



INHIBITIONS AND REWARDS OF PROFESSIONALIZATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME IN NIGERIA

UMEZULIKE ANTHONIA NGOZI (ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR) MIVETA; MABEN

Department of Vocational Education,
Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu
University, Igbariam Campus
toniaumezulike@yahoo.com;
an.umezulike@coou.edu.ng
07067650365,0807676269

Abstract

The Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) is a professional organization committed to the promotion and advancement of business education programme in Nigeria with the Motto: Business Education, Our Business. Business educators are professionally qualified personnel in the field of business and education, engaged in classroom teaching and administration in the public or private sectors and others that are duly accredited and professionally accepted in related subject area. Though the programme received laudable acceptance by the government in the National Policy on Education, but it is unfortunate that the Association is not well recognized by the government (federal, state and local government) as they do with Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) etc. What could be contributing to this lip service attitude by the government towards the programme? Thus, this paper is out to find, factors that are inhibiting successful rewards and sustainable professionalization of Business Education programme in Nigeria. It was observed that: non- central quality examination, free entry and exit of teachers, lack of association's autonomy for admission and sanctioning of airy members etc were some of the inhibitions towards successful rewards and sustainable professionalization of ABEN. It is recommended among other things that government should allow ABEN the autonomy to act and admit members as it was done in other professions like NBA, NMA.

Keywords: *Inhibitions, Rewards, Successful, Sustainable, Professionalization, Business Education*

Introduction

In every society in the world, there is always the need for a highly skilled and disciplined work force. Societies became better off economically, socially, mentally, physically and otherwise when they have citizens who are literate and intelligent and who have the cause of the nation at heart. When people are able to understand, identify with the country's philosophy, aspirations and goals, development become easier, and the government will have lesser problems in leadership since the majority are aware of their rights and obligations.

Sound development of a nation occur as a result of effective functions of their teachers. No nation rises above their caliber of teachers. A nation characterized by low and middle level man power can hardly boast of any major breakthrough in any sphere of life. Mishra (2018) maintained that the need for highly skilled person becomes very essential for any meaningful achievement to be made. That is to say, it is worthwhile to realize that both adult and young need to be trained in such a way that they can show function effectively in the society.

There is need to develop the right attitude in them as this in itself will help them to achieve the nation's goals and objectives. For instance at the national level, the people need to be made to appreciate the dignity of the labour. The result of this will be seen in their attitude to work. If a society believe more on consumption rather than production, its citizen will show poor attitude to work. Such nation will forever remain poverty stricken and underdeveloped.



Njoku (2006) stressed that another important factor to be considered when developing a nation is ability on part the work forceto secure and exhibit the right competencies. That if the right competencies and good attitude to work are built in individuals, they will takebold steps to develop sound skills and proficiency to work. Having considered this, the need for professions and professionals at various fields of study becomes very imperative and crucial.

Business education is a body of knowledge which aims at preparing recipients for positive role in the society. Such role could be as employee, entrepreneur or as self-employed. Aina (1996) observed that business education is not expected to seek out, identify, create or anticipate human wants and needs, but alsois required to create all the gamut of goods and services that are needed to satisfy those human wants and needs.

If the goal of business education is the production of man power who possesses the requisite knowledge, skills and attitude for harnessing other resources and bringing them into a co-operative relationship,business educators must be highly skilled and knowledgeable. (I.e must be a professional.

Concept of Profession and Professionalization

The word profession has been defined as an occupation that can claim exclusive technical competence and also adheres to ethics of professional conduct. That is say that, profession is a calling in which one professed to have acquired special knowledge used by either instructing, guiding or advising others or serving them in a specificarea.

According to Yusuf, Afolabi and Oyetayo (2014),a profession is an occupation or vocation that requires special skills, knowledge and qualification that will enable one secure high social status. It is a job that requires special skills or knowledge through special training with a high level of education; and it utilizes functional education and mental ability rather than manual or physical labour. Dada and Fadokun (2010) maintained that a profession entails an occupation that is dependent upon specialized intellectual study and training for the provision of skilled service to other members of the society, government and non- governmental agencies for a definite fee or salary. Orubite (2010) posits that a profession is a paid job that requires prolonged training and liberal or formal educational qualification. The term profession as defined by Carr Saunders cited by Mishra (2018) is an occupation based upon specialized intellectual study and having the purpose of which is to supply skilled services or advice to other for definite fee orsalary.

Professionalization refers to a distinct task which could only be performed meaningfully by an individual who has been initiated, trained and assessed (Njoku, 2006). A job identified as a profession could not be performed by a member of another profession to the satisfaction of the original member or group. In the case of some groups, modes of assessment for potential members exist which further means entry into the profession is regulated. Code of behaviour also exists, which means that ethical standards are set. Professionalization is a vocation that requires special skills and knowledge. It is a job that utilizes functional education and mental abilities rather than manual or physical labour. Orubite (2010) view professionalization as an occupation in which members acquire a body of systematic knowledge on which their work with people is based, develop group feeling and responsibility, assume attitude of moral concern towards clients and join together in association to advance the vocation and control members conduct through established ethics. Pratte and Rury (2011) argue that a profession is an occupation with enviable remuneration and high social status.

Furthermore, Orubite (2010) posits that, a profession is a paid job that requires prolonged training and liberal or formal educational qualifications. According to Dada and Fadokun (2010), a profession entails an occupation that is dependent upon specialized intellectual study and training, for the provision of skilled service to other members of the society, government and non-governmental agencies for a definite fee or salary.



These definitions show distinct characteristics that could be attached to a vocation or occupation to portray them as a profession. Some of these characteristics are extensive but may not include every attribute that has been ascribed to profession. This is because, the search for standardized criteria by which a vocation/occupation can be recognized as a profession has been on for years; yet there is still disagreement on a universally acceptable list of the characteristics of a profession (Dada, 2010). This brings us to the discussion on the criteria of a profession.

Characteristics of a Profession and Professionalization

A true profession according to Ndinechi (1996) and Umezulike (2018) must have the following characteristics:

- i. A common body of knowledge acquired after a long period of specialized intellectual study and training with continuous learning throughout the career
- ii. A controlled admission to the profession which is done by specifying the pre-requisite for entry into training, the probable duration of training, the basic knowledge required for practice of the occupation and minimum qualification required before one will be admitted
- iii. A strong professional association which enables the profession to meet its goals and advance the welfare of its members
- iv. Clearly defined code of conduct (ethics) which must specify standards of practice strictly to be observed by the members so as to guide their behaviour
- v. A strong professional organization which guides the interest of its members as well as codifies the entire professional framework
- vi. An association with independence and freedom to practice without any interference
- vii. An association with high degree of autonomy to exercise professional duties to individual members and for the profession as a whole

Concept of Professionalism

Professionalism is said to be acting appropriately and in a manner that is acceptable to general body. It is completing one's tasks and responsibilities on time. It can also be defined as the proper attitude and conduct of a person. It is a valued quality that has friendly, polite and business-like characteristics. It is a necessary trait for every employee and business. Hence, it also refers to any activity of man accompanied with the afore stated characteristics. Thus activity is based on intellectual action along with personal responsibility. Adesina (2015) maintained that professionalism is linked to building into teaching career, some control device to ensure that the practitioners are worthy members of the profession. Oyekan (2010) defined professionalism as a process involving improvement in the status and practice of the occupation as the practitioner continually upgrades the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for effective and efficient professional practices.

Professionalism is a means of forming a professional body. Thus, a professional body is a non-profit organization seeking to further a particular profession, the interest of individual engaged in that profession and for the public interest. Professional body can equally be seen as a group of people in a learned occupation who are entrusted with maintaining, controlling and overseeing of the legitimate practice of the occupation. The major role of a professional is to develop and monitor professional programmes, update skills and thus perform professional certification to indicate that a person possesses qualification in the subject area. Examples of professional bodies include: Nigeria Medical Association (NMA), Nigeria Bar Association (NBA), Institute of Certified Accountant of Nigeria (ICAN), Association of Business Educators of Nigerian (ABEN) etc.



Professionalism is not something that can come overnight. Nonetheless, some people seem to possess certain traits and characteristics that make it easier for them to adopt professionalism. In other words, all the skills required must be inculcated through role modelling and situations that can bring out the qualities of a professional. For this to happen, we must not only select the best candidates but have the best programme that permits these candidates to develop the qualities of a true professional. As such, it is imperative that the education component of our curriculum must focus on this guidelines to enable professionalism excel.

The History of ABEN

The Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) is a professional organization that is committed to the promotion and advancement of Business Education in Nigeria. Their motto reads thus: "Business Education, our Business". The association was inaugurated as the Nigeria Association of Business Education (NABE) at the Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria on March 30, 1984. The founder and initiator of the association was Dr. M.O. Anyaduba, a lecturer in the Vocational Technology under the School of Business, University of Nsukka, when he went for sabbatical leave at ABU, Zaria. The nomenclature ABEN means Association of Business Educators of Nigeria. It was finally registered under the Companies and Allied Matters Act Degree of 1990 as the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) in January, 2006 with Registration Number: **N.CAC/IT/NO.20181**.

Aims and Objectives of ABEN

The aims and objectives of ABEN shall be:

1. To bring together Business Educator in Nigeria
2. To create, foster relationship and assist subsidiary chapters composed of persons of acceptable professional standards in all the States of the Federation
3. To cooperate with governments through their agencies, the private sector and examining bodies for the improvement of business education and teaching profession in Nigeria
4. To serve as a unifying body between institutions and business communities in the country and to promote business education through curriculum development and other means within the framework of educational organization
5. To arrange conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops in Business Education for Business Educators and the business community
6. To promote the professional growth of Business Educators
7. To publish professional journals, books and newsletters for the purpose of disseminating information relevant to the improvement, reinforcement and updating of instructional methodology.

Source: ABEN Constitution – RC NO: N.CAC/IT/NO.20181-abennigeria.net

Traits of ABEN as a Profession (Inhibition and Rewards of Professionalization of ABEN)

Belonging to a professional body is one of the attributes of a profession. But it is quite unfortunate that teaching of business education is dominated by uncertified business educators and governments (federal, state and local government) on their own part are not perturbed, though the programme received laudable acceptance in the National Policy on Education. What could be contributing to this government paying lip service towards strong acceptance and substantive recognition of business education programme in Nigeria?



The writer through direct interviews and observations gathered the following facts as the major challenges that are hindering successful and sustainable professionalization of Business Education Programme in Nigeria.

1. **Lack of Autonomy:** Teaching profession (business education inclusive) lack autonomy as to determine whom be admitted into teaching profession. This is evidently proved during teachers' recruitment at various levels. It will be recalled that the establishment of Teachers Registration Council of Nigeria (TRCN) by the Federal Government was to ensure that only personnel with adequate education background and duly certified will be admitted to teach in schools (tertiary, secondary and primary levels). But today, our school systems are filled up with uncertified teachers because teaching profession (business education inclusive) is seen where people who failed to be accommodated in their various profession can be settled and managed pending the time they will be admitted in their rightful profession.
2. **No Common Certified Examination:** In teaching profession, there is no central examination as in medicine, law etc profession. Though recently, the TRCN had introduced common examination to be taken by undergraduates before their graduation/induction, still recruitment of teachers without education background are still going on, especially at tertiary level.
3. **Political Interference:** Our political leaders contribute a lot towards non-professionalization of business education programme. This is true because information got from Business Education Department in most Colleges of Education and Universities revealed that more than 90% of their teaching staff are not business educators. Making further investigations, it was discovered that majority of them came in from government list which can never be possible in professions like: engineering, law, medicine etc. This shows lack of ABEN autonomy for admission.
4. **Free Entry and Free Exist:** Since teaching appointment is open for all, one is free to secure appointment as he/she wishes, if he/she has somebody in the government and exist when he/she find a better paid job. This makes teaching mockery rather than being a substantive and viable profession.
5. **Poor Funding:** Evidence from government budget on education revealed that professional programmes like law, medical, engineering etc, received higher allocation than education. 2014 -2018 federal government facilities disbursement revealed that education received least allocation of #1.2 billion while medical and engineering received #3.4 and #3.9 billion respectively. This shows that government has more likeness to sciences and engineering as the only sources for economic and national development, forgetting that education is the faculty that breed all the programmes. Thus, business education has proved to be the most potent instrument in man's struggle for survival, growth and development and the teacher remains its pivot.
6. **Public Misconception and Disregard on Business Education Programme:** Many people (parents and guardians) see business education as programme for not well to do individual thereby banning their children and wards from enrolling into the programme. Their hatred did not stop with public misconception but goes as far as influencing government position in the association as a professional body.



7. **Non-challant Attitude on part of the National Assembly Members:** The laissez-faire attitude on part of the National Assembly members in passing the final bill towards making ABEN a recognized and substantive professional body had been a source of concern to the entire ABENITES. All the necessary documents have been submitted. The documents have pass first and second stages since 2012, yet the third (ie the final stage) is still awaiting. The writer is attributing the delay to corruption on part of the National Assembly members. Maybe they are waiting for the association to give them bribe before they will make the final declaration.
8. **Inability of the ABEN to Maintain Standard Code of Ethics:** Professionals usually have well defined code of ethics to regulate the conduct of their accredited practices. Unfortunately, ABEN has little of no influence on matters of policies making for auditing and registering professionally qualified persons into the profession. That is they (ABEN) lacks the control and the legal backing to enforce the standards set by them on their members.
9. **Mistrust on Part of Some Branch ABENITES:** Some members of ABEN are dubious and therefore extort money from fellow members in the name they are forming a state branch. Some who willingly form a branch failed to inform members within the state that they are floating a branch until they fill up elective positions. They will inform members within the state about the branch, when money is needed. Thus, the association is not form for the public interest but for their selfish interest. In a situation where members are not being transparent in their dealings, how do the association come together to mount pressure for government to give them recognition.
10. **Poor Attendance of Members to In-service Training:** Regular staff training is one of the basic attribute of a profession. The writer observed with dismay that majority of business education graduates who were able to secure employment or establish their own businesses after graduation failed to attend regular refreshment programmes in order to update their knowledge and skills in line with the current global changes. They see conferences, seminars and workshops attendance as waste of time and money, forgetting that knowledge expires like vehicle licenses that required renewal within a specific period of time. This can contribute to government delay in given the association freedom of existence (autonomy).
11. **Non-inclusion of ABEN Members During Policy Making:** Government tends to give more opportunities to some groups than others. They see the entire education as one, forgetting that there are many programmes within education faculty. Odemuyiwa (2012) stressed this in his welcome address as National President of ABEN at Federal Polytechnic, Nekede Owerri, Imo State. He decried that, it is disheartening to note that no Business Educator is used during the Curriculum Review exercise in 2009. This according to Odemuyiwa has led to non-inclusion of Business Education in the recently published Benchmark for post graduate programmes in Education in the Nigerian universities.

Benefits to be Accrued if ABEN is Given Full Professional Recognition

The following are possible benefits ABEN members and the general public will enjoy if ABEN is allowed to practice professionally:

1. ABEN will have autonomy over admission and recruitment of right personnel in teaching and office work just like in other professional bodies (law, medicine, engineering etc). There will be no more political interferences.



2. Standards should be set for practitioners to observe and apply just like other viable profession. This could take the form of common standard examination and qualification one must have to obtain before he or she will be allowed to practice as a professional business educator.
3. Code of conduct should be made available and known in every institution or establishment where business education is offered or practice.
4. There should be strong enforcement of the law and defaulters will be given desired punishment and sanctions
5. ABEN autonomy will enable the association to be strong enough to defend the right and welfare of their members
6. No policy or review in curriculum concerning the association will be taken in their absence
7. The general public will appreciate and respect the association (promoting professional growth of business educators in Nigeria)
8. The association will pursue for their proper funding to enable her provide necessary facilities and materials required and not government or institutions management providing obsolete and irrelevant materials and facilities
9. It will bring about strong unity and progress among the members, as members will begin to enjoy unbiased freedom
10. As there will be regular checks and balances of members abilities to adapt to modern technological usage and advancement. No member will like to lag behind as regards updating and refreshing his or her knowledge and skills towards application and usage of modern technologies
11. There will be regular provision of vital information to business educators as to enable them prepare today's business education students for tomorrow's workforce
12. There will be enhancements in remuneration, welfare packages and other fringe benefits in business teachers' career structure thereby making teaching profession more attractive, rewarding and satisfactory.

Conclusion

Business Education remains the foundation of human resource development which provides knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in education and business world as a producer or consumer of economic goods and services. Professionalization of ABEN will continue to be a mirage rather than a reality unless government will grant the association total freedom and autonomy to practice like other professional bodies such as medicine, law etc. When ABEN is granted autonomy to practice, she will set out strong code of ethics to check excesses of defaulters and fakes for optimum service delivery, economic and national development.

Recommendations

Based on the writer's observations, submissions and conclusions, the following recommendations were made:

1. The TRCN should storm into various academic institutions and enforce the management to implement the government's directives by relieving all the teachers without teaching qualification their appointment
2. There is also need for teaching profession to increase the number of years one will spend if he/she wishes to join teaching profession because only one year course programme (PGDE) is not enough to qualify one to be a professional teacher. Just as in medical or bar profession where one must stay 5 – 6 years before he/she will be admitted, even if the person is a professor before he/she secure admission to study
3. Government and National Assembly should as matter of urgency grant ABEN fully autonomy to practice as an independent body if Nigeria will be capable of producing and providing efficient and strong human resources, economic and capital development



4. Information gotten from some members showed that they stopped attending ABEN conferences because editorial bodies are not fair in publishing articles. ABEN executives at the national level should therefore carry every member along and stop being selective as regards publishing articles in ABEN annual journal
5. National and state branch executive of ABEN should be role models and live up to expectations by being transparent in their leadership and dealings for solid and unbiased attainment of common professional goals.

References

- Association of Business Educators of Nigeria Constitution. RC NO: N.CAC/IT/NO.20181. *abennigeria.net* retrieved 15th September, 2019.
- Adesina, S. (2015) *Growth with development: Nigeria educational experiences between 1914 – 2014*. Abeokuta: Educational Industries Nigeria Limited
- Aina, O. (1996). The future of business education in Nigeria: A challenge to education. Inaugural address of NABE. *Journal. Business Education Journal* 1 (1) 1 -8
- Dada, S. and Fadokun, J.B. (2016). Professional ethics in teaching: The training and development challenges. Online available at <http://www.data.up.ac.za/presentation/word/dat.pdf.02/11/2012>
- Mishra, R.C. (2018) *Encyclopedia of educational administration: History of educational administration*. New Delhi: A.P.M. Publishing Cooperation
- Ndinechi, G.I.C. (1996) *Business education manuscript for undergraduates*. Unpublished
- Njoku, C.U. (2006) *Business education and value orientation for nationaleconomic empowerment and development*. Paper presented at ABEN Annual National Conference at Owo, Ondo State.
- Odemuyiwa, J.S. (2012) *Quality assurance in business education*. President welcome address of ABEN National Conference at Federal Polytechnic, Nekede Owerri, Imo State
- Orubite, A.K.O. (2010) *Acceptable school norms and unprofessional conduct in Nigerian schools: Implications for academic standards*. Paper presented at the Nigeria Delta Development Commission (NDDC), organized workshop for secondary school core subject teachers in the Niger Delta Region. 19th April – 20th May, 2010
- Oyekan, S.O. (2010) *Foundation of teacher education Okitipupa*: Ebun-Ola Printers (Nig.) Ltd.
- Pratte, D.U. & Rury, K. (2011). An instrument to measure the professionalism in a professional service. *The service Industries Journal*, 10(2), 336-347.
- Umezulike, A.N. (2018) *Characteristics of a Profession* COOU, Igbariam: Post Graduate Tutorial Manuscript.
- Yusuf, M.A., Afolabi, F.O. and Oyetayo, M.O. (2014). Professionalization of teaching through functional teaching profession in Nigeria. *European Scientific Journal* 10 (4) 107 - 118