



## ACHIEVING QUALITY IN BUSINESS EDUCATION IN A GLOBALISED-WORLD: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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### **Abstract**

*The need for achieving quality in business education cannot be over-emphasized in a globalized world. The world has become a global village in which technology is affecting every aspect of work. Business education which mandate is to produce manpower needed in modern business offices must see the need to improve the quality of manpower that would suit the ever dynamic world of innovation and technology. This paper examined achieving quality in business education in a globalized world: challenges and strategies. It focused on impediment to quality business education, function of good quality education, technological challenges facing business education in the e-world and the strategies. It was concluded that It is a known fact that business education produce manpower needed in many offices today. The business world has been and would continue to be in a digital world. It was concluded that despite the fact that there are many impediments to quality in business education, there is the need for business education curriculum to be design in a way that will suitable for the dynamic e-world. It was recommended that adequate steps should be taken to improve the quality of business education to meet up with the dynamic digital world and that business education curriculum should be overhaul to keep pace with the ever dynamic digital world.*

**Key words:** *Quality, Business Education, Globalised-world, Strategies and Challenges*

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### **Introduction**

Business education has been defined in several ways, most of which highlight its vocational nature. It is a form of vocational education that is directed towards developing the learner to become productive in teaching, paid employment and self-employment (Idialu in Amoor, 2010). Business education prepares beneficiaries for gainful employment and sustainable livelihood. It is generally seen as education for and about business. Business education for business is that aspect of vocational education which provides instruction and preparation for positions in office occupations such as secretary, data processor, word processor, computer analyst and accountant. On the other hand, education about business provides knowledge and understanding of the economic, financial, marketing, accounting, management system and other branches of business endeavour. In other words, education about business prepares students to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy (Ugwuogo, 2013).

Amoor (2010) note that business education plays a significant role in the economic development by providing knowledge and skills to the learners, thereby, enabling them to adequately impart knowledge into others, and handle sophisticated office technologies and information systems. The goal of business education is primarily to produce competent, skillful and dynamic business teachers, office administrators and businessmen and women that will effectively compete in the world of work. It has as its primary aim, the preparation of people for roles in enterprises such roles could be as employees, entrepreneurs and employers or simply as self-employed.



Vocational and technical skills (Business education) and competence has been identified (Rufia, 2013) as critical success factors in the actualization of Nigerian Vision 20:2020 which is about Nigeria becoming one of the first 20 economies in the world by the year 2020. Business education holds the prospect of contributing, through its job creation and self-employment packages, for the attainment of vision 20:2020. A gainfully employed individual contributes to GDP per capita, reduces poverty and unemployment which are some of the indices of development. A well trained business educator can successfully be engaged into the following areas:

Teaching profession from secondary to university level depending on qualification  
Business enterprise as a promoter, manager, marketer, account clerk, secretary, word processor, sales representative, broker etc.  
Proprietorship of private schools- primary, secondary, tertiary, computer training institute and so on.

There is no gain saying the fact that business education, an aspect of vocational education, is what Nigeria needs most now to help her solve most of her social, economic and developmental problems. (Ugwuogo, 2012).

Business education involves teaching students the fundamentals, theories and processes of business. Education at this stage occurs at several levels including secondary education and higher education with the greatest activity occurring in the latter. Business education typically prepares students for an occupation in business or a business related field or a teaching career in academics (Dhaka, 2011). Esene (2012) defined Business education as education for and about business or training in relevant skills in office occupation. The goals of business education according to Asuquo (2005) are as follows:

- To provide opportunity job preparation or vocation studies for students in order to make them render effective and efficient services in office, distributive and service occupations.
- To prepare students, based on interests and aptitudes with the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to enter into a business occupation, advance and profit in it.
- To provide opportunities for students to develop an understanding of the business and economic system of the nation so as to enable them to participate actively as producers and consumers of goods and services.
- To develop in students the basic awareness of the contribution which business and office employees make to the nation's economy.
- To develop and improve the personal qualities and attitudes of students as required in personal and employment situations.
- To serve as a guide for individual students for suitable placement in business and office employment.
- To enable students have career consciousness and economic understanding of the free enterprise system.
- To prepare students for leadership position in both public and private lives.

Business education is offered in both secondary schools and tertiary institutions. At the tertiary level, business education is offered in colleges of education and universities. Courses are taught in Accounting, Management, Office Technology and management and marketing. Students are



expected to have relevant skills and knowledge, attitude to enable them perform effectively in their private businesses and public offices.

Chibuike, (2013) noted that if institutions that have the business education programme must achieve their goals, they must put in place quality enhancing strategies that will ensure the production of quality graduates for national development. Such quality enhancing strategies include adequate funding, effective monitoring and evaluation, review of programme, recruitment of quality staff, and use of quality course materials, effective assessment and development of staff as well as standardization of requirements for intake of quality students. Quality assurance refers to the planned and systematic activities implemented in a quality system so that quality requirement for a product or service will be fulfilled.

### **Concept of Quality in Education**

In studies of quality and equality issues in education in third world countries, it is pointed out that there is as yet no consensus on the definition of the term “quality”. More importantly, notions of quality change over time and are tied to societal values. Another important point that has been raised relates to the relative paucity of meaningful data that could provide indicators of quality.

For many people, casual and expert observers, political authorities, parents and communities, teachers and education administrators, “education quality” is defined by national examinations. In their role of measuring quality, they actually specify what it is that they want. The logic of such an orientation is quite straightforward. Education systems set objectives and those objectives are then operationalised in the curriculum and teachers' guides. The mastery of the curriculum is measured by national examinations. Hence the best indicator of high quality in education is a high score on the national examinations. When students perform well on national examinations, then it is reasonable to conclude that they have had a high quality in education (Daniel and Nobuhide, 2010). In this regard, when families see that the poor quality of schooling will not provide their children with the skills or diplomas they are sent to acquire, they stop sending their children to school. However, the focus on examination results especially in developing countries can be detrimental to the quality of teaching and learning as teachers tend to rely on rote learning preparation of children for tests and examinations.

Many studies continue to show that efforts to engage with quality are fraught with difficulties, not least of which a consideration of what quality is. Equally problematic are efforts to effectively achieve, improve and measure quality. Consequently, as much as is written about quality, a reading of literature can be quite confusing as numerous and conflicting definitions of quality are presented, depending on how the term is conceptualized. The normative nature of the concept provides some explanation for this particular situation.

Although the concept of quality education is still contentious, it is clear from a lot of research that good quality education facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that have intrinsic value and also helps address important human goals. Evidence is now clear-cut on the links between good education and a wide range of economic and social development benefits. Better school outcomes as reflected in student scores are related to higher income in later life. Empirical work has also demonstrated that high quality schooling improves national economic potential that are strong and significant to social benefits (Daniel and Nobuhide, 2010).



Part of the returns to school quality come through continuation in school. Consequently, students who do better in school, as evidenced by either examination grades or scores on standardized achievement tests tend to go further in school or university. In this regard, higher student achievement keeps students in school longer, which leads, among other things, to higher completion rates at all levels of schooling. Using simple measures of basic cognitive skills, studies show that skills are separately important in determining earnings, apart from the effect of schooling attained. Although there is still data paucity, which suggests the need for caution in interpreting the results due to other extraneous factors, there are strong evidences associated with increase in test scores suggesting a substantial return to higher levels of cognitive skills and the probability of higher levels of school quality (Daniel and Nobuhide, 2010).

Quality in this context therefore can be realized according to Apuega and Torubeli (2015) as follows:

#### **Quality of Student intake or Enrolment**

The type of student to be admitted for business education related programmes matters a lot for quality to be maintained. Apuega and Torubeli(2015) observed that some institutions have their ways of attracting students they lower their standard by adopting unconventional procedure like internal sale of forms for admission other than the nationally accepted UMTE procedure. Others equally admit students without the minimum entry qualification. This trend no doubt, is bound to have adverse effect on the process of implementation Of the curriculum

#### **Staff Quality and Quantity**

Admittedly, no nation can rise above the quality of its teachers as the National Policy on Education (2004) acknowledged. This implies that the caliber of lecturers employed to train business education students at all institutions is crucial.

#### **Facilities, Curriculum and Minimum Standard**

According to Apuega and Torubeli(2015), the link between availability of facilities, programme curriculum and minimum standard is very strong. No curriculum can be adequately covered without adequate facilities to work not to talk of standard. The expansion of the Business education curriculum at all level implies that adequate facilities should be put in place to ensure its full coverage. Such facilities includes good libraries and books, ICT facilities, classrooms and office accommodations, technical workshops and laboratories, vehicles to facilitate mobility amongst others. These facilities are very essential to fast track the attainment of quality in the teaching and learning environment. When such facilities are put in place, it will motivate teachers to put in their best to enhance productivity and ultimately promotes quality service delivery in business education.

#### **Funding**

In Nigeria, investment on education has suffered a considerable neglect. Despite the fact that education is a huge capital investment enterprise, there has been poor budgetary allocation to the education sub-sector. It is sad to note that our leaders have not recognized the importance of education due to the lack of political commitment in terms of funding.



As a policy to the funding of education, government around the world committed themselves to UNESCO convention by earmarking 25 percent of state budget to education. Regrettably, Apuega and Torubeli, (2015) lamented that the non-compliance of the UNESCO convention by the Nigerian government has hampered teachers' professional development and welfare. Over the years, budgetary allocation to education has continued to witness an abysmal rate. It is not surprising that monies budgeted for education are not always released particularly to the various institutions. Under the face of meager financial resources, there is the tendency for academic quality to be compromised due to deplorable financial state to implement programmes.

### **Implementation of Educational Policies**

Nigeria has experimented different educational system aimed at producing an economically and politically virile nation. It operated a 6-5-4 system, a 6-3-3-4 system and currently, a 9-3-4 system under the UBE programme. In assessing the educational programmes, Salisu and Olusanya in Arikawei and Torubeli (2015) noted that none of the systems is absolutely better than the other. The gap in policies is however on the process of implementation.

### **Impediments to Quality in Business Education**

Business education provides the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding needed to perform in the business world as a producer and or consumer of goods and services that business offers. It includes virtually all the knowledge which holds prospect for gainful employment. The realization of lofty aims of business education depends on how much the following challenges are tackled in the e-world

**Unqualified Teachers:** Teachers are critical stakeholders in curriculum implementation. The employment of unqualified teachers to teach business courses is a great disservice to quality of business education graduates. It is a well-known fact that most of the higher institutions that offer business education programme suffer from shortage of qualified teachers (Amoor in Ugwuogo, 2012). Business education has become a dumping ground sort of for graduates from different disciplines employed in the name of business educator.

**Obsolete Technologies:** Manual typewriters are still largely in use. Some available modern ICTs are grossly inadequate

**Under Utilization of Computers:** The department is not taking full advantage of shared printer, shared logic/resources and networking.

**Large Class Size:** The high teacher-student ratio affects quality of delivery of practical courses like word processing, data processing, shorthand and others

**Poor Funding:** Many administrators fail to understand that business education programme is capital intensive. It is a well-known fact that one of the major problems bedeviling education in Nigeria today is inadequate funding and business education is no exception

**Curriculum Development:** "Curriculum is simply about taking a subject, preparing it for classroom use, and following through so that it makes a lasting impact on students (Mednick in Mohammad, 2015). Null (2011). Curriculum designers should consider objectives, plans as well as methods, materials and assessment procedures. Especially, the Business Education curriculum should meet the educational needs of most students and the present e-world.



**Environmental Challenges:** The general environment that surrounds Business education has seen drastically changes over the last several years. Causes of these changes include the emergence of global market which is more connected and integrated, the political system and the revolutionary changes in the field of information and communication technologies(the e-world) (Hallinger and Snidvongs2008)

**Graduate Competency:** The term competency refers to knowledge, skill and attitude that enable one to effectively perform activities of a given occupation or function to the standard expected in employment. Competency is the combination of skills, abilities and knowledge needed to perform a specific task. In business and professional life, competencies are used for employee selection, the basis for compensation, performance measurement, training needs assessment, training outcomes assessment and strategic planning. It is believed that having knowledge alone is not sufficient in today's society; business education students need to adapt to change and to apply their knowledge to solving problems. Competencies like: communicating; managing people and tasks; and, managing innovation and change, other competencies include: critical thinking, interpersonal skills and computer skills.(Mohammad, 2015)

#### **Technological Challenges facing Business Education in the E-world**

Despite increasingly widespread of technologies in virtually every aspect of learning, significant challenges are preventing effective implementation of technology in Business education. In the view of David (2013) some of these challenges are systemic and some related to the technologies themselves, teachers and education leaders share in the blame as well. He listed the following as technological challenges in Business Education:

**Professional Development.** Key among all challenges is the lack of adequate, ongoing professional development for teachers who are required to integrate new technologies into their classrooms yet who are unprepared or unable to understand new technologies.All too often, when schools mandate the use of a specific technology, teachers are left without the tools (and often skills) to effectively integrate the new capabilities into their teaching methods. The results are that the new investments are underutilized, not used at all, or used in a way that mimics an old process rather than innovating new processes that may be more engaging for students.

**Resistance to Change.** Resistance to technology comes in many forms, but one of the key resistance challenges identified is "comfort with the status quo. Teachers often see technological experimentation as outside the scope of their job descriptions.

**Delivering Informal Learning.** Rigid lecture-and-test models of learning are challenges to students in other to experiment and engage in informal learning. Opportunities for such informal learning can be found in non-traditional classroom models, such as flipped classrooms, which allow for a blending of formal and informal learning.

**Failure of Personalized Learning.** There is a gap between the vision of delivering personalized, differentiated instruction and the technologies available to make this possible. Teachers seem to see the need for personalized learning, they are not being given the tools they need to accomplish it, or adequate tools simply do not exist.



### **Failure to use Technology to Deliver Effective Formative Assessments.**

Assessment is an important driver for educational practice and change, and over years there is a rise in the use of formative assessment in educational practice. However, there is still an assessment gap in how changes in curricula and new skill demands are implemented in education; schools do not always make necessary adjustments in assessment practices as a consequence of these changes.

### **Strategies to achieving Quality in Business Education**

The vision statement of NPE (2004) at secondary and tertiary levels is to provide trained manpower in applied science, technology (Ghourri, Khan, Malik, and Razzaq, 2010) and business (Okolocha, 2012) particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels; provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills necessary for agricultural, commercial and economic development and to give training and impart the necessary skills to individual who shall be self-dependent economically. At the tertiary level, graduates 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 the business education in Nigeria, Business education should adhere to the following strategies:

**Institute Flexible, Workable and Adaptable Programme:** For Business education to address the technological changes currently taking place worldwide, there should be readiness to amend and revise some of its curricula where necessary. Business education should strive to adopt strategies to produce graduates who are innovative and adaptable to changes in the world of technology. Business Education graduates should strive to be innovator of ideas. This implies that Business education graduates should be able to adapt to the dynamic technologies. Effective strategies can be developed at all administrative and decision levels for the purposes of maintaining or improving Business Education quality. Strategies may need to vary by particular social and economic context and by the developmental level of the targeted education institutions. Such conditions do not eliminate the possibility of useful national policies related to quality (Okolocha, 2012).

**Developing and Implementing a Well-Designed Curriculum Suitable for Innovation:** Perhaps one of the simplest and least expensive actions that could be taken over the next decade to improve education quality is to ensure that all teachers have and know how to use a well-designed curriculum and correlative textbooks for what they teach. One approach to the implementation and coordination of new curricula and related changes is through a national instructional strategy prepared policy made in education Included would be a set of guidelines and action plans related to the use of instructional time, development of instructional materials, and instructional support roles.(David & Don in Mark (2013)

**Strengthening Research, Innovations and Development:** Research is ahead of practice. Although much is now known about conditions and factors that build and sustain quality education, education policies and practice are too rarely informed by the insights research can bring. National research centers can provide leadership in mapping and implementing research and development programs to improve education quality. They can



also disseminate information on strategic implications of existing research and exemplar practices on education quality, assist in developing school-level instruments to monitor school quality, and participate in development of national and cross-national efforts to improve education indicators.

### Conclusion

It is a known fact that Business Education produce manpower needed in many offices today. The business world has been and would continue to be in a digital world. Despite the fact that there are many impediments to quality in business education, there is the need for business education curriculum to be design in a way that will suitable for the dynamic e-world.

### Recommendations

In view of the foregoing, the following recommendations are made:

There is the need for cross fertilization of ideas and enhance technology transfer by business education stakeholders that will promote exchange of ideas in technology which would further develop business education programmes in a global world.

Policy makers in Business Education should ensure that the curriculum is reviewed to meet with the changing digital world.

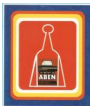
Government should ensure that education policy (relating to Business education) be run uniformly throughout the country, educational issues should not be politicized or compromised in a digital world.

Living in an innovative times, policy makers should allow business education the freedom to excel in a digital world

Adequate steps should be taken by all stakeholder in Business Education in maintaining, enhancing and improving the quality of business

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