



EVALUATION OF BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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Abstract

This paper examines the problems and prospects of evaluation in business education. Business education holds the key to economic and industrial revolution of Nigeria, in that, it emphasizes employable skills needed for self-reliance. But unfortunately, business education is not given the proper attention it deserves. This has caused a lot of problems which include lack of qualified manpower, poor curriculum implementation, and inadequate academic facilities. Other problems include underfunding of business education programmes and lack of instructional aids. It is required in this paper that, government, individual and educational bodies to take evaluation of business education important by funding the system. The bodies involved should adopt flexibility, adaptable programmes and ensure high quality and appropriate skills including professional manpower to enhance the evaluation system. Finally, it was included in this paper that students and instructors should always do their best to help evaluation in business education to be enhanced. There is need for practicing teachers to undergo in-service training. The evaluation of this study covers cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain of the learners.

Introduction

Certain trends of reforms have usually been observed in some developing countries as they attained their independence. One of such major reforms has been the emergence of new educational system aiming at meeting the aspirations and needs of such country. Nigeria is not left out. This paves way for the Federal Government of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) to place a great premium on technical education of which business education is a sub-set. The National policy on education (2013) as regards business education in national development stated in one of the philosophies of education that there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria; to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive while interest and ability should determine individuals' direction in education. The rapid technological changes in the 21st century poses challenges to education and employment sectors. The new labour market demands have caused many graduates with various certificates to be unemployed. The massive rate of unemployment and the changing face of the economic, social, political, labour market worldwide have led to new education reform with emphasis on technical education (business education inclusive) geared towards helping the youths and adult to be self-dependent. Cinterfor (2006) stated that business education can be a tool to counteract at least in part, the harmful effect of



unemployment by promoting greater job turnover and guarding against the risks of obsolescence.

Business Education is an educational training which encompasses knowledge, skills, competencies, structural activities, abilities, capabilities and all other structural experiences acquired through formal, on-the-job or off-the-job which is capable of enhancing recipients opportunity for securing jobs in various sectors of the economy or even enabling the person to be self-dependent. Manfred and Jennifer (2004) observed that business education comprises all more or less organized or structured activities that aim at providing people with the knowledge, skills and competencies necessary to perform a job or a set of jobs whether or not they lead to a formal qualification.

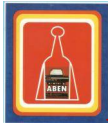
Evaluation according to Stoner (2004) is a process in which parts, processes or outcomes of a programme are examined to see whether they are satisfactory, particularly with reference to the stated objectives of the programme. Tyler (2008) stated that evaluation is the collection, analysis and interpretation of information about training as part of a recognized process of judging its effectiveness, its efficiency and any other outcome it may have. Evaluation, therefore, is not the making of value judgment that is subjective. Rather, it is the application of formal inquiry techniques (Scriven, 2007) for data collection in order to conceptualize, refine, and determine the effectiveness or worth of a programme with a view to aiding decision making as to whether to continue, modify or terminate the programme. It is both qualitative and quantitative in nature; and the process of making objective judgment is based on the qualitative and quantitative information obtained from measurement.

According to Asuquo (2010) Business Education is a programme in vocational education. It is instruction programme which offers specialized instruction for office occupation and general business orientation. According to Osuala (2008) it is a programme of instruction which consists of two parts.

- (a) Office education – being a Business Education Programme for office careers through initial refresher, and upgrading education leading to employability and advancement in and occupations and
- (b) General Business, being a programme of instruction to provide students with information and competences which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the service of the business world.

So from the aforesaid definitions, it is observed that everybody needs business education either for occupational purpose or for general business idea.

According to Asuquo (2010), the philosophy of business education in Nigeria is predicated on the fact that every citizen is a participant on the nation economic activities either as a producer or consumer of goods and services and that every citizen must be conscious of his/her contribution to the economic well being of the nation.



Nwanewezi (2010) describes business education as part of general education, an encompassing education for office occupation, business teaching, business administration and economic understanding. In all, Abdulkadir (2011) noted that one remarkable important characteristic of business education is that its products can function independently as self employed and employers of labour.

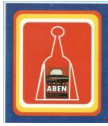
A critical examination of the above definitions of business education shows that certain things in common are discovered, which are as follows:

1. Business education is concerned with equipping the individuals with skills and competencies required for participation in the business world.
2. These skills may be for personal use, such as enabling the individuals to be good consumers of the products of the business enterprises and
3. The skills may be for entry into the business community as employer or employee. From the above definitions; there is need for business education programme to be a periodically evaluated so as to meet up with the needs of the learner and the society. Based on the National Policy on Education (2013), it is obvious that many expectations are placed on business education. Therefore, effective evaluation must be conducted to fulfill the goals and objectives of national values.

Concept of Evaluation

Asuquo (2010) defined evaluation as the process of obtaining and providing useful information for making decisions in education. In other words, it is the process of judging the adequacy of the amount of knowledge or skills possessed by a student after a certain level of learning. Asuquo further stated that evaluation is related to measurement but is broader in scope than measurement. That means taking the results of measurement which could be from test scores, inventory, observation, examination, assignment, project or other instruments and applying value judgments to them. According to Oni (2002), evaluation is the systematic acquisition and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some objects.

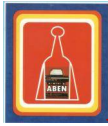
Cronbach (2004) defined evaluation as the collection and use of information to make decisions about an educational programme". Alkin (2009) defined evaluation as a more general judgment of the outcome of programme, which involves the use of observations various tests, questionnaire, interviews etc, his emphasis was on the processes of educational evaluation. Akin (2000) quoting (Alkin,2009) defined evaluation as the process of ascertaining the decision areas of concern; selecting appropriate information, collecting and analyzing information in order to report a summary of data useful for decision makers in selecting among alternatives. Therefore, Obanya (2005) suggested that one of the proposes of educational evaluation is to identify some of the problems that the students may need to overcome in order to progress in learning. Evaluation facilitates the identification of what is left to be learned. It provides



adequate and effective feedback on students' achievement not only in the cognitive area, but also in the areas of interest and manipulative skills.

Indices for Evaluation in Business Education

1. **Qualitative manpower:** This is the greatest, most important, crucial and critical asset of any organization or institution. Without qualitative manpower the best designed organization or institution that is guided by well made plans with necessary equipment cannot achieve its set goals. Stoner (2004) describes manpower as managerial, scientific, engineering, technical and other skills employed and which should be employed to design and develop organization and manage productivity and service enterprise and economic institutions. Therefore, in business education, qualitative teachers are very important in the teaching learning process. The implementation of a well designed curriculum depends on teachers, if the programme must see the light of the day. The question now is what steps are taken to ensure that business education teachers undergo in-service training to be well grounded in the business skills and impart same to the students. This is one of the problems that this programme is facing. Therefore, for the programme to achieve its set objective there is need for business education teachers to undergo in-service training, seminars, workshop to help them to be equipped with the relevant skills, competencies, knowledge to impact same on the students'.
2. **Curriculum Implementation:** Curriculum goals, intentions and objectives of the school have to do with selection of learning experience organization of experiences and finally specification of evaluation procedures (Tyler, 2008). Universities are to produce graduates that are grounded in generic skills and quality education for the nation's economic development. Despite the laudable philosophy of business education programme in Nigeria, recent studies have shown that business education graduates do suffer labour market discrimination because of lack of adequate competencies. Curriculum therefore should reflect research about what works, as opposed to what is popular today or tomorrow. This implies that the curriculum content implementation in business education should enable business students to attain the society's expectation and perhaps most importantly their needs (Tyler, 2008). Curriculum implementation is vital to educational success and nation building. It is observed that government spend money, time and resources on designing what ought to be learned in schools in order to elevate the social consciousness, improve economic viability, prepare its children for adulthood to be self-relevant, and self-employed. It is observed that business education programme implementation is the problem of the curriculum. It always stops at the paper work.



3. **Academic Facilities:** Academic facilities have been observed as a potent factor to qualitative education. According to Oni (2002), facilities constitute a strategic factor in organizational functioning. This is so because it determines to a very large extent, the smooth functioning of any educational system. Oni further stated that their availability, adequacy and relevance influence efficiency and productivity. Fairombi (2009) opined that the wealth of a nation or society could determine the quality of education in that land, emphasizing that a society that is wealthy will establish good schools and employ quality teachers. Learning facilities are needed to help such students learn with ease, thus bring about good academic achievement. Obanya (2005) cited Prossor's theories of business education when he stated that the school workshops, laboratories and total environment where business education programme is given must be adequately equipped to reflect the actual work environment. Ifejie (2009) supported the theories of business education when he pointed out that the teaching of business education subjects requires the use of specialized laboratories, workshops, machines and equipment. Unfortunately, in business education, the low level of funding makes it impossible for the classrooms, laboratory, workshops, and studio to be properly and adequately equipped. Consequently, students cannot make a successful acquisition of skill. Osuala (2004) confirmed that the major problem facing business education is inadequate qualities of equipment, machines, instructional materials etc. Therefore, there is need for government in this era of technological advancement to provide tertiary institutions with the necessary funds to purchase academic facilities. Evaluation of the programme will be meaningful if facilities are on ground to be assessed.

Purpose of Evaluating Business Education Programme

According to Asuquo (2010) evaluation does not occur in a vacuum. Before we set out to teach, we have goals in mind. Evaluation is therefore based on the set goals. Asuquo further stressed that evaluation is a significant component of any worthwhile venture, just as it is necessary to evaluate every undertaking to know whether there is success, progress, growth or otherwise. It is essential to evaluate instructional programmes in school in order to test those hypotheses upon which the school and its programmes are based. The result of tested hypotheses then shows whether the objectives of the learning process have been attained and to what degree. For instance, teachers, students, administrators, facilities, services, budget, etc. could be evaluated in a school to know whether all expectations have been met. Specifically, evaluation in Business Education intends to serve the following purposes.

1. To serve as data for good planning
2. To use its result for accreditation of programme
3. To improve schools community relationship



4. For programme improvement and expansion
5. For decision making.

Roles of Evaluation

1. Evaluation seeks to appraise what students have learned.
2. It influences the methods of study employed by the student if a teacher announces that an essay test will be given, the students' study method will be suitable for an essay examination with serious and detailed study and will differ from the method used for a multiple choice test.
3. It provides students with the opportunities to express themselves.
4. When evaluation is done after teaching and during the term it provides basis for the location of errors resulting from learning.
5. Evaluation provides basis for marks and reports of progress.
6. It motivates the students to study especially when they are informed of their progress.

Types of Evaluation in Business Education

There are several types of evaluation in business education including formative, summative, ultimate, process, and programme evaluation. This study however focuses on programme evaluation. According to Asuquo (2010) the process takes care of the whole programme to determine the extent to which it is serving the purpose it was established. This is carried out in order to obtain relevant data for programme planning, programme improvement and accountability. Data collected are used to assess the effectiveness and quality of the programme.

Criteria for Evaluating Business Education Programme

The following criteria could be used to evaluate Business Education programme.

1. Evaluating the scope of the programme in terms of meeting the needs of all the individuals who need and desire occupational training.
2. Evaluating the degree to which the programme has met the needs of the individual, the industry and the society generally.
3. Evaluating to obtain follow-up information in order to establish the degree of effectiveness of the programme.
4. Evaluating the validity of the curriculum content and the teaching procedures in terms of their ability to meet the objectives of the programme.



Problems of Evaluating in Business Education Programme

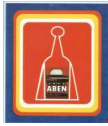
There are many factors that militate against effective programme evaluation in business education. According to Asuquo (2010) some of these problems are outlined here.

1. Poor teacher preparation. Some teachers are so poorly prepared that they lack adequate skills in the evaluation procedure.
2. Poor experience and teaching background on the part of new teachers employed to teach in the programme
3. Too many activities to be performed within a limited time and with the materials so diverse that thorough completion of the programme is impossible.
4. The tendency to prepare materials that appear to favour average and above average students at the expense of slow learners.
5. The number of students enrolled each year vis-à-vis the number of teachers and equipment may not be comparable. This may affect the objectivity of the evaluation result.
6. Under funding of the programme can be another major set-back to effective evaluation.
7. Effective evaluation requires constant assessment but the fact is that a single teacher may have too many students to assess at a time.
8. Lack of necessary instructional materials or resources could also affect the effectiveness of an evaluation process in Business Education.

Prospects of Evaluation in Business Education

According to Asuquo (2010) for evaluation of the business education programme to be effective, the following steps must be taken.

- a. Priority must be given to the objectives of the programme when carrying out the evaluation process. In fact the objectives of the Business Education programme must form the basis of the evaluation process.
- b. The devices that will be used for the evaluation process must be predetermined. They should be the most appropriate, so that comprehensive data or information could be obtained
- c. An effective evaluation must cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learner.
- d. An effective evaluation requires the assistance and cooperation of the teachers, students, school heads, supervisors, parents and even the government. Every person should be involved in the process in one way or another to make it successful.

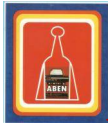


- e. Evaluation must also cover many aspects of the learning process and must make use of a variety of evaluation techniques because a single device employed may not provide adequate data for an objective value judgment.
- f. Since evaluation is not an end in itself, but a means to an end, the results of the evaluation process must form the basis upon which some concrete decisions are taken towards improving instructions in the Business Education Programme.

Strategies for Qualitative Business Education Programme

The vision statement of national policy on education (2013) at tertiary level indicates that students are expected to acquire both physical and intellectual skills, which will enable them to be self-dependent and useful members of the society. To meet the policy goals of NPE, and the challenges facing business education, they should adhere to the following strategies.

1. **Institute flexible, workable and adaptable programme:** To address the current socio-economic changes taking place worldwide, business education must be ready to amend and revise some of its curricula where necessary so as to effectively become a driving factor for the implementation of socio-economic development strategies. Saansaliyu quoted by Alaku (2007), laments the gap between policy decisions in the field of business education and implementation of those policies.
2. **Ensuring High Quality and Appropriately Skilled Business Profession:** For business education to meet the economic, social and political trends of the time, the programme must use qualified Business Education professionals/teachers in its implementation.
3. **Promotion and proper coordination of education, industry and work environment:** As a matter of urgency, there is need to improve the status and attractiveness of business education by professionalizing it. Flexible and workable policies on business education and proper recruitment pattern should be put in place, to increase skill levels, provide better access to delivery of learning for all.
4. **Encouraging Continuing Business Education:** The greatest weakness in the execution of business education is disjointed training and lack of continuity of the programme from primary school level to tertiary institutions on-the-job training. Government is good at formulating very viable policies and goals for the betterment of its citizens but the question is to what extent do the planners and implementers ensure that programme starts from infancy stage to fully completed and evaluated stage without creating gaps along the line.
5. **Adoption of Uniform Standard of Training and Certificate:** There is need for government to have analysis of the number of business education institutions and training centres. The essence is to increase the mobility of training and



occupation. There is need for government to put in place proper machinery in order to standardize, monitor and control the issuance of these certificates.

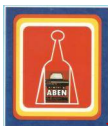
Conclusion

The success of business education programme hinges on proper planning, efficient implementation, adequate funding and motivation. The fact that Nigeria inherited from British government a tradition that valued academic studies more than skill subjects hampered the effective take off of business education. Business education should align its curricula to labour market demands in order to provide youths with sufficient skills necessary to access good jobs. Since an adage says, “No man is an island”, there must be in place a framework for pulling together resources and expertise of business education. This will create understanding, cooperation and good academic input into various business education issues. The integration system of pathway should be adopted to bring together business education curricula, academic and applied curriculum, the labour market demands, institutions and the society at large. Nigeria has to be fully launched into the industrial age especially now that business preparedness has become increasingly paramount.

Recommendations

For evaluation of business education programme to be efficient and effective the following are recommended for adoption and implementation.

1. Practicing teachers at all levels of education should undergo professional training through seminars, workshops and other in-service training to acquire knowledge and skills in the adoption of business driven instructional methodology.
2. Curriculum of business education needs an in-depth review. This would enable the graduates respond to social goals, economic realities and future life challenges. This should be done by selecting contents that are consistent with emergent and anticipated needs of the society.
3. Business education teachers that are unskilled and lack the knowledge of using equipment and other facilities, should be trained and retrained on the job through seminars workshops and conferences to enable them gain current knowledge of new devices and equipment. Priority must be given to the objective of the programme when carrying out evaluation process.
4. The devices that will be used for evaluation must be predetermined.
5. An effective evaluation must cover the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains of the learner.
6. The results of the evaluation process must form the basis upon which some concrete decisions are taken towards improving instructions in Business Education programme.



Evaluation must cover many aspects of learning process in Business Education programme.

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