ekoh-Nweke and Offia (2019) also view business education as a course that prepares students for life in the business world. Similarly, business education is defined as a systematic and organized programme of instruction aimed at transmitting knowledge, skills, ideas, attitude and technical know-how to recipients which is required for usage in business offices and for teaching others (Oyedele and Oladeji, 2016).

There are different areas that the knowledge of business education plays very prominent roles in the success of other disciplines. For instance, understanding ways of recording business transactions, accurate keeping of financial record of resources, developing and improving basic arithmetic skills; understanding different filing system, write malleable letters,



accurate processing and management of information; easy saving and retrieving of information, developing human relation skills, using initiative tact, handling major office routine duties; knowing the importance of being honest and punctual at work, setting different office machines, acquiring effective sales habit, being a judicious spender, analyzing situations; having knowledge of consumer behaviour and rights, among others. In essence, business education prepares everyone including the so called highly valued medical doctors, lawyers, engineers and what have you for employment; either a paid job or to be self-employed. The reason being that without the knowledge of business education, there is no direction for other professions.

Despite all the laudable roles of business education in human resources and national development, scholars at various times have pointed out that business education is being handled with levity in Nigeria and this results in loss of prestige and diminishing morale which has greatly affected the teaching and learning of business education (Oyewole and Ihionkhan, 2020; Edokpolor and Egbiri, 2017 and Oladunjoye, 2016). Rebranding business education through professionalization therefore, would restore the prestige and boost the morale of qualified educators who will be better placed to produce qualified and marketable graduates in business education.

Teaching generally, which encompass business education, has been described by scholars as a profession patronized by the people who could not succeed in their chosen vocations in other profitmaking businesses which they considered more lucrative than teaching. Teaching is seen as discipline for people who could not find anything better for themselves in their society. Also, the teaching profession in Nigeria has been regarded as a dumping ground for people who desire to have a temporary job while they seek other jobs of their dreams. Teaching is an occupation dating from the time of human existence (Olagunju, 2020; Ekaette, 2019; Ejiogu, 2017; Fareo, 2015 and Yusuf, Afolabi and Oyetayo, 2014). However, the authors explain further that despite its age, it has consistently lacked the command of prestige and power accorded the classical professions. In Nigeria, teaching has remained a trade union rather than a professional organization.

Moreover, Ekaette (2019) laments that teaching has been hijacked by all comers, making it almost a dumping ground for every bird of passage holding on to teaching for just a while as they seek jobs of their choice, or persons who failed to succeed in other vocations and perhaps those who wish to combine teaching with other businesses. Notwithstanding, in the



view of Amaewhule et al (2019), teachers are indispensable tools in the education of any nation. Oke, Ogundele and Mainoma (2017) explain that teachers occupied a pivotal position in transforming the teaching-learning process for quality education. Furthermore, Eduwen and Osagie-Obazee (2016) opine that teachers are the heart of the education process and the main determinant of the quality and effectiveness of its results. In essence, the success of any nation depends on the quality of teachers.

A profession has been defined as an occupation that can claim exclusive technical competence and also adheres to ethics of professional conduct. Elsewhere, a profession is being defined as a calling in which one professed to have acquired special knowledge used by either instructing, guiding or advising others or serving them in some art. These professions have quality control measures and compulsory registration of their members (NOUNS, 2019). Similarly, it is an occupation or job for which a person has received a specialized training or skill and follows as a career. From another perspective, a professional is someone who is learned or skilled in a particular job or occupation in which he has specialized and intends to practice throughout his working career (Olagunju, 2020; Yusuf, Afolabi and Oyetayo, 2014; Dada and Fadokun, 2010; and Orubite, 2010).

Professionalization is a process whereby occupations have become or seek to become publicly recognised as professions according to the degree to which they meet the alleged criteria. It is the driving force for educational improvement and national development, particularly now that the education system is riddled with so many challenges and conflicting pressures (Olagunju, 2020; Ekaette, 2019). The authors stress further that the universal criteria that sets a vocation apart as a profession include theoretical and practical knowledge mastered fully by the practitioners, reasonably long training in the field, continuous practice, a regulatory body that licenses and disciplines as well as promotes the professional growth of practitioners and rendering qualitative services to the society by the practitioners, among others.

Professionalization entails admission of members on equal footing, maintenance of members' register, dues, and records which involve ranking and seniority; high standards of professional code of conduct, ethics and practice. Likewise, members practice freely in accordance with existing laws and membership is restricted to those who fulfill the minimum qualification or are admitted by examination. Any profession that measures up to its billing will command high status and dignity, societal recognition, acceptance, job opportunity, security, job satisfaction, immense rewards and professional excellence, that is, efficient and effective service delivery.



From the foregoing, it is evident that business education has fulfilled virtually all the criteria for professionalization. It is high time professionalization process began and accomplished in due course for business education to be publicly recognized and accepted as a profession in Nigeria.

There are three main components of professionalization: ethics, behaviour and accountability. Ethics is all about the legal and etiquette to which a professional business educator must adhere to such as the code of professional conduct as stated by the regulatory bodies and the constitution. Behaviour emphasizes the processes, procedures, competence and productivity applied in the course of carrying out one's duties. It also entails exhibition of appropriate behaviours such as decent appearance, promptness, maintaining a civil and appropriate relationship with colleagues, parents and students. Accountability on the other hand, is the exhibition of high level responsibility towards lifelong teaching and learning, regularity in classroom teaching, availability of teachers to meet the needs of students regularly, school or community services, among others (Olagunju, 2020).

Although, business education has been facing a lot of challenges like qualification and quality of teachers, poor funding, inadequate curriculum content; poor implementation of curriculum, unstable policy, epileptic power supply, time allocation, inadequate equipment and infrastructure to mention but a few. Professionalization will enhance quality in business education as the issue of quality personnel will be resolved and teachers will ensure that students receive the high-quality teaching they need to succeed. It will minimize quackery and impostors as standard and due process will be followed in employing qualified business educators. Moreover, professionalism will enhance maintenance of a reputation for integrity, accountability, confidentiality, competence and commitment by business educators. It will also affect the role of business educators and their pedagogy which in turn will affect the student's ability to learn effectively (Olagunju, 2020; Ekaette, 2019; Nwosu, 2017; and Salehnia and Ashraf, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

The knowledge of business education cut across all disciplines. There is no profession in Nigeria and the world at large that does not require the services of business educator for successful operations. Be it doctor, lawyer, engineer, pharmacist, nursing, surveyor, architecture, technologist to mention but a few. Hardly can any of the professions succeed without



the knowledge of business education. Why then do people look down on business education as inferior to other highly valued disciplines? Why has business education not been professionalized all these years since it is the bed rock for the success of other disciplines? Why the discrepancies in business educators' remuneration and other welfare packages enjoyed in other highly valued disciplines? These and other questions are the agitations of the present writer. It is against this backdrop that the paper examines rebranding business education through professionalization in making it attractive and lucrative like other disciplines.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the reasons for people's perspective about business education?
2. Why discrepancies in remuneration and other motivational packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed?
3. What are the benefits that will accrue to business education if rebranded through professionalization?

Method

Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 1,373 business educators (17), NCE Parts 1-3 business education students and their parents/guardian (1356) in Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo. The researcher used purposive sampling to select 136 NCE Parts 1-3 business education students and their parents/guardian plus the 17 business educators making a total sample of 153 due to COVID 19 pandemic. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire tagged "People's Perspective about Business Education and Professionalization (PPBEP)". Three experts, one in tests and measurement and two in business education from Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko and Adeyemi College of Education, Ondo respectively validated the instrument. The Cronbach Alpha reliability test was used to determine the consistency of the instrument which yielded 0.75 reliability co-efficient. The questionnaire was structured on a four-point rating scale as Strongly Agreed (SA) - 4 points, Agreed (A) - 3 points, Disagreed (D) - 2 points and Strongly Disagreed (SD) -1 point. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 153 questionnaire out of which 105 (69%) copies were retrieved. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. Regarding the research



questions, mean rating of 2.50 was used for decision. Items of mean value of 2.50 and above were considered as agreed while items with mean values below 2.50 were considered as disagreed.

Result

Research Question 1

What are the reasons for people’s perspective about business education?

Table 1: Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on reasons for people’s perspective about business education

S/N	Item	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	The course is newly introduced in Nigeria in the 1970s	1.69	.94	Disagree
2	Admission requirement is cheaper than other highly valued disciplines	2.08	.66	Disagree
3	The duration of course is short	1.99	.83	Disagree
4	Learners are not exposed to real world of work	2.91	.99	Agree
5	Business education is for those that are not academically sound	2.71	.71	Agree
6	Business education has no global acceptance	2.82	1.20	Agree
7	The skills in business education can be acquired in mushroom Centres outside the school	3.29	1.01	Agree
8	No regulatory body that licenses and disciplines as well as promotes the professional growth of practitioners	3.36	.91	Agree
9	Some business educators are employed without educational background which make the entry into the job more porous	3.05	.00	Agree
10	The status/nomenclature of business education is not consistent in all the institutions offering it.	2.95	.87	Agree
Grand mean and standard deviation		2.69	0.91	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 1 reveals that the respondents disagreed with items 1-3 with mean scores of 1.69, 1.99 and 2.08 respectively. However, the remaining seven items (4-10) with mean scores ranging from 2.71 to



3.36 indicates the respondents' agreement to the reasons for peoples' perspectives about business education. This agreement was very evident as the mean scores were above the fixed decision value of 2.50. It was also established by the grand mean of 2.69 and standard deviation of 0.91 respectively. The implication is that people's perspective about business education is poor as they see business education as inferior to other highly valued disciplines.

Research Question 2

Why discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed?

Table 2: Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed

S/No	Item	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Government rates other professions higher and more important than business education since it is not a science course	2.95	.85	Agree
2	Other professionals are more qualified than business educators	1.89	.67	Disagree
3	Those in business education does not have cognate world of work experience like housemanship and internship as applicable in other highly valued professions	3.12	.70	Agree
4	Business education is not as hazardous as other disciplines	3.10	.70	Agree
5	Government policy did not favour business educators	2.77	.86	Agree
6	Business education is easy than science courses	1.71	.70	Disagree
7	Business education does not have future like medicine, law and engineering courses	3.65	.71	Agree
8	Business education has not been globally accepted	3.07	.61	Agree
9	Business educators still have time to do other businesses	1.56	.73	Disagree
10	Business educators spent a lot on upgrading as a result of technology	2.00	.82	Disagree
Grand mean and standard deviation		2.60	0.74	Agree

Source: Field survey, 2020

Table 2 shows the reasons for discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed. The table indicates that the respondents agreed to items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 with mean scores ranging from 2.77 and above which attested to the agreement of the respondents; while respondents disagreed with items 2, 6, 9 and 10 with mean scores between



1.56 and 2.00 as reasons for the discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed. The mean scores of items 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 were all above the fixed decision value of 2.50. Also, the grand mean of 2.60 and standard deviation of 0.74 signified that respondents agreed with the reasons adduced for discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed. This implied that business educators are not regarded as professionals like doctors, lawyers, engineers and so on hence, their being handled with levity in Nigeria.

Research Question 3

What are the benefits that will accrue to business education if rebranded through professionalization?

Table 3: *Mean scores and standard deviation of respondents on benefits that will accrue to business education if rebranded through professionalization*

S/No	Item	Mean	SD	Remarks
1	Global recognition and acceptability of business education will be possible through professionalization	3.24	.83	Agree
2	Business education will have a high degree of autonomy for setting standard and self-regulation of their accredited members' conduct	3.24	.79	Agree
3	Business educators will be compelled to develop and maintain professional culture and refrain from unethical values	2.97	.85	Agree
4	Modernisation of business education programme will be possible	2.71	.92	Agree
5	Enhanced special salary structure with encouraging welfare packages may be achieved	2.96	1.08	Agree
6	Government will provide adequate funding, infrastructure and other modern facilities for the programme	2.25	.93	Disagree
7	Prestige and integrity of business educators will be promoted	3.32	.77	Agree
8	Standard requirement for employment of	3.34	.99	



	qualified business educators will be made possible			Agree
9	Government will be mandated to include core business educators among curriculum developers and policy makers	1.90	1.05	Disagree
10	There will be opportunity for unified service conditions, nomenclature/status and adequate curriculum content in all higher institutions offering business education across the nation	3.10	.87	Agree
Grand mean and standard deviation		2.90	0.91	Agree

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 3 shows the benefits that will accrue to business education if rebranded through professionalization. The table reveals that the respondents agreed with all the items with mean scores ranging between 2.71 and 3.34. However, the respondents disagreed with items 6 and 9 with mean scores of 1.90 and 2.25. The agreement of respondents on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 and 10 is evident in the mean scores of 2.71 and above which is above the fixed decision value of 2.50. This was also signified by the grand mean and standard deviation of 2.90 and 0.91 respectively. The implication is that if business education is rebranded through professionalization, there will be a high degree of autonomy for setting standard and self-regulation of their accredited members' conduct, it will be globally recognised and accepted, business educators will enjoy special salary structure with encouraging welfare packages and quality of teaching and learning of business education will be enhanced in Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The analysis of the study reveals the reasons for peoples' perspectives about business education as: lack of exposure of learners to real world of work, being a course that is meant for those who are not academically sound, a course without global acceptance, a course whose skills can be acquired in mushroom educational centres, lack of regulatory body that licenses, disciplines and promotes professional growth of practitioners, having business educators without educational background employed into the profession due to porous entry into it and inconsistency in the nomenclature/status of business education in institutions offering it. This is so because of the grand mean of 2.69 which is above cut-off point of 2.50. This finding is in agreement with the argument of Ekaette (2019) that the



vocation has been hijacked by all comers, making it almost a dumping ground for every bird of passage holding on to teaching for just a while as they seek jobs of their choice, or persons who failed to succeed in other vocations and perhaps those who wish to combine teaching with other businesses. Buttressing, Agboola (2015) stresses that business education has its peculiar vitiating factors and malaise as it is often referred to as the “poor cousin” of the Nigerian educational system confined to the academic ghetto in terms of visibility. It is often regarded as the preserve of the “flotsams and jetsams” of intellectual life. The author elucidates that students offering business education are often regarded as inferior by their contemporaries. Moreover, many opt for business education only after they have failed to gain entrance into other highly valued courses. In addition, Olupayimo (2016) opines that most students in the higher institution of learning perceived business education as their last resort. To cap it up, Oyewole et al. (2020) lament that inadequate optimization of resources, coupled with poor societal perception appeared to be the reason why graduates of business education are not equipped with the requisite attributes for gainful employment, poverty alleviation and national development.

Furthermore, it can be inferred from the findings of this study that the reasons for the discrepancies in remuneration and other welfare packages of business educators as against what others in highly valued disciplines enjoyed are: the rating of other profession higher than business education by the government, lack of access to cognate world of work experience as in other highly valued professions, not being a hazardous profession like others, unfavourable government's policy, being a course without future like medicine, law, etcetera and lack of global acceptance of business education. This is in tandem with the view of some scholars that business education is being handled with levity in Nigeria and this results in loss of prestige and diminishing morale which has greatly affected the teaching and learning of business education. (Oyewole et al., 2020; Edokpolor et al., 2017 and Oladunjoye, 2016).

Moreover, findings of this study show the benefits that will accrue to business education if it is rebranded through professionalization. Based on the decision that an item with a mean value of 2.50 and above is accepted as benefit, it can be inferred that the benefits that will accrue to business education if it is rebranded through professionalization are: global recognition and acceptability, high degree of autonomy for setting standard and self-regulation of accredited members' conduct, development and maintenance of professional culture by business educators and refrain from



unethical values, modernization of programmes, enhanced special salary structure plus encouraging welfare packages, promotion of business educators' prestige and integrity, possibility of having standard requirement for employment of qualified business educators and unified service conditions, status and adequate curriculum content in all higher institutions offering the course. This is in line with Ekaette (2019) that teacher professionalism is the driving force for educational improvement and national development, particularly now that the education system is riddled with so many challenges and conflicting pressures. Investing in teacher professionalization is one way that a nation's educational system can improve, and by so doing, ensure that students receive the high-quality teaching they need to succeed.

This is also in agreement with the opinion of other scholars like Olagunju, 2020; Ekaette, 2019; Nwosu, 2017; Salehnia et al., 2015; Fareo, 2015 and Adeyemi and Okewole, 2012 that professionalization will enhance quality in business education as the issue of quality personnel will be resolved and teachers will ensure that students receive the high-quality teaching they need to succeed. It will minimize quackery and impostors as standard and due process will be followed in employing qualified business educators. Moreover, professionalization will enhance maintenance of a reputation for integrity, accountability, confidentiality, competence and commitment by business educators. It will also affect the role of business educators and their pedagogy which in turn will affect the student's ability to learn effectively.

Conclusion

There is no business that can succeed without the knowledge of business education though the discipline is not highly valued like medicine, law and engineering, amongst others. Rebranding business education through professionalization will enable business education to assume its pride of place in Nigeria since it is the bed rock for all other disciplines. This will eventually change the poor societal perception about business education, encourage business educators to constantly acquire and apply new skills in the classroom situation to make learning an interesting experience; equip graduates of business education with the attributes for gainful employment, poverty alleviation and national development for global relevance.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made among others:



1. Business education be professionalized as soon as practicable.
2. Business educators should endeavour to upgrade themselves from time to time for global relevance and acceptability.
3. Government should ensure the involvement of core business educators in curriculum review from time to time.
4. Qualified and sufficient business educators be employed to handle business education programme and salary/other welfare packages of business educators be reviewed upward like their counterparts in other highly valued disciplines.
5. Qualified students should be enrolled to study business education.
6. Internship of not less than one year be introduced into business education programme as applicable in other highly valued professions. OR The student industrial work experience scheme (SIWES) and teaching practice may also be elongated to one year to take care of the internship programme.

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