



Business Education a Panacea for Unemployment Among Youth in Nigeria

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Abstract

The teaching of Business Education has been going in to extinction as if the subject has no importance to the youth's employment in Nigeria. Having recognized teaching of Business Education as vanguard and elements of salvaging the current unemployment rate in Nigeria, the need to have the knowledge of Business Education is considered paramount. This paper intended to highlight the relevance of Business Education as panacea for unemployment among youths in Nigeria. The study therefore, brought to the light of relevance of Business Education, development of Business Education as well as challenges facing Business Education in Nigeria. Finally, the paper forwarded some of the recommendations in promoting Business Education in Nigeria which among others include the need of equipping Business Education Department with adequate and quality teachers with necessary materials such as model rooms, typing pools and computer lab to promote teaching and learning of the subject.

Keywords: Business, Education, Unemployment, Youth

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Introduction

The earliest form of Business Education according to Osuala, and Popham (1975) as well as most authors was the apprenticeship training. At that time an individual had to learn a trade under another person who had the skill for the trade, or who was experienced in a particular area. These were craft, bookkeeping, farming, and sales, and many other. The period of training varied from one trade to another. Sometimes the length of time was based on how fast the apprentice could learn the skill. At the end of the training it was an option put forward to the apprentice whether to remain with the master and be paid a token sum, which may be complimented with material items. The second option was that of the freed apprentice to establish own business and to have a

apprentice also. If the first option was chosen, the master was obliged to feed and provide with the routine helps. In all he was still responsible to the master and must operate within the rules stated by his master. One thing that made the training very striking and worth emulating but which we lack in our society today, was that the apprentice must be worthy in character and learning. The issue of character and learning has been jettisoned, especially that of character. There were certain skills which some families endowed with, but which they did not want to share with outsiders. All these took place in a non- formal setting.

As time went on, businesses started growing, Popham (1975) stated that more people were needed in businesses and the idea of restricting the training to certain places was not achieving



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much and itinerant tutors started veiling around the country United State of America (USA) giving instruction in book keeping and penmanship. Youths started appreciating the need for business skills and grammar schools started including book keeping, penmanship and commercial arithmetic in their curricula as a result of demands for commercial training. This gave Business Education a place in the formal setting. However, the earliest type of business training in colonial Nigeria was done on-the-job after primary or secondary education. It was believed that after secondary education a worker could be trained on the job to acquire skills in office occupation, except in typewriting and shorthand aspects of secretarial occupations. As a result, graduates of secondary schools were automatically employed into clerical positions on application and interviewing.

Presently, with the increasing number of Nigerian youth with capability to be employed in government agencies were not opportune, due to high level of unemployment and competition in the country almost in every sector of the economy. The unemployment rate was high and obviously securing employment is difficult for an average Nigerian. Business Education involves teaching of students the fundamental concept, theories and process of business as well as equipping the youths with necessary skills and techniques to be self-employed (Amuchi & Matsayi, 2018). Therefore, this paper examined the concept of Business Education as a panacea for unemployment among youths in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Business Education is an area of Education which deals with the study of the subject of related disciplines. It is a combination of two disciplines dealing mainly with the art of shorthand writing, typewriting, accounting, business mathematics, secretarial duties, and commerce and office practice. The field of study offers every individual an opportunity to develop those abilities, skills and understanding of the vocational opportunity available. One of the important macro-economic problems of our system is

unemployment. Unemployment exists because most of the products of our Education system look for jobs that do not exist because the system of education was general in nature not meeting specific occupational needs (Aliyu 1999).

Business Education plays a significant role in Nigeria's economic growth and development. It improves personal qualities and builds the attitudes of youths that are necessary for adjustment to personal and employment situations, and also provides knowledge, skills and competence for individuals to function well in office occupation and also create jobs for themselves and others (Amoor, 2010). In spite of Federal Government's initiatives to alleviate unemployment and poverty in the society the nation's economy is still characterized by high rate of unemployment and poverty. Now that the nation is experiencing economic meltdown, which will in turn, increase the rate of unemployment and poverty in the society, integrating entrepreneurship courses into the curriculum of Business Education programme in Nigerian institutions is a right call and at the right time since entrepreneurship Education will provide additional skills, resources, and methodologies to Business Education graduates to transform their ideas into visible and viable businesses after graduating from the College. If this is rightly done, the graduates do not need to queue up in the labour market for paid employment but rather create jobs for themselves and others. This will go a long way in reducing poverty in the society and unemployment in the labour market.

In order to be able to understand the concept of Business Education, it would be necessary to look at the definitions of Business Education in the past and present time. This is because technology has helped to change definitions of certain things. It therefore, implies that Business Education, as a course of study has to move with time.

Aliyu (1999) stated that "Business Education is education to produce goods and services". One teacher responded as economic concepts necessary for living in a business economy. Another teacher Amuchi & Matsayi (2018)



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opined that it's learning skills to enter a business or distributive job. A person on the street said "Shorthand and typing, that's it". After looking at the different views of people about Business Education, Lawal (2005), came to a conclusion that: Business Education is a course that prepares students for entry into and advancement in jobs within business and it is equally important because it prepares students to handle their own business affairs and to function intelligently as consumers and citizens in a business economy. Amoor (2010) defined Business Education as those business programmes and courses taught ordinarily at the Schools and Colleges. Ugwuogo (2013) defined Business Education as an essential part of the preparation of youths for live and living. Also affirm that business education as a programme of instruction which consists of two parts (1) Office Education a vocational programme of office careers through initial, refresher and upgrading Education and General Business Education a programme to provide students with information and competences which are needed by all in managing personal business affairs and in using the services of the business. Still on the definition of Business Education, Igboke (2006) defines Business Education as that facet of Educational training that helps the individual to acquire relevant skills needed for living. Igboke (2006) gave another definition as an Educational programme that equips an individual with functional and suitable skills, knowledge, attitude and value that would enable him/her operates in the environment he/she finds himself/herself. It can be seen from the foregoing discussions that as the years go by; the definitions of Business Education continue to change. This means that Business Education is not static. It could be deduced from the definitions above that Business Education is an Education for and about business. It combines both theoretical and practical knowledge. In the same vein, it exposes the recipient to the economic system of his country and equips him with lifelong skills that would enable him to make reasonable judgment as a producer, employee or consumer of goods and services.

Today we are speaking broadly of Business Education as that aspect of the total educational programme that provides that knowledge, skills, understanding, and attitudes needed to perform in the business world as producer or consumer of goods and services that business offers. According to Hamman (1999). Business Education with the training of the individual for business and about business the former focusing on those who need career in business and the latter is for all students in the entire school system irrespective of their career aspirations. (Abdulkadir, 2011), views Business Education as that specialized type of education which by its versatility equips its recipient with the skills, competencies, and attitude, necessary to make him a useful and self-reliant citizen. Business Education deals with empowerment necessary to meet business challenges in a dynamic business world or society. It offers youths the ability to cope with emerging changes in Education, and in business where the person is expected to manifest all the skills acquired while in training. Therefore, Business Education is planned for training and developing youths to expose them in the field of business, and as a professional, consequently, expanding the way for imparting competences for economic development of the society.

The State of Youth Employability in Nigeria

Nigeria's population is said to have reached about 167 million people in 2012 (National Bureau of Statistics). The National Population Commission (NPC, 2013) states about half of the population is made up of youth, defined as individuals between 15 and 34 years of age. Unfortunately, as the youth population grows, so does the unemployment rate. In fact, unemployed youth numbered about 11.1 million in 2012 according to Iwayemi (2013). Here we explore a number of trends in youth unemployment in Nigeria and discuss various government programs attempting to address the problem.

The younger youth struggle even more to find jobs: At least two-thirds of unemployed youth are between 15 and 24 years of age. And, in terms of gender, available statistics show that a



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majority of unemployed youth are female. Analysis of youth unemployment by geographical settlement location (rural and urban areas) indicates that youth unemployment is mostly in rural areas and rapidly growing: From 2010 to 2011, the share of unemployed youth in rural areas increased from 47.59 percent to 59.95 percent. The population of unemployed youth in rural areas rose from 2.9 million in 2008 to about 5.9 million in 2012. (Asaju et al 2014).

Relatedly, in terms of education, from 2008-2012, over half of unemployed youth did not have an education past primary school. This particular group has consistently accounted for over 50 percent of all unemployed youth. However, graduates of tertiary institutions also seem to be badly hit by unemployment too making up about 20 percent of youth unemployment and often remaining unemployed for upward of five years after graduation (Tunji 2019).

Falusi (2014) opined that several factors may be blamed for the prevalence of youth unemployment in Nigeria. There is a high population growth rate 3.5 percent per annum which accompanies an already large national population of over 167 million people. In addition, deficient school curricula and poor teacher training have contributed to the failure of educational institutions to provide their students the appropriate skills to make them employable. Since schools in rural areas are generally more deficient in infrastructure, teaching facilities and teacher quality than schools in urban areas, this may help account for the high growth in rural unemployed youth. In fact, some experts suggest that the major jump in rural youth unemployment in 2011 could be due to the mass failure in examinations conducted among final-year students in 2010, which made many of them unemployable in 2011.

In addition to these supply factors, there is a lack of vibrant industries to absorb competent graduates. This obstacle was in part caused by an infrastructural deficit and a debilitating structural adjustment program (SAP) implemented by Nigeria in the 1980s, which led to the closure of many industries and from

which the country is yet to fully recover. It is also well-known that the youth unemployment situation has been aggravated by flawed and inconsistent public policies on employment.

Another reason might be that policy makers have had to confront inadequate information and data that can form the basis of effective planning. As reported in other studies such as Abdulkadir (2011), employment data are very hard to obtain, even from statutory institutions and agencies established for gathering socio-economic data. Where unemployment registers exist at all, they are limited to urban areas, and, in fact, not all those searching for employment attempt to register. In the absence of such data, policymakers tend to rely on cross-sectional household surveys, which are often inconsistent and full of errors. This lack of data makes it difficult for policymakers to understand the nature of the employment challenge and make informed decisions on how to support young people in the labor market. The scarcity of data on informal employment and entrepreneurship in particular is a major obstacle, given the importance of this sector for youth employment.

Relevance of Business Education to Nigerian Youths

The relevance of Business Education for youth's employability and reliance cannot be over emphasized. It helps youth's development, which Business Education in a free enterprise economy as a distinct philosophy geared to effective economic citizenship, personal business competence, and continued refinement and operation of business system (Hamman, 1999). Business recognizes the contributions that education makes to improve organization and procedure and to human relations in general with consumers; labour and government. There is an appreciation in the community in the role of business; freedom of enterprises and right to profit as legitimate aspirations. Business Education fosters those values in a free enterprise. In Nigeria, the nation takes the initiative to identify Business Education goals and adopt-techniques of planned development for achieving these goals.



1. Business Education for Self-employment

Business Education helps in self-employment, it concerns itself primarily with preparing (youths) men and women for employment in business, office and distributive occupations. Continuous increase in employment opportunity.

2. Business Education as a Career Orientation

Iboke 2005 stated that Business Education offers to every individual, who undertakes vocational training capable of yielding saleable skills as self-employed, an opportunity to develop those skills, abilities and understandings that will enable them to handle completely personal business affairs, develop understanding of the vocational opportunities available in the broad field of business; and to assume his citizenship responsibilities through enlightened participation in an understanding and appreciation of the Nigerian enterprise system. It also offers the youths who wishes to pursue a career in business an opportunity to develop these skills, abilities and understanding that will enable them to enter or to provide them with occupational intelligence to enable them fit into and find job satisfaction in the labour force of the complex and dynamic national economy.

3. Business Education as the Livewire of the Economy

According to Hammam, (1999) Business Education is the live wire of national economy and that is an assurance that it will continue to grow tremendously because a graduate of Business Education stands a great chance of being employed or self-employed. Though gainful employment people increase their wage earnings power, acquire more goods and services thereby increasing their standard of living; savings and investment would also emerge, to facilitate employability and reliance.

4. Business Education as the Objectives of Self Reliance

Business Education, is also directed helping students to understand better and to act more intelligently in dealing with the crucial

problems that face their country's economy. To deal with these problems intelligently they have an understanding of business economic system. Business Education assists students in making the transition from the pursuit of academic training to the reality of active participation in the work force (Aliyu, 1999). According to Igboke (2005), Business Education is training for discipline. It is also training for self-reliance indeed. It is the training of an individual's total person for the business, in business and about business, which teaches him/her how and when to depend upon himself/herself not only for his/her economic survival but also for performing social responsibilities.

5. Business Education as the Objectives of Economic Efficiency

Business Education equips individuals with the knowledge of the business world. This ranges from investment opportunities, insurance policies, advertising practices, mode of financial transactions, means of payment, borrowing, to entrepreneurship. According to Ugwuogo (2013) economic literacy is the right of every citizen which should encompass bodies of knowledge about how the wealth of the nation is derived, how it is distributed and the place of the individual in the scheme of the economy, Nigeria should therefore have to pursue vigorously a viable functional Educational programme to enable it achieve its national objectives. This paper is now stressing for a well-articulated Business education programme in this regard. This is because Business Education is pivotal to all aspects of managing our national economy. Business Education offers all the ingredients needed for higher productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in resource management (Igboke, 2005). In addition, its offering is practical, lively, dynamic, its participants and indeed all citizens come across its offering in their daily economic and social activities.

The Challenges of Business Education:

There are problems stirring at the Nigerian Business Education system, and in this article, we are going to dissect these challenges, and possibly make recommendations on how to



come out of the problems. First of all, let us look at some of the challenges facing Nigerian Business Education.

1. Lack of Responsibility and Control

The challenges of educational development in Nigeria is that of lack of responsibility and lack of control, there is evidence of conflict of interest on the part of education managers in the country at different levels, ranging from the Federal, States as well as the Local Government. For instance, let us take a look at the gap that existed between the State Government and the Federal Government Universities, in terms of school fees, the Federal Government cannot for whatever reason, regulate, let alone to interfere in the affair of the state universities. That is why in the State universities, whatever they decide as school fees are what the students pay. It is also obvious that the control of the educational system is neither in the hand of the federal government, nor the state government lest alone in the hand of local government and this has posed a serious challenge to effective Educational development in the country.

2. Political Interference

This is another problem of Business Education in Nigerian. One of the prevalent challenges in Nigerian schools today is political interference, and politics remained one of the major forces affecting the Educational system in Nigeria. Today, a lot of educational institutions that have been opened are run for sheer political motives in many states of the federation. For instance, admission into Nigerian universities, colleges, and polytechnics are for the most parts of the country, guided by Nigerian politicians, and not determined by students' academic performance. How would you describe a situation, where parents will use their political offices to influence their children's education in Nigeria? (Amoor 2010)

3. Examination Malpractices

Through findings, examination malpractices on the part of the Nigerian students have been identified as one of the challenges witnessed in the Nigerian educational sector today, occasioned by students' poor preparation for

the examination. And this is another set back the Nigerian educational system has experienced. Considering the rising costs of education in Nigeria, in terms of school fees, and enrolment fees, and cost of books including other school materials, students, in fact, even their parents will not for whatever reasons, want to be kept behind, regarding their children's grades, rather they will want to go to extra miles or any length to making sure their children obtain better grades. Another instance is that, most teachers in Nigerian school system are not even helping matters, they will go as far as possible to encourage examination malpractices in Nigerian schools, by way of asking students to sort for their marks and grades, as well as contributing money to teachers, so that they (the students) can secure teachers' assistance during examinations. This is unfortunate! Why? It is because, even the teachers are aware that the students have not prepared for the examination, and they have not encouraged them because they knew that they are standing chances of losing their money, should they encourage the students to read and prepare for their examination.

4. Poor Funding

Underfunding of the Nigerian educational sector, and the negligence in maintaining school facilities, as well as, instructional infrastructure has led to schools getting deteriorated. That is why there are deteriorated classrooms blocks, and libraries and laboratories among other facilities.

Conclusion

These immense importance of Business Education as a panacea for unemployment among youths in Nigeria is really imperative. To meet the needs of the society the National policy on Education emphasizes on Business Education on educational system in recognition of this, Business Education programme was incorporated into our educational system right from the junior secondary school level for a gradual skill development and competency. Certainly this would lead to development of Business Education and lifelong occupation in Nigeria, as far as inculcating right attitudes,



morality, peaceful co-existence and sense of belonging in to the mind of contemporary Nigerian youths.

Recommendations

From the above discussion, the following recommendation were forwarded in promoting Business Education in Nigeria.

1. There is the need for equipping Business Education Department with adequate and qualify teachers with necessary materials such as model rooms, typing pools and computer labs to promotes teaching and the learning of the subject.
2. Government should make sure that Business Education should be re- introduced in primary school's level as a means of providing rudimentary hint as panacea for un- employment to Nigerian youths.
3. There is the need for re-orientation of the Nigerians on the importance of Business Education at all level by organizing seminars, conferences, workshops and sensitization campaign on the relevance of Business Education on youth employability
4. Government should provide Business Education teachers with special salary package in order to motivate them to remain in the profession for lifelong.
5. Government should re-emphasize and make it mandatory the teaching and learning of Business Education skills at all level of Education in Nigeria.

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