



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS IN BUSINESS EDUCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The general lack of code of conduct in the educational institutions has affected every facets of the country's economy which has contributed to poor economic development. Business education is a programme stated by the Federal Government in its National Policy to contribute to national development has failed to achieve this goal. The laudable programme if adequately and effectively implemented, employing standard code of conduct in training ethical business education graduates to man the innovated business world is expected to bring about employment generation, poverty eradication and drastic reduction in corruption thereby contributing to national development. Unfortunately, the programme was jeopardized from achieving this goal through poor implementation and unethical practices in our educational institutions. This paper therefore, examined the vision and mission of business education for sustainable development, unethical practices in business education, ethical standard for business education programme, roles of business education for national development and challenges of business education for national development. Conclusions and recommendations were also drawn.

Keywords: *Ethics, Moral Standard, Business Education, National Development.*

Introduction

Education is the pivot of any nation's development. Any educational system that operates with high ethical standard is the quickest and surest way to achieve national development. According to Olu (2015), national development implies a general and sustainable improvement in the socio-economic well being of a state, arising from the structural transformation of the economy. National development embraces a whole nation and circumscribes the overall development or a collective socio-economic, political as well as ethical standard of a country (Lawal and Oluwatoyin Olu, 2015). A country realizes its ethical standard through education which is an instrument that instills the required moral pattern or ethical paradigm.

Business education, an integral educational system equips individuals with productive skills, values, attitudes, knowledge and competences needed for nation's sustainable development. Unfortunately, lack of proper code of conduct and ethical standard



in the training institutions have crippled the speedy development of business education to national development. Business educators must be men and women whose vision and mission must pass not only pedagogical tests, but also moral and ethical requirements aimed at meeting global best practices. Business educators should possess high ethical standard so as to produce ethical graduates that are devoid of corruption. Again, moral ethics should be integrated into the curriculum of business education to equip students with high moral ethical culture for national development. Gana (2014) lamented that unless the curriculum of business education is infused with an ethical code as a course in its programme, in the near future, the programme may not be able to produce the type of future generations of business educators that can squarely face the prevailing challenges and ensures the sustainable development of the country and the business world.

According to Eze and Njiru (2006), ethics refers to the values, or rules of conduct held by a group or individual within a family, work environment, institution, profession, community, society or nation. It is the rule of principle that directs the behaviour of an individual, group of people, community or society within a particular setting. Omoregbe (2000) contended that ethics deals with how men ought to behave, and why it is wrong to behave in certain ways and right to behave in certain other ways. It studies the reason why certain actions are said to be wrong morally and why some are regarded as being morally right.

Ethical consideration in any human endeavour is of paramount importance since human being is so constituted that not all kinds of actions befit his nature, lead to self-fulfillment and progress within his social, economic and political environment. The nature of man is such that he lives a moral life that will bring general happiness, self fulfillment and desist from behaving in certain other ways that will be detrimental to his well being and progress. The main aims of ethics are to develop a body of moral standard that man should adopt to enable him attain internal harmony, happiness, self fulfillment and successful co-existence within the environment in which he lives.

The importance of ethical consideration in business education need not be over emphasized since business education programme is the bedrock to any nation's economic development. Ethical standards prevent against fabrication, corruption, falsification of facts, cheating but promote the pursuit of knowledge, values, attitude, and acquisition of skills and competences which is the primary goal of business education. In order to institute sound business education programme that will achieve its goal of producing sound business education graduates that will contribute to national development, the professional association (National Association of Business Educators) and agencies must adopt codes and policies, streamline ethical behaviour that will guide the profession and integrate such into the programme's curriculum. According to Gana (2014), it is necessary for the



curriculum of business education to have professional ethics or rules of conduct that will continually guide the programme and professional relationship. Integrating ethical standard in business education curriculum will help in the production of manpower that sustains, improves productivity and enhances national development.

The Vision and Mission of Business Education for Sustainable Development

Business education is a programme for complete development of individual students to become an effective business teacher, and/or high caliber professionals in different business establishments that are key to sustainable development. The vision of business education is a programme that will lead the country to future greatness through adequate provision of manpower resources that will develop and harness the nation's economic resources to its fullness. Having a vision of sustainable economic development will lead the nation to greatness; enable the business educators perceive their role as contributors to the nation's future greatness by producing highly qualitative business education graduates that will boast the economy of the country.

Business education at the university level has the mission to train the necessary manpower for industry, business, private and public establishments. It prepares students on different career opportunities such as in the areas of commerce, industries, managerial posts, secretaryship, accounting positions, entrepreneurship etc. The vision of the nation having sustainable economy directs the mission of business education into producing entrepreneurs and manpower resources into reality.

The mission statement of business education is the basis for its philosophy in relation to basic values, beliefs, attitudes, aspirations and philosophies. Business education concerns itself with the acquisition, development and inculcation of proper values for the survival of the individual and the society (FRN, 2004). It is education for acquisition and development of skills, competences, attitudes and attributes which are necessary for efficiency of the economic system (Aliyu, 2006). Human capital development is the greatest thing a country can cherish for its macro level with a vision and mission as an essential tool for achieving sustainable development.

Unethical Behaviours in Educational Institutions

Unethical behaviour is a canker worm that has gone deep into so many countries especially developing countries. It has destroyed many facets of the society and educational activities of so many institutions in different ways. There is increasingly high reduction in moral standard in our tertiary institutions which has adversely affected every fabric of educational activities, According to Agbanifoh (1999), unethical behaviour refers to behaviour that violates or does not conform to the generally accepted standards of behaviour or expectations of society. There are many of these unethical behaviours in our educational



institutions when tend to encounter our beliefs, values and norms. These unethical behaviours that have violated the moral values and standard in training institutions are identified as follows:

1. **Malpractices During Examination:** Malpractices during examination are now becoming a habit in many Institutions and are highly scandalous. Students are no longer ready to work hard for the examination instead they will choose to operate their computer or handset at the detriment of their academic activities. These students copy on the sheet of paper, on their palms and even laps during examinations. According to Kanu and Akanwa (2012), some of the lecturers contributed to examination malpractice by helping their students in exchanging of financial gratification through the following means:
 - i. Preferential marking
 - ii. Fraudulent recording/arbitrary award of marks
 - iii. Fanning of examination questions/scripts.
2. **Irresponsible Teaching:** Some lecturers at the beginning of any semester will never attend to lectures until few weeks to the end of lectures; they go into lecture hall and tell students sections of the book they will read for examination. Such lecturers do not even think of covering the course contents but how to administer examinations to the students that have not learnt.
3. **Corruption:** Corruption is a canker worm that has eaten deep into the lives of so many Nigerians especially the so-called leaders. In our tertiary institutions, some university dons ask for financial gratification from students in order to give them good grades. On the other hand, due to competition for admission into Nigerian universities, it becomes a golden opportunity for university workers to extort money from parents to give their children admission. This has led to offering admission to unmerited candidates denying the qualified ones fundamental human rights.
4. **Education Scandals/Plagiarism:** In some tertiary institutions, lecturers prepare handouts or textbooks pirated from someone's textbooks and force the students to buy at exorbitant prices whereby any student that falls to buy will automatically fail the course. Such lecturers most often don't attend classes. They always go for summer while academic activity is in progress.
5. **Teachers' Misconduct:** In our educational institutions, teachers often involve themselves in some unethical practices. Kinta, Fowoyo and Aliyu (2011) identify some of the common pitfall of teachers as it regards unethical behaviours as follows:
 - Inviting female students to their homes or to parties, such female students begin to develop inflated ideas about themselves, leading to rudeness to teachers from female and male students.



- Smoking and taking alcoholic drinks within the campus in the glare of the students.
 - Lack of commitment to school or class work and other bad teacher behaviours.
6. **Incompetent/Unqualified Teachers:** The Nigerian common dictum, man knows man has come into our training institutions. Sometimes those in the corridor of power write notes mandating the institution administrators to offer lectureship appointment to nonprofessionals who are not quality to train students of tertiary education. Such teachers cannot produce ethical, competent and effective students, for teaching has an imbued work ethics and a code of conduct. In the same vein, there is a dictum that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers.
7. **Cultism:** Cultism is an evil menace that has seriously affected the level of education in our training institutions. According to Babaiola (2006), cultism exists in our tertiary institutions (especially the universities) for the following reasons:
- Long years of military rule and its attendant brutalization of the civil populace.
 - The employment of discretionary admission which favours less brilliant students. but prejudice the interest and chances of brilliant and talented ones.
 - The presence of non-students in the halls of residence of higher institutions which makes it easier for extraneous forces to employ them for diabolical ends.
 - Access of students to dangerous and sometimes sophisticated lethal weapon.
 - Readiness of some university administrators to employ cult members for their own selfish ends like suppression of vocal and dynamic students leaders.
 - Existence of fear as a result of lack of security on campuses.
 - Inadequate accommodation leading to over-crowding and all manners of sharp practices.
 - The course system which allows a student to stay in school for a longer period than necessary and which makes him to lose focus and thereby becoming a professional student in the process.

Ethical Standard for Business Education

Business education ethics is a mission to prepare ethical business education graduates for value creation as well as skill, knowledge and competency acquisition.



Business education professionals should be aware of ethical behaviours in the modern business world and prepare the students to adapt to the modern trends, for business education programme to contribute effectively to national development, it should go beyond mere impartation of knowledge and skills but[^] incorporate in the programme such attributes as social responsibility, moral duty, fairness, justice, mutual respect, honesty, moral reasoning, integrity, discipline.

1. **Social Responsibility:** Social responsibility is a person's or an organization's moral obligation towards others who are affected by his or her actions (McShane, Glinon and Ann, 2000). Business education operates within an environment. The environment is bound to provide enabling resources and facilities the programme needs to operate. Business education programme has ethical social responsibility to produce ethical graduates who are knowledgeable in different aspects of business education and are skillful in innovative ethical business world. The importance of business education social responsibility to both business education and the society are as follows;
 - i. Business education social responsibility helps business educators to train ethical business education graduates who are knowledgeable in different field of the programme.
 - ii. It helps to train Innovative business entrepreneurs for the nation's sustainable development.
 - iii. Social responsibility helps to improve-the image of business education.
 - iv. It helps both the lecturers and the students to recognize their moral obligations both to the profession and the society at large.
 - v. Social responsibility facilitates the adoption and adaptation of business education to the constantly changing technological innovations in the business world.
2. **Moral duty:** Moral duty refers to what specifically a person is expected to do in his specific and sometimes, peculiar conditions (Ekei, 2001). A business educator has the duty to train students and acquaint them with the necessary skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and competences needed in the field of business. The students have the moral responsibility to attend lectures and be trained, When teachers are committed to their duty, institutions are sure of producing ethical students that will infuse ethical behaviours and practices into the world of work.
3. **Fairness with the Students:** Business educators should be fair in their dealings with the students so as to enhance their loyalty and productivity. When students are treated with fairness, it motivates them and makes them to put in their best in pursuit of academic activities thereby increasing the academic standard of the institution.



4. **Justice:** Justice is based on the foundation of fundamental equality of all men. Since men are created equal, they should be treated as such. Business education value demands equal opportunity, equal treatment, equal services, equal protection, equal distribution of goods, reward and access to public benefits both in school and field of work. Business educators should exercise justice In training the students so as to produce ethical graduates that will move Into the field of work propagating justice.
5. **Mutual Respect:** Respect is said to be reciprocal, A business educator should be a person of respect, who accord respect to his/her students. When relationship weakens, mutual respect should be rebuilt. Respect and trust make it easier for a teacher to direct, coach and train students effectively.
6. **Honesty:** Honesty is an essential fundamental human value. Honesty is of vital importance in any human endeavour. According to Omoregbe (2000), a man who chooses to be honest even if it means being poor is a wise man and he will have no cause to regret for he has chosen the higher value, a more lasting and more rewarding value, An ethical business educator is always an honest individual who impacts honesty to students since honesty Is the best policy and a key to successful living in the long run.
7. **Moral Reasoning:** Moral reasoning is the process by which human behaviours, institutions or policies are judged to be In accordance with or in violation of moral standards (Velasquez, 1992), Business educators should inculcate in students moral standard that should direct their moral reasoning to what the society requires from them on graduation.
8. **Integrity:** Integrity/ according to Ejiofor (1987) is an aspect of one's character rooted in *his* conviction which serves to deter him from taking advantage of his position or strength to gain at the expense of his organization, client or subordinate, A person of integrity has the *will* power to do what Is right and abstain from doing what is wrong. Business educators should therefore be men and women of high integrity, who are morally courageous/ always willing to stand by the truth and ready to shun corrupt practices so as to produce graduates of integrity that will enhance national development.
9. **Discipline:** Business educators should be highly disciplined so as to be in a position to inculcate in students the spirit of self-control, hardwork, honesty, good time management and *selfless* service.

Role of Business Education for National Development

Development of any nation depends on the level of its ethical standard and economic development. Business education is education for national development which prepares



students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and enables them handle their own business affairs and function intelligently as owners and citizens In a business economy (Nolan, Hayden and Malsbury, 1967), Business education prepares individuals as entrepreneurs, business executives, managers, computer analysts, bankers, insurers, accountants, marketers, secretaries and office managers who are the major contributors to national development It is an aspect of the total education which equips individuals with appropriate values and attitudes with which to conduct their economic activities in accordance with laid down principles, rules and guidelines that enhance national development.

Business education equips individual with general business knowledge which enables them as workers, entrepreneurs, businessmen and women to increase productivity which in turn lead to increase in standard of living. Increase In standard of living of a nation depends largely on the country's Gross National Product (GNP) which is a key to the nation's development.

Business education exposes students to the general business subjects which equip the youths with prevocational knowledge that enables them establish small scale business and become gainfully employed after graduation. In a developing country like Nigeria, establishment of small scale enterprises contribute immensely to the nation development. Ekpeyong (2012, citing the Nigeria's third National Development Plan summarized the role of small scale business in the development of Nigeria to include:

- i. Creation of employment
- ii. Manpower training
- iii. Local development
- iv. Fill in employment
- v. Waste utilization
- vi. Introduction to *big* business
- vii. Promotion of competition
- viii. Self-reliance
- ix. Aid to industrialization
- x. Catering for small demand

Consequently, effective business education programme contributes immensely towards employment generation and poverty eradication. According to Makeri (1990), many university degree holders and graduates of other tertiary Institutions are jobless while the Holders of vocational (Business) qualifications are averagely employed. This shows the significant contribution to the economic development of a country.

Usoro (2001) further advocated that business education encompasses courses such as business administration, marketing, accounting, purchasing and supply, secretarial



education and business law. This therefore follows that business education train business teachers, managers, seasoned administrators, secretaries, accountants, producers and marketers of goods and services and distributors who are the engine rooms of any organization which is the bedrock for any nation's economic development. Business education programme therefore contributes immensely to any nation's development.

Impediments of Business Education to National Development

1. **Poor Implementation of Business Education:** The laudable business education programme to achieve its goal of economic development should be properly implemented. All the human and material resources including functional innovative curriculum must be properly put in place.
2. **Lack of Proper Funding:** Proper funding of business education programme has over the years become a very serious challenge to the programme full operation. Business education being capital intensive need adequate fund for the programme to be more functional to meet up with innovative strategies in the business world.
3. **Poor Business Education Programme Partnership with Industry:** Business education programme in our tertiary institutions lack serious partnership base with industry where the products of the programme would be employed, This industrial establishment complained of students, lack of acquisition of appropriate skills required in the field of work.
4. **Poor Ethical Standard:** Business educators should shun unethical practices in our training institutions and integrate into their curriculum high ethical standard that will necessitate for the production of ethical business graduates that will man our innovative business world. The inculcation of good moral standard in business education students will transform our societal value system in the business world into innovative ethical business society that will bring about national development.
5. **Poor Curriculum Content:** There have been structural defects in-business education curriculum. According to Qkoye (2016), the curriculum content of business education is much far below what is expected in the field of work. Most of the courses offered by business education students in the tertiary institutions have fallen below what is required to be employed as experts in the innovated modern business world.
6. **Poor Quality and Quantitative Business Education Teachers:** The Nigerian tertiary institutions are faced with poor quality and quantitative business education teachers that will train today's business education graduates that will work in the modern business world, The few existing-teachers are trained in the old dispensation and cannot teach most of the ICT related courses effectively.



7. **Poor Facilities:** The facilities needed for effective training of business education students are grossly inadequate. This lack of facilities has made it highly difficult for the students to possess the necessary skills required in the field of work.

Conclusion

The importance of business education to national development cannot be overemphasized. The programme as a key drive to country's economic development is not achieving its objective of equipping students with necessary skills, values, attitudes, knowledge and competences required to work as entrepreneurs, business administrators, managers, professional secretaries and accountants in different spheres of lives.

The half-baked implementation of the programme, lack of code of conduct in our educational institutions and ever-changing technological innovations in the business world have deterred the programme from contributing effectively to national development. For business education to achieve national development, there must be changes in all aspects of its academic profession, inculcation of high ethical standards in students and government serious commitment to the programme's full implementation.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proffered for business education to achieve national development:

1. Ethical business educators should be employed in our educational institutions to produce ethical business education graduates that would revolutionize the business world.
2. Government and education authorities should ensure full implementation of business education at different levels through adequate provision of funds and other resources.
3. Education administrators and curriculum planners should embark on curriculum review, integrating ethical considerations needed for effective production of ethical graduates needed to work in the modern innovative business world.
4. Government and education authorities should employ teachers with good ethical standards and who are skilled in current technologies. Also, the already employed teachers who are not abreast of the modern technology should be retrained through constant workshops, seminars and conferences.

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