



BUSINESS EDUCATION CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION IN NIGERIA: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

OLUWADARE, AYODEJI ABRAHAM

trichkoretimi@gmail.com

Department of Business Education
Adeyemi Federal University of Education,
Ondo, Ondo State, Nigeria.

OMIDIJI, SAMUEL AJETOMOBI

omidjissamuel17@gmail.com

Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

AWE, OLAWUMI HAFSAT

awe4@gmail.com

Department of Office Technology and Management
The Federal Polytechnic, Ado-Ekiti,
Ekiti State, Nigeria.

Abstract

The Business Education programme in Nigeria requires a proactive and effective assessment that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. This will go a long way in ensuring the correlation between skills and competency displayed by graduates of business education and the certificate they obtain to parade looking for white-collar jobs in the world of competition. This can only be achieved through a well-structured and update of business education curriculum. The curriculum development process include: curriculum content with details of what the teachers are expected to teach and each students expected to learn. Most schools in Nigeria adopt evaluation instruments like test, assignment, term paper, projects, research report, giving practical work and examination methods are common methods used. Therefore, business education graduates should as a matter of urgent importance be able to put to practice the skills professed by their certificates. However, 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. In view of the foregoing, the paper therefore recommends among others that evaluation should be based on the behavioural outcome or goal of the programme and should be consistent. Also, government and authorities of tertiary institutions should at regular intervals organize workshops, seminars and conferences in order to improve lecturers' instructional competences for effective implementation of Business education curriculum.

Keywords: Business Education, Curriculum Development, Implementation, Problems and Prospects



Introduction

Business education was brought to limelight and given prominence by the new National policy on education in 1977. This policy has been severally reviewed. It is a programme of study which is geared towards equipping the learners with employability skills and knowledge which would enable recipients create, or acquire job and skills for personal growth and development.

Process of curriculum development is essential for successful achieving educational goals for business education students. It demands for systematic approach which should respect several aspects: the needs of the society, the nation, the students and teaching staff. This process should be maximally efficient and effective; it should be built upon previous work. Process itself should be done in specific algorithm starting from the definition of final goals and integration of different elements inside one curriculum. Curriculum should present mosaics of different courses, learning and teaching strategies and integrated into one picture which is specific for one institution. It has to respect all existing materials and human resources of the institution. Involvement of the key subjects in process of curriculum development should be from the first stage of process, and that first stage is creation of mission statement of the institution. The student is the central figure in the process if education and modern educational institutions use 'student centered approach' as their main philosophy in the process of curriculum shaping. Students should be involved in process of design and curriculum development. Representatives of students and their organizations should be involved in work of committees and bodies in charge for curriculum design. The fact that students are involved in shaping of their learning gives special quality to education process. According to Tukur (2016), curriculum development in business education is a process that integrates a content area with educational theory and methodology and evaluates its impact when curriculum development follows a systematic approach, it easily provides high-quality evidence of the impact a school member's efforts in order to improve educational process at the institution. One of the basics of curriculum development is the continual improvement of the outcomes, the analyses of the processes and the decision to change. The business curriculum is a body contested terrain (Cohen, Manton) and Morrison, 2000) not only among the educators but also among the other stakeholders, the business community, the authorities and the students included). Each group of stakeholder brings into the arena a particular dominant perspective about the business curriculum. To illustrate the contrast, the educators aligned themselves with the 'about business' perspective and the business community is all for 'for business' and there is a big gap between the perspectives. The problem is magnified when both groups of stakeholders insist their perspective will lead to the correct direction for the future of business education. Thus, it is timely to study their perspectives and to examine the gaps between these perspectives.

However, recent developments in business education appear to have pulled the gap closer. Two notable events are worth mentioning: the unemployed business graduates (Gradun, 2016) and the need to have strategic thinking managers (Lucas and Milford, 2003). The unemployment phenomenon has created ripples among the educators causing them to rethink the objectives of business education. Generally, the educators are willing to listen to the voice of the employers due to two reasons: research funds and employment provided by business organizations. These two factors have caused the educators to accept the dual purpose of business education: the academic tradition of educating the person and the teaching of vocational skills. Moreover, the dynamic business environment calls for innovative thinking managers. Employers have accepted the fact that managers are developed and require life-long learning. This theme suggests that the employers are ready to shift from the extremely 'for business' perspective to a more moderate perspective. As both stakeholders begin to shift to more moderate positions, an amicable solution to the problem is possible.



Conceptual Review

The business education programme in Nigeria requires a positive and effective evaluation that can bridge the gap between theory and practice. This will go a long way in ensuring the correlation between skills and competency displayed by graduates of business education and the certificate they obtain to parade looking for white-collar jobs in the world of competition.

Business education is one of the occupational areas that are richly provided by vocational and technical education in Nigeria. Business education refers to a programme of instruction that offers various skills in accounting, marketing, office technology and management (OTM) and recently entrepreneurial education. Major topics include: office practice, bookkeeping, business mathematics, business communication, secretarial duties, word processing, advertising (Ajisafe, Bolarinwa and Edeh, 2015). Edokpolor and Egbri (2017) had stipulated that the actual goals of business education shall be to:

1. Prepare students for specific career in office occupations;
2. Equip students with the requisite skills for job creation and entrepreneurship; and
3. Expose students with knowledge about business, including a good blend of computer technology, which incorporates information and communication technology (ICT). They further explained that the first two goals involve education 'for business, which is aimed at equipping recipients with the requisite attributes (knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes) to become gainfully employed in the world of work, whereas the later address education 'about business' which is aimed at providing a sound basis for further studies at the graduate and postgraduate levels. The concept of development has to do with the identification of basic needs of families, individuals, interest groups, communities and their abilities to meet; these needs, which are channeled or targeted towards sustainable development (Ogunduyile, 2004). :

A curriculum is an embodiment of all knowledge, skills and attitudes which a nation, through her schools, imparts to her citizens by knowledge in the definition, we mean all facts, theories, principles/generalizations and rules needed to be acquired to be certified as competent in a field. Curriculum also involves acquisition of skills needed to perform tasks programme for effective teaching and learning. In actual sense, a curriculum is an educational programme without which education could hardly be organized. Education is said to be formalized because it is organized and goes with a programme of experiences under the guidance of the school. Any education that is not organized does not go with formal curriculum. Thus, informal education has no formal curriculum. According to Onwuka (1981) defined curriculum as a process of learning which takes into account all human activities such as human sensitivity, could be political, economic or professional. According to him curriculum could also be considered as the deliberate systematic and planned attempts made by the school to change the behaviour of the members of the society in which it situates. Mkpa in Nnachi (2009) view curriculum as a vehicle through which the school could strive towards the achievement of educational ends. Such ends could be those of the nation, State and local governments of communities.

Walton et al, in Ben-Yunusa, (2008) defined curriculum as that content and those processes designed to bring about learning of educational value. By this definition, curriculum is considered to include both what is to be taught and by what means it is to be taught. He further defines curriculum as the set or sequence of potential experiences set up in the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting.

However, Knight and Trowler (2001) define curriculum as an account of the content to be studied, its organization, the learning and teaching methods and the arrangements for evaluating student learning. In addition, they remark that there are distinctions between the three types of curriculum: the planned curriculum, the delivered curriculum and the received curriculum. Also they explain the curriculum intentions become changed as they are created in teaching and learning situation and assessment regularly shows that what learners understand is different from what was



planned and created (Ibid). Therefore, the knowledge that there are "slippages" between the three)(Ibid).

Trauth, Farwell and Lee (1993) refer to these "slippages" as curriculum gaps. Preedy, (2002) in describing the curriculum management process identifies three stages of the curriculum: the intended curriculum - what is planned; the offered curriculum - what teachers teach; and the received curriculum - what students actually experienced in the classroom. She remarks that a major task is to ensure the three stages 'are in harmony' and integrated appropriately.

Also, Oluwadare, Adekunle and Ebiniyi (2019) and 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 place.

From all the foregoing discussions on Business Education and curriculum development, we can see clearly that business education prepares individual for initial office or selling jobs and for managing of individually owned control and operate business enterprise. It is a subject that provide general knowledge and understanding for all persons not minding age, occupation, professions, social or economic status. And curriculum offerings of this subject must cater for updated requirements in the 21st century skills. And to achieve this, core and elective courses have been studied in the department of business education. In spite of these, graduates from this programmes are found in top.

Problems of Curriculum Development and Implementation

Some contemporary thinkers in education and training conceive of business education as a major contributor to human resource, entrepreneurial and national development. Despite these laudable roles, available indications have shown that Nigeria have been handling business education with levity (Edokpolor & Egbri, 2017). The authors also added that this situation has consequently deprived business education from adequate provision of funds, qualified manpower, modern facilities, quality curriculum and proper attention. Although business education have attracted bulk of research within these areas (Ugwoazo, 2013) leaving a gap in literature pertaining to empirical support. Also, it remain unclear how the possibilities of overcoming the problems and challenges of business education would help in promoting national development.

However, adequate optimization of resources for the effective delivery of business education in Nigeria is receiving a growing attention (Edokpolor & Mafidon, 2017; Edokpolor & Oduma, 2017). This is because vocational education in general has been considered as a viable programme that helps to promote sustainable economic growth and development (Agrawal, 2013). It is believed that for any nation to help in promoting sustainable economic growth or development, efforts shall be made to invest sufficient amount of financial resources on business education programme.

Business education is equally faced with the challenge of the use of outdated curriculum. The curricula of most business education are outdated, as such, needs overhauling. Elaborating on this, Aworanti (2015) states that it is regrettable that most vocational education curricula are outdated having been in use for over fifteen years. Looking at this situation closely, it is clear that current business education may not be able to meet the need of industries or employers of labour genuinely. This situation has consequently created a huge gap between business education and industries in Nigeria. This may be the reason why, Majumda (2011) asserts that the challenges on how to develop curriculum and training programme that would help to respond: to the skills needed by industries seem to be a common concern. He stressed that many authors have mentioned the gap between the skills needed by the industries and those students acquire at the end of training programme.

Also, It should be noted that inadequate provision of financial resources has been identified as greatest challenge facing education in Nigeria (Nwadiani & Omoike, 2006; Asiyai, 2015), especially vocational and technical education sector because of its capital intensive nature (Adeyanju, Adekunle, & Osifila, 2007), of which business education programme is a major component. By virtue of this nature, every item within the business education instructional environment is subjected to adequate



optimization of financial resources. However, in view of the contending demands for financial resources by various sectors of the economy, business education have been finding it difficult to employ manpower in terms of quality and quantity, develop or renew curriculum and offer a wide-range of modern infrastructure and facilities, such as the state-of-the-art lecture halls, workshops, studios, libraries, entrepreneurial research centres and information technology services. The existence of all these identified issues and challenges are mere pointer to the fact that business education programme is currently delivered theoretically and as such not capable of equipping recipients with the requisite attributes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) for gainful employment and further education. Commenting on this ugly situation, Obunadike (2015) argued that the practical courses that are supposed to expose individual students to real-practical training in order to strike a balance with or match the theory learnt in the classroom have become a myriad.

More so, challenge faced the business education curriculum is the low public interest in the programme. It is a general belief that business education is a form of education of the ungifted and underprivileged child. Many of parents and elites in Nigeria society believed that business education is meant for the less academically endowed. Therefore, they clamour for other types of education and only opt for business education as their last resort which resulted to low enrolment in colleges of education and universities in business education courses.

The effect of the above mentioned challenges such as inadequate provision of finance, lack of highly qualified professional teachers, lack of modern facilities, politicized curricula, outdated curriculum and low public interest is that skilled and competent graduates may not be produced which is the output of curriculum implementation. The high rate of unemployment and poverty in Nigeria as a result of poor implementation of business education curriculum has necessitated the need of all stakeholders to collaborate, invest sufficient resources on curriculum implementation of business education. This strategic approach according to Edokpolor, Edokpolor & Olupayimo cited in James & Robinson (2017) can help to serve various purposes, which include financial management, staff development, curriculum renewal, service delivery, students mentoring, equipment donation, raising course awareness, facilities management, among others.

Prospects of Curriculum Development and Implementation

Before discussing the meaning of curriculum development, there is the need for us to be reminded of Alviore (2014) simple definition of curriculum which states that curriculum is the 'heart' of any learning institution, meaning that schools or institutions of whatever level cannot exist without a curriculum. Due to its importance in the lifespan of educational institutions, the curriculum undergoes dynamism due to the dynamic state of our society. What then do we mean by curriculum development?

Alviore (2014) saw curriculum development as planned, purposeful, progressive and systematic process employed to bring about positive renovations in the educational system. Development or changes in the world always call for development or changes in school curricula too, so as to get them updated to meet the societal needs. With formal education, curriculum development has become a systematic, planned, purposeful, progressive improvement given to educational content.

It is pertinent to note that curriculum development broadly covers the school, the learners, the teachers as well as the development of the society generally. Thus, the following are enumerated as the importance of curriculum development as outlined and described by Alviore (2014).

Firstly, curriculum development greatly improves the economy of a country. It provides solutions to the world's pressing conditions and problems, such as environment, politics, socio-economic and any other issues of poverty, climate change and sustainable development.

Curriculum development assists to preserve the country's national identity and to ensure its economic growth and stability. Thus, a country's president must have a clear vision for his people and the country via the curriculum of the country's school system. For instance, the president, Acquire of the Philistines' (a tourism country) must develop his higher educational programme towards curriculum programmes that will boost tourism industry in his country. Thus, curriculum development must be



geared towards the improvements in the needs of a country generally and specifically towards the schools, teachers and planners improvements. activities, or have poor knowledge of research.

Conclusion

In the wake of development/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 development process in business education should be based on specific criteria that constitute the major factors which should be considered in conduction with an educational evaluation.

Business educators therefore, should see curriculum development 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.

However, I would not be honest to claim that this review/paper has made large and outstanding contribution 'to the knowledge and practice in the field of business education. However, a few new contributions are worthy of mention. First, by identifying the perspectives of stakeholders and curriculum gaps that exist between them, the perceptions of the stakeholders can be understood clearly. By understanding the nature of the perspectives, business curriculum Developers/designers are more informed of the expectations of the stakeholders and the process .Of curriculum development/design to satisfy the needs and requirements of the stakeholders is made easier and more effective. If curriculum development process 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.

Recommendations

The following are recommendations that would help in curriculum development and implementation process in business education:

1. Government and other stakeholders should focus their attention and invest their resources on business education so as to help equip recipients with the requisite attributes for entrepreneurial development, poverty alleviation, and national development.
2. Curriculum development process evaluation should be done with positive intention to ensure critical analysis of the new challenges facing the business teachers,
3. Curriculum development/evaluation should also be based on the behavioural outcome or objectives of the programme.
4. Feedback should follow curriculum development/evaluation and should be made available to the appropriate stakeholders for effective implementation and follow-up,
5. Federal and state ministries of education and other stakeholders should help provide the colleges of education with needed instructional resources for effective implementation of curriculum.
6. Government and colleges of education authorities should at regular intervals organize workshops, seminars and conference in order to improve lecturers' competences for effective implementation of curricula.

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